

STANDARDS COMMITTEE
6 SEPTEMBER 2021

Minutes of the remote attendance meeting of the Standards Committee of Flintshire County Council held on Monday, 6 September 2021

PRESENT: Julia Hughes (Chair)

Councillors: Gladys Healey, Patrick Heesom and Arnold Woolley

Co-opted members: Jonathan Duggan-Keen, Jacqui Guest, Mark Morgan and Gill Murgatroyd

APOLOGIES: Phillipa Earlam and Deputy Monitoring Officer

ALSO PRESENT: David Davies attended as an observer

IN ATTENDANCE: Monitoring Officer and Democratic Services Officer

11. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST (INCLUDING WHIPPING DECLARATIONS)

None.

12. MINUTES

The minutes of the meeting held on 5 July 2021 were approved, as moved by Mark Morgan and seconded by Councillor Gladys Healey.

RESOLVED:

That the minutes be approved as a correct record.

13. DISPENSATIONS

None.

14. FINDINGS FROM INDEPENDENT MEMBER VISITS TO COMMITTEE MEETINGS

The Monitoring Officer presented the report which summarised the findings from visits undertaken by the Independent Members of the Committee to Council meetings earlier in the year.

Whilst there was positive feedback on the conduct and chairing of meetings, four observations were made to improve clarity and understanding for those viewing the meetings online. Most suggestions had been implemented with some involving ongoing actions. The Committee was asked to endorse the findings prior to sharing with Chairs of Committees.

Gill Murgatroyd suggested that, where possible, Independent or Co-opted Members could be labelled accordingly when participating in remote attendance meetings to distinguish them from Councillors.

Mark Morgan proposed that the findings be shared with Committee Chairs and Group Leaders. He was seconded by Councillor Arnold Woolley.

RESOLVED:

That the findings be formally shared with the Chairs of the Committees and Group Leaders.

15. REVIEW OF THE ETHICAL STANDARDS FRAMEWORK

The Monitoring Officer presented an update on the Review of the Ethical Standards Framework being undertaken by Richard Penn on behalf of the Welsh Government (WG), as reported at the previous meeting.

Following the consultation period, a series of recommendations had been submitted to WG for consideration and response in the Autumn. Any legislation required as a result of the review would be passed before the end of this local government term. The report and response from WG would be scheduled on the Committee's forward work programme once it was published.

The recommendation in the report was moved and seconded by Councillors Arnold Woolley and Gladys Healey.

RESOLVED:

That the Committee notes the report and awaits the outcome of the review.

16. PAN WALES STANDARDS CONFERENCE

The Monitoring Officer presented a report on preparations for the Pan Wales Standards Conference due to take place virtually in late October/ November 2021. Once the date was confirmed, representatives from the Committee would be invited to take part.

The recommendation was moved by Councillor Arnold Woolley and seconded by Jonathan Duggan-Keen.

RESOLVED:

That the Committee notes the preparations for the conference.

17. FEEDBACK FROM THE ETHICAL LIAISON MEETING

The Monitoring Officer presented a report giving feedback from the second ethical liaison meeting held in August.

The meeting had been well received and a range of actions had been agreed to support the forthcoming duty on Group Leaders to help promote good conduct by elected Members. Group Leaders had agreed to further meetings and would be asked to endorse a draft syllabus of actions to be introduced for the Member induction process following the elections in May 2022.

The Chair, Vice-Chair (Mark Morgan) and Councillor Patrick Heesom - who had all been in attendance - spoke in support of the value of ethical liaison meetings.

The recommendation was moved by Mark Morgan and seconded by Councillor Gladys Healey.

RESOLVED:

That the Committee welcomes the outcomes of the ethical liaison meeting and agrees to hold a third meeting in the new calendar year.

18. FORWARD WORK PROGRAMME

The Monitoring Officer presented the Forward Work Programme for consideration where the following changes were suggested:

- If available, the Penn Review of the Ethical Standards Framework to be included on the agenda of the joint meeting with Town/Community Council representatives on 1 November 2021.
- The meeting in January 2022 to include an item on agenda items for the next Ethical Liaison meeting.
- The item on Independent Member visits to Council meetings to be moved from January to July 2022 to start planning the process with a view to recommencing visits in September 2022.

The changes were moved by Gill Murgatroyd and seconded by Councillor Gladys Healey.

RESOLVED:

That the Forward Work Programme, as amended, be approved.

19. MEMBERS OF THE PRESS IN ATTENDANCE

There were no members of the press in attendance.

(The meeting started at 6.45pm and ended at 7.45pm)

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Chair