

FLINTSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL

Date of Meeting	Tuesday 22 nd October 2019
Report Subject	Review of the Flintshire Standard
Report Author	Chief Officer (Governance)

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The Council has adopted a local resolution process that also includes a statement of the standards of behaviour to which the Council aspires. This is called the Flintshire Standard. There has been a desire amongst both Members and Officers to review and restate those expectations.

Officers have reviewed the standard with Group Leaders and some amendments are suggested to expand and clarify expectations around behaviour. The Standards Committee endorsed the changes and suggested that complaints under the Local Resolution Protocol should be brought within 3 not 12 months. The Constitution and Democratic Services Committee endorsed the suggested changes.

RECOMMENDATIONS

1	That the amended Flintshire Standard be adopted.
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REPORT DETAILS

1.00	BACKGROUND TO THE FLINTSHIRE STANDARD
1.01	In June 2013 the Council adopted a local resolution process, called the Flintshire Standard, as an alternative to referring complaints about behaviour, from Members and/or Officers, to the Public Services Ombudsman for Wales. The Flintshire Standard set out how Members should behave towards each other and Officers.
1.02	The provisions of the Code of Conduct, which, whilst possessing the virtue of brevity, do not give practical examples of what is required. The Flintshire Standard therefore expands upon the obligations that relate to behaviour towards others with a list of “do’s and don’ts” across a range of situations. The Standard also sets out an escalating process of mediation to be followed in the event that a Member or Officer feels its provisions have been breached.
	Reviewing the Standard
1.03	There has recently been a desire amongst both Members and Officers to review the contents of the Flintshire Standard in order to: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• expand and clarify the guidance within it; and• restate and reinforce the behaviours expected.
1.04	Officers and Group Leaders have therefore suggested some amendments to the Flintshire Standard. These are shown in tracked changes at Appendix 1.
1.05	The Standards Committee and Constitution and Democratic Services Committee have considered the amendments. The Standards Committee endorsed the amendments at the meeting on 2 nd September 2019 and suggested that the time limit for making a complaint under the Local Resolution Process should be 90 days not 12 months. The aim of local resolution is to provide a quick outcome and so this change seems appropriate. A verbal update will be provided on the feedback from the Constitution and Democratic Services Committee.

2.00	RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS
2.01	The Flintshire Standard is intentionally quick and simple to operate in its early stages, so that any disputes are quickly resolved. The process is therefore not greatly demanding of time or other resources.

3.00	CONSULTATIONS REQUIRED / CARRIED OUT
3.01	Chief Officers and Group Leaders (plus their deputies) have contributed to the preparation of the suggested amendments. As noted the document has been endorsed by the Standards Committee and by the Constitution and Democratic Services Committee.

4.00	RISK MANAGEMENT
4.01	The local resolution process contained within the Flintshire Standard is intended for use on low level complaints concerning the relationship between Councillors or Councillors and Officers. It can be invoked quickly and easily in order to catch issues before significant harm occurs to that relationship and whilst people are more willing to compromise. It is, however, extra statutory and so does not have recourse to the legislative sanctions available following a complaint to the Ombudsman. Its use must always therefore be considered carefully to ensure its suitability in light of the nature of the complaint and the surrounding circumstances.

5.00	APPENDICES
5.01	Appendix 1 – Flintshire Standard

6.00	LIST OF ACCESSIBLE BACKGROUND DOCUMENTS
6.01	Report to Standards Committee - 2 nd September 2019 Report to Constitution and Democratic Services - 16 th October 2019 Contact Officer: Gareth Owens, Chief Officer (Governance) Telephone: 01352 702344 E-mail: gareth.legal@flintshire.gov.uk

7.00	GLOSSARY OF TERMS
7.01	None