

## STANDARDS COMMITTEE

<b>Date of Meeting</b>	Monday, 11 January 2021
<b>Report Subject</b>	Independent Member attendance at Committee Meetings
<b>Report Author</b>	Chief Officer Governance

### **EXECUTIVE SUMMARY**

In November 2019 the Chair and Vice Chair of the Committee met with the Leader and the Chair of the Council following a best practice recommendation within the report of the Committee on Standards in Public Life in England. It was suggested at the meeting that Independent Members of the Committee should attend Council meetings and Committees in the same way that they had attended Town and Community Council meetings during the course of 2019. At the meeting of the Standards Committee on 3 February 2020 such attendance was agreed by the Committee, and it was further agreed that a rota of visits would be arranged.

There has been a period of time where Council meetings could not take place due to the restrictions arising from the COVID19 Pandemic, and until legislation was passed to allow Council meetings to be held virtually/remotely. Now that all Council meetings are fully operational and taking place as remote meetings, it is appropriate for the Committee to agree a rota of attendance for Independent Members at Council meetings and Committees.

In attending such meetings the following simple guidelines are suggested for how they are conducted for the sake of courtesy and transparency:

- 1) that there should be a published rota of attendance by Independent Members of the Committee;
- 2) that the Chair of each Committee meeting should be told specifically who will attend their meeting;
- 3) that the attendee should not speak at the meeting unless invited to do so by the Chair of the Committee, and if invited to do so should only explain the nature and purpose of the programme of attendance if invited to do so;
- 4) that the attendee should decline to give specific advice on matters under the code such as declaring interests, and should refer any such requests to the Monitoring Officer or deputy Monitoring Officer instead;
- 5) that Independent Members will not be in attendance during the consideration of any confidential reports.

## RECOMMENDATIONS

1	That the Committee agrees a rota of attendance and the guidelines for how they should be undertaken.
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## REPORT DETAILS

<b>1.00</b>	<b>EXPLAINING INDEPENDENT MEMBER ATTENDANCE AT COMMITTEE MEETINGS</b>
1.01	In November 2019 the Chair and Vice Chair of the Committee met with the Leader and the Chair of the Council following a best practice recommendation within the report of the Committee on Standards in Public Life in England. It was suggested at the meeting that Independent Members of the Committee should attend Council meetings in the same way that they had attended Town and Community Council meetings. At the meeting of the Standards Committee on 3 February 2020 such attendance was agreed by the Committee, and it was further agreed that a rota of visits would be arranged.
1.02	From the end of March 2020 there was a period of time where Council meetings could not take place due to restrictions arising from the COVID19 Pandemic. This remained the case until legislation was passed to allow Council meetings to be held virtually/remotely. Now that all Council meetings are fully operational and taking place as remote meetings it is appropriate for the Committee to agree a rota of attendance for Independent Members at Council meetings and committees.
1.03	The purpose of attendance should be looking to see whether Councillors attending meetings and Committees follow the Members' Code of Conduct, the Flintshire Standard, the Member/Officer Protocol and, at Planning Committee, the Planning Code of Practice. It was agreed that one Independent Member would attend each meeting aside from Full Council meetings, which it was agreed would be attended by two Independent Members of the Committee.
1.04	In attending such meetings the following simple guidelines are suggested for how they are conducted for the sake of courtesy and transparency: 1) that there should be a published rota of attendance by Independent Members of the Committee; 2) that the Chair of each Committee meeting should be told specifically who will attend their meeting; 3) that the attendee should not speak at the meeting unless invited to do so by the Chair of the Committee, and should only explain the nature and purpose of the programme of attendance if invited to do so; 4) that the attendee should decline to give specific advice on matters under the code such as declaring interests, and should refer any such requests to the Monitoring Officer or deputy Monitoring Officer instead; 5) that Independent Members will not be in attendance during the consideration of any confidential reports.

1.05	The Democratic Services Team Leader (Committees) has prepared a rota of the upcoming meetings between the beginning of January 2021 and the end of July 2021 for consideration by Members and to assist Independent Members of the Committee to agree who will attend which meetings and Committees.
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<b>2.00</b>	<b>RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS</b>
2.01	Preparing a rota can be achieved within available resources.

<b>3.00</b>	<b>CONSULTATIONS REQUIRED / CARRIED OUT</b>
3.01	The Chairs of all Committees will be contacted in advance to inform them of the rota and proposed attendees.

<b>4.00</b>	<b>RISK MANAGEMENT</b>
4.01	Observation of Council meetings or behaviour of Councillors by Independent Members of the Committee will help inform the work of the Committee and may reduce the risk of poor behaviour at the meeting or in the future.

<b>5.00</b>	<b>APPENDICES</b>
5.01	Appendix 1- Draft rota of meetings between the beginning of January 2021 and the end of July 2021.

<b>6.00</b>	<b>LIST OF ACCESSIBLE BACKGROUND DOCUMENTS</b>
6.01	None  <b>Contact Officer:</b> Gareth Owens, Chief Officer Governance <b>Telephone:</b> 01352 702344 <b>E-mail:</b> <a href="mailto:gareth.legal@flintshire.gov.uk">gareth.legal@flintshire.gov.uk</a>

<b>7.00</b>	<b>GLOSSARY OF TERMS</b>
7.01	None