

Statutory and Non - Statutory Guidance issued June 2023 (and updated in July 2023 and August 2023.)

Threshold Criteria - Role of Leader of Political Group -

Section 52 of the Local Government 2000 Act as amended by section 62 of the Local Government and Elections (Wales) Act 2021, requires that a leader of a political group consisting of members of a County Council or County Borough Council in Wales –

1. must take reasonable steps to promote and maintain high standards of conduct by the members of the group, and
2. must co-operate with the council's standards committee (and any sub - committee of the committee) in the exercise of the standards committee's functions.

The Statutory and Non-Statutory Guidance includes at Part 2 the requirements to establish -

“the threshold which the Standards Committee will use to establish whether it is content that Political Group Leaders have complied with the duties of the 2021 Act” .

Following discussions with Group Leaders and the Standards Committee at the Vale the following suggestions have been put forward with regard to the threshold to be used it being noted that the threshold would not have regard to historical matters which arose before the duty was in place:

1. Group Leaders to make themselves available to meet with the Monitoring Officer, Chair of the Standards Committee and Standards Committee as required,
2. Group Leaders to meet with the Standards Committee on an annual basis at the start of each Council year. However, should areas of concern arise regarding a Group during the year the relevant Group Leader may be required to attend before Standards Committee as advised by the Monitoring Officer,
3. Group Leaders to meet with the Monitoring Officer and Chair of Standards Committee on a six monthly basis,
4. Group Leaders to take reasonable steps to ensure that Members within their Group make themselves available to meet with the Monitoring Officer as required,
5. Group Leaders to take reasonable steps to ensure that Members within their Group co-operate with the Monitoring Officer and the Standards Committee when an issue is referred to the Monitoring Officer and or the Standards Committee,
6. Group Leaders to record any areas of concern in their Groups and raise them with the Monitoring Officer in a timely manner including identifying any areas requiring training by any Members of the Group,
7. Group Leaders to take reasonable steps to ensure Member attendance at mandatory training events,

8. Group Leaders to take reasonable steps to ensure that where there is a policy decision by the Council or Cabinet that this is adhered to by Members of their respective Groups,
9. Group Leaders to take reasonable steps to ensure that factually inaccurate information is not put into the public domain by their Members so as not to damage the reputation of the Council,
10. Group Leaders to ensure that the relevant DBS checks are applied for by Members, as and when required, in line with Cabinet resolution and that Members engage with the process in a timely manner,
11. Group Leaders to complete the Group Leader proforma, promoting compliance with the Code of Conduct, as required,
12. Group Leaders to support within their Group's decisions of the Standards Committee and /or Adjudication Panel for Wales.
13. Group Leaders to support within their Groups decisions of the Local Dispute Resolution Panel.