

Meeting of:	<b>Standards Committee</b>
Date of Meeting:	<b>Thursday, 30 January 2025</b>
Relevant Scrutiny Committee:	All Scrutiny Committees
Report Title:	Standards Committee Forward Work Programme
Purpose of Report:	To present to Members the Forward Work Programme for the Municipal Year 2025/26
Report Owner:	V. Davidson – Monitoring Officer / Head of Legal and Democratic Services
Responsible Officer:	K. Bowen – Principal Democratic and Scrutiny Services Committee Officer
Elected Member and Officer Consultation:	This report does not require consultation to be undertaken
Policy Framework:	This is a matter for decision by the Standards Committee
<p>Executive Summary:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The Standards Committee agreed to establish a Forward Work Programme for the Committee in March 2018 and attached to the report at Appendix 1 is the suggested Forward Work Programme for the Municipal Year 2025/26 for Committee's consideration.</li> </ul>	

## **Recommendation**

1. That Members agree the Forward Work Programme attached at Appendix 1 to this report and / or make any amendments or additions as required.

## **Reason for Recommendation**

1. To discuss and agree a Forward Work Programme.

## **1. Background**

- 1.1** The role and function of the Standards Committee is:

- (a) To promote and maintain high standards of conduct by Councillors, Co-Opted Members and church and parent governor representatives of the Council;
- (b) To assist Councillors, Co-Opted Members and church and parent governor representatives of the Council to observe the Members' Code of Conduct;
- (c) To advise the Council on the adoption or revision of the Members' Code of Conduct;
- (d) To monitor the operation of the Members' Code of Conduct;
- (e) To advise, train or arrange to train Councillors, Co-Opted Members and church and parent governor representatives of this Council on matters relating to the Members' Code of Conduct;
- (f) To grant dispensations to Councillors, Co-Opted Members and church and parent governor representatives of this Council from requirements relating to interests set out in the Members' Code of Conduct.
- (g) To deal with any reports from a case tribunal or interim case tribunal, and any report from the Monitoring Officer on any matter referred to that Officer by the Public Services Ombudsman for Wales; and
- (h) To exercise (a) to (g) above in relation to the Community Councils wholly or mainly in its area and the Members of those Community Councils.

## **2. Key Issues for Consideration**

- 2.1** Attached at Appendix 1 to the report is a suggested Forward Work Programme for the Municipal Year 2025/26 for the Committee's consideration and approval. The proposed dates for the Council's timetable of meetings for 25/26 ( following discussion with the Chair in relation to dates for Standards Committee meetings) are scheduled to be considered by Cabinet in February 2025 and as soon as the dates are confirmed Members of the Standards Committee will be advised accordingly and the dates uploaded to the Council's website.
- 2.2** Standards Committee Members are reminded that the Council's Annual Meeting is scheduled to take place on 7<sup>th</sup> May, 2025 and the appointment of the Chair

and Vice-Chair of Standards Committee will be dealt with at the first meeting of the Standards Committee following the Annual Meeting.

- 2.3** Having regard to the provision at Section 63 (which came into force on 5<sup>th</sup> May, 2022) of the Local Government and Elections (Wales) Act 2021 that as soon as reasonably practicable after the end of each financial year a standards committee must make an annual report to the Local Authority.
- 2.4** It is suggested that the Annual Report for 2024/25 be presented to the Standards Committee following the Council's Annual Meeting) on 7<sup>th</sup> May, 2025 and reported to Full Council as appropriate.

### **Standards of Conduct Expected by Member, Local Dispute Resolution Procedure and Civility in Public Life**

- 2.5** Within the work programme reference has been made to a report in respect of a review of the Council's Protocol 'Standards of Conduct expected by Members under Section 19 of the Council's Constitution and the Council's Local Dispute Resolution Procedure (LDRP) for dealing with low level allegations of breaches of the Members Code of Conduct and the Vale of Glamorgan Council's Protocol. This review having been agreed by Full Council on 2<sup>nd</sup> December 2024 to take place.
- 2.6** However, the Chair of the Standards Committee and the Monitoring Officer following recent discussions with Group Leaders having regard to the Group Leader duty under the Local Government and Elections (Wales ) Act 2021 advised that a review by the Welsh Local Government Association in relation to on going work by the Local Government association regarding Civility in Public life is pending. The All Wales Monitoring Officer Group are also due to consider the current LDRP process with a view to making suggestions for amendments to the procedure.
- 2.7** It has therefore been suggested that the Standards Committee awaits the outcomes of discussions / suggestions in relation to the above matters prior to any review being undertaken, neverthe less update reports on such matters have been included in the attached Forward work programme in order for the Standards Committee to be able to monitor progress.

### **Low Level Concerns / Complaints**

- 2.8** Some Local Authorities in Wales statistically report the numbers of low level concerns / complaints reported to and dealt with by the Monitoring officer throughout the year to their Standards Committee. The Monitoring Officer in conjunction with the Chair has considered that such concerns/ complaints should also be reported to the Vale Council's Standards Committee. It is therefore intended that the number of concerns is reported to the Committee on a regular basis to aid discussion in relation to any Code of Conduct matters.
- 2.9** Committee is requested to consider and approve the proposed work programme for 2025/26.

### **3. How do proposals evidence the Five Ways of Working and contribute to our Well-being Objectives?**

**3.1** As detailed in paragraph 1.1 of this report.

### **4. Climate Change and Nature Implications**

**4.1** There are no climate change or nature implications as a direct consequence of this report.

### **5. Resources and Legal Considerations**

#### **Financial**

**5.1** There are no financial implications as a direct consequence of this report.

#### **Employment**

**5.2** There are no employment implications as a direct consequence of this report.

#### **Legal (Including Equalities)**

**5.3** The Council has a duty to establish and maintain a Standards Committee as defined by legislation as set out in the Standards Committees Rules and Regulations 2001 and the Standards Committee (Wales) Amendment Regulations 2006.

### **6. Background Papers**

None.

**STANDARDS COMMITTEE****FORWARD WORK PROGRAMME FOR THE MUNICIPAL YEAR 2024/25**

<b>Date of Meeting</b>	<b>Report Title</b>
<p>Dtc May, 2025</p> <p>The Council's draft calendar of meetings is to be reported to Cabinet in February 2025.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Appointment of Chair and Vice-Chair of Standards Committee</li> <li>• Dispensation Applications (if any)</li> <li>• Feedback report following any observations at Vale of Glamorgan Council and Town and Community Council meetings</li> <li>• Update report of Monitoring Officer meeting with Clerks of Town and Community Councils</li> <li>• Update report following All Wales Monitoring Officer Group meeting</li> <li>• Update report regarding any Low level concerns/ complaints reported to the Monitoring Officer</li> <li>• Correspondence with the Public Services Ombudsman for Wales</li> <li>• Proposed Review of Local Dispute Resolution Procedure and Update report on review with Local Government association and Welsh Local Government Association re Civility in Public Life</li> </ul>
<p>Dtc July, 2025</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Dispensation Applications (if any)</li> <li>• Feedback report following observations at Vale of Glamorgan Council and Town and Community Council meetings</li> <li>• Update report following meeting of Standards Committee Forum June 2024</li> <li>• Draft Standards Committee Annual Report (together with feedback from Political Group Leaders on compliance with section 62 of the Local Government ad Elections (Wales) At 2021)</li> <li>• Internal Audit reports, if any</li> <li>• Correspondence with the Public Services Ombudsman for Wales</li> </ul>
<p>Dtc September, 2025</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Dispensation Applications (if any)</li> <li>• Feedback report following observations at Vale of Glamorgan Council and Town and Community Council meetings</li> <li>• Report on Protocol - Standard of Conduct Expected by Members and Civility in Public Life (Update)</li> <li>• Correspondence with the Public Services Ombudsman for Wales</li> <li>• Update report regarding any Low level concerns/ complaints reported to the Monitoring Officer</li> </ul>

Dtc November, 2025	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Dispensation Applications (if any)</li> <li>• Feedback report following observations at Town and Community Council Committee meetings</li> <li>• Correspondence with the Public Services Ombudsman for Wales</li> <li>• Update re Standards Conference Wales 2024</li> <li>• Update report of Monitoring Officer meeting with Clerks of Town and Community Councils</li> </ul>
Dtc January, 2026	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Dispensation Applications (if any)</li> <li>• Feedback report following observations at Vale of Glamorgan Council and Town and Community Council meetings</li> <li>• Correspondence with the Public Services Ombudsman for Wales</li> </ul>
Dtc March, 2026	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Dispensation Applications (if any)</li> <li>• Feedback report following observations at Town and Community Council meetings</li> <li>• Correspondence with the Public Services Ombudsman for Wales</li> <li>• Standards Committee Forward Work Programme</li> </ul>

**N.B.**

- (1) Adjudication Panel for Wales Annual Report (to be presented when available)
- (2) Public Services Ombudsman for Wales Annual Report (to be presented when available)