

Standards Committee meeting with Group Leaders to discuss the Group Leaders duties - 3 May and 12 June 2023

The following is a summary of the main points from these meetings. The Standards Committee welcomed the opportunity to meet with the Group Leaders, either in person or online. The Standards Committee agreed that this was a reasonable first step and that both it and the Group Leaders are in a learning process.

Issues for consideration by the Standards Committee

Although the new duty is a responsibility of Group Leaders, the Committee may wish to consider inviting the Chief Whip of a party, where one exists and the Chief Whip is responsible for conduct issues, to attend the meeting with the Group Leader to support them when discussions relate to Code of Conduct issues.

Relationship between the Standards Committee and Group Leaders needs to develop. A mid-year review meeting may be appropriate rather than leaving issues to an annual meeting.

Review the form and also the process for the annual meeting with Group Leaders to meet the individual needs of the Group Leaders. The Monitoring Officer will discuss the content of the form with colleagues in Wales.

Consider developing a set of questions to ask all Group Leaders at these meetings, so consistency.

Group Leaders are generally reactive to any Code of Conduct issues raised, rather than being proactive in Groups.

The role of the Standards Committee to develop members' understanding. The Committee will review the information provided in its Annual Report.

The Monitoring Officer will add an item on the agenda of the next Group Leaders meeting seeking their feedback on this first meeting with the Standards Committee.

A Guide for Group Leaders on what could be included on Group meeting agendas, which would assist them in their duties - issues the Standards Committee consider as good practice for discussion at Group meetings.

Independent Members will observe Council meetings on a rota to observe Code of Conduct, standards and ethical issues at meetings.

Issues for consideration in other areas:

No reference to pastoral care, wellbeing of members or continuing professional development – refer to Democratic Services Committee.

Training on effective behaviour and ways of asking questions and constructively challenging a policy rather than the individual should be considered – refer to Democratic Services Committee.

Information needs to be provided for anyone considering standing at an election regarding the role of a councillor and what it entails and signposting candidates to

the Code of Conduct and Ethical requirements – refer to Democratic Services Committee and Elections Section. Prior to the 2022 election information on such issues was made available on the Council website for candidates.

Difficulties completing online training on the NHS eLearning platform - refer to Democratic Services Committee.

Councillor attendance at meetings – information on how Group Leaders access members' attendance at meetings on the Moderngov system will be sent to them.

Issues to add to the Member development programme:

Role of the Standards Committee and Ombudsman – discuss requirements with the Monitoring Officer.

Training & skills development – Welsh language and information on bilingualism – discuss requirements with member and Welsh Language Officer.