

STANDARDS AND ETHICS COMMITTEE:

9th FEBRUARY 2022

**REPORT OF THE DIRECTOR OF GOVERNANCE & LEGAL SERVICES
AND MONITORING OFFICER**

OBSERVATION OF MEETINGS

Reason for this Report

1. To allow the Committee to consider the feedback provided by Committee members following observation of meetings of the Council and Community Councils.

Background

2. The Committee has agreed that observation of Council, Committee and Community Council meetings is helpful for members, in particular the Independent Members of the Committee, to gain experience of the Council and Committee processes, and to provide opportunities for first hand feedback to the Committee of any issues relating to standards and conduct.
3. The Committee has approved a feedback proforma for use by the Members of the Committee when observing meetings. Members have been asked to complete a form for each meeting they attend and submit it for consideration at the next appropriate Committee meeting.

Issues

4. Meeting observation feedback has been received from two Committee members in respect of the full Council meeting held on 27th January 2022. The completed observation forms are appended as **Appendix A**.
5. Members will note that the meeting observed was held virtually (remotely) using video conferencing facilities, in line with arrangements made under the Local Government and Elections (Wales) Act 2021, which requires all authorities (including principal authorities and community councils) to make provision to allow remote attendance at their meetings.
6. Members will also note that the feedback is positive in relation to general standards of conduct as well as the management of the meeting.

7. The feedback in relation to this meeting has also been shared with the Chair of Council, for his information.
8. In relation to the observation about declarations of personal interests, the Committee may wish to note that declarations made at meetings for the first time, if they are not included in the Member's Register of Interests, are published separately on the Councillor's webpage (under 'Declarations at Meetings'). Committee Services staff may offer assistance, but the responsibility for providing written confirmation of declared interests remains with the Member concerned, in accordance with the duties imposed under the Code of Conduct.
9. In relation to the feedback provided by both Committee members regarding a reference made by one Councillor about having been treated in a racist manner in the past, the Committee will note that the Leader of the Council asked the Councillor to provide him with any evidence of such treatment. The Monitoring Officer can also confirm that, as the allegation referred to officers, the Chief Executive, as Head of Paid Service, has written to the Councillor asking him to provide further information to support his allegations, so that they may be properly investigated. The Committee should note that allegations regarding staff misconduct are governed by employment law and the Council's disciplinary policies and procedures; and determination of such complaints does not fall within the remit of the Standards and Ethics Committee.
10. Details of all forthcoming Council, Committee and Cabinet meetings are listed in the calendar of meetings, which is regularly circulated to Standards and Ethics Committee members and is published on the Council's website, here: <http://cardiff.moderngov.co.uk/mgCalendarMonthView.aspx?GL=1&bcr=1&LLL=0> Independent members, and in particular, newly appointed members, are encouraged to observe a full Council meeting and a Committee meeting.
11. Details of forthcoming Community Council meetings are published on the respective Councils' websites. Members are similarly encouraged to observe a Community Council meeting. Members are advised to contact the Clerk to confirm the meeting is going ahead and to check arrangements for attending. Community Council website links and Clerks contact details are accessible here: <https://www.cardiff.gov.uk/ENG/Your-Council/Voting-and-elections/Community-councils/Pages/Community-councils.aspx>

Legal Implications

12. There are no direct legal implications arising from the content of this report.

Financial Implications

13. There are no direct financial implications arising from this report.

RECOMMENDATION

The Committee is recommended to:

- (1) Note the meeting observation feedback received, as set out in **Appendix A** to the report and make any comments considered appropriate; and
- (2) Continue to observe meetings of the Council, Committees and Community Councils and provide feedback to the Committee.

Davina Fiore

Director of Governance and Legal Services and Monitoring Officer

3rd February 2022

Appendix

Appendix A Meeting Observation Feedback Forms for full Council meeting held on 27th January 2022

Background papers

Standards & Ethics Committee report, 'Observation of Meetings, July 2021