

STANDARDS AND ETHICS COMMITTEE:

14 FEBRUARY 2023

**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.
4. At its last meeting on 25th October 2022, the Committee considered feedback provided in respect of observation of the September 2022 Council meeting.

Issues

5. Meeting observation feedback has been received in respect of the Council meeting held on 27th October 2022. The completed observation form is appended as **Appendix A**.
6. Members will be pleased to note that the feedback in relation to the management of the meeting and clarity of decision making is positive, and that no conduct or standards and ethics issues were noted.
7. However, certain issues are raised in relation to the ability to hear proceedings and the availability of papers. This feedback has been shared with the Head of Democratic Services, who has responded to confirm the following:

- (i) The technical equipment for hybrid meetings is relatively new and certain teething issues have been encountered, which have since been addressed, partly by all meeting participants developing familiarity with using the new system, and partly through upgrades to the system designed to prevent their recurrence. During the October 2022 Council meeting, technical issues occurred during the meeting which required the remote part of the meeting to be restarted during the break, which meant that the remote attendees needed to re-join the meeting after the systems were rebooted. Resolving these issues took slightly longer than expected, causing a longer break than advised by the Lord Mayor. The restart of the remote part of the meeting also created a delay with the re-activation of the webcast. However, the webcast was back online as quickly as possible and upgrades made since to the system should prevent a recurrence of this problem.
- (ii) Circulation of exempted documents is undertaken within the Modern.gov system when the agenda is published. Access is provided to users who have registered their device with Democratic Services. Authorised users can then view the exempted reports on the Modern.gov app or intranet without the need for circulation by email. However, as it transpired during the meeting that some Members had not seen the exempted documents, they were circulated again via email and the item was moved to later in the meeting, to ensure all councillors had the opportunity to look at them before voting on the matter.

8. The feedback has also been shared with the Lord Mayor, as Chair of Council.

9. 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:

[Monthly meetings calendar - February 2023 : Cardiff Council \(moderngov.co.uk\)](https://www.moderngov.co.uk/2023/02/01/monthly-meetings-calendar-february-2023-cardiff-council)

Independent members, and in particular, newly appointed members, are encouraged to observe a full Council meeting and a Committee meeting.

10. 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:

[Community councils contact details : Cardiff Council \(moderngov.co.uk\)](https://www.moderngov.co.uk/2023/02/01/community-councils-contact-details-cardiff-council)

Legal Implications

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

Financial Implications

12. There are no direct financial implications arising from this report. Any relevant payments and allowances associated with observing meetings would be payable in accordance with the rates set by the Independent Remuneration Panel for Wales, and met from the allocated budget.

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

7 February 2023

Appendix

Appendix A Meeting Observation Feedback Form for full Council meeting held on 27th October 2022 (DM)

Background papers

[Standards and Ethics Committee report, 'Observation of Meetings', 25th October 2022](#)