

STANDARDS AND ETHICS COMMITTEE:

7 NOVEMBER 2023

REPORT OF THE INTERIM 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 meeting on 25th July 2023, the Committee considered feedback provided in respect of observation of the Annual Council meeting held in May 2023, Radyr and Morganstown Community Council meeting held on 22nd June 2023 and Old St Mellons Community Council meeting held on 13th July 2023.

Issues

5. Meeting observation feedback has been received in respect of the St Fagans Community Council meeting held on 4th September 2023 (**Appendix A**).
6. Members will be pleased to note that no concerns have been raised in relation to Member conduct, standards and ethics issues or the management of the meeting.
7. The feedback has been shared with the Clerk to St. Fagans Community Council for information.

8. In relation to the feedback about remote access to the meeting, the Committee may wish to note that Community Councils are subject to the same requirements as principal authorities (County Councils) to make provision for remote attendance at Council meetings. However, for Community Council meetings, the requirement is for meeting attendees to be able to hear and be heard by other attendees (without a requirement for attendees to be able to see and be seen by other attendees – which applies to full Council meetings of a principal authority). The Committee will also be mindful of resource constraints for Community Councils, reflecting their comparatively smaller budgets, which will have a bearing on their IT capacity.
9. In relation to the observation on ‘Agenda and reports availability’, namely that: ‘Agenda and Minutes provided prior to the meeting, although no reports available’, Members may recall considering this issue previously (in December 2020 and July 2021). The legal requirements for Community Councils are to publish electronically the agenda and minutes of the proceedings of the council’s meetings and, ‘in so far as reasonably practicable, any documents relating to the business to be transacted at the meeting’ (sections 55 and 57 of the Local Government and Democracy (Wales) Act 2013). The Committee has made a recommendation that any reports relating to business items to be discussed at the meeting should be published, as a matter of best practice, to facilitate transparency and public engagement and the Monitoring Officer discussed this issue with the Community Council Clerks at one of their regular meetings in 2021.
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: [Monthly meetings calendar - October 2023 : Cardiff Council \(modern.gov.co.uk\)](#) Independent 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: [Community councils contact details : Cardiff Council \(modern.gov.co.uk\)](#)

Legal Implications

12. Relevant legal provisions are set out in the body of the report. There are no direct legal implications arising from the recommendations of this report.

Financial Implications

13. 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,

reflected in the Members' Remuneration Schedule (in Part 6 of the Constitution), 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**, 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.

Debbie Marles
Interim Monitoring Officer
1st November 2023

Appendix

Appendix A Meeting Observation Feedback Form for St Fagans Community Council meeting held on 4th September 2023 (AH)

Background papers

[Standards and Ethics Committee report, 'Observation of Meetings', 25th July 2023:](#)
[CITY AND COUNTY OF CARDIFF \(moderngov.co.uk\)](http://CITY.AND.COUNTY.OF.CARDIFF.moderngov.co.uk)