

Committee: **Council**

Date of Meeting: **21st March, 2024**

Report Subject: **Annual Report of the Ethics & Standards Committee**

Portfolio Holder: **Councillor Stephen Thomas, Leader of the Council/
Cabinet Member Corporate Overview & Performance**

Report Submitted by: **Andrea Jones, Head of Legal & Corporate
Compliance/Monitoring Officer**

Reporting Pathway								
Directorate Management Team	Corporate Leadership Team	Portfolio Holder / Chair	Governance and Audit Committee	Democratic Services Committee	Scrutiny Committee	Cabinet	Council	Other (please state)
	X						21.3.24	X Standards Committee

1. **Purpose of the Report**
To provide Council with the Annual Report of the Ethics & Standards Committee for the year 31st December 2022 to 31st December 2023.
2. **Scope and Background**
 - 2.1 The Local Government Act 2000 requires the Council to establish a Standards Committee to promote and maintain high standards of conduct and probity in the conduct of Councillors. The Ethics & Standards Committee has been in operation since November 2000.

The Local Government & Elections (Wales) Act 2021 has introduced a mandatory requirement for Standards Committees to present an Annual Report to full Council. This statutory report must describe how the Committee has discharged its functions during the previous year and must include a summary of any reports, actions or recommendations made or referred to the Committee. In addition, it should be noted next year's Annual Report must include an assessment of the extent to which leaders of political groups on the Council have complied with their new duties to promote and maintain high standards of conduct within their groups.
3. **Options for Recommendation**
 - 3.1 Option 1: Council considers the report and confirms that the statutory duty imposed by the Act (outlined above) has been met.

Option 2: Council considers the report and provides specific comments and/or suggestions prior to confirming that the statutory duty has been met.

4. **Evidence of how this topic supports the achievement of the Corporate Plan / Statutory Responsibilities / Blaenau Gwent Well-being Plan**
- 4.1 As outlined above, there is a statutory duty for the Ethics & Standards Committee to report annually to Council on its work during the previous twelve months.
5. **Implications Against Each Option**
- 5.1 ***Impact on Budget (short and long term impact)***
There is no impact upon budget arising out of this report.
- 5.2 ***Risk including Mitigating Actions***
N/A
- 5.3 ***Legal***
The Local Government & Elections (Wales) Act 2021 imposes a duty upon Standards Committees to produce an annual report and for the report to be presented to full Council within three months.
- 5.4 ***Human Resources***
There are no human resource implications associated with the report.
6. **Supporting Evidence**
- 6.1 ***Performance Information and Data***
Data is contained within the report which is pertinent to the work of the Ethics & Standards Committee.
- 6.2 ***Expected outcome for the public***
The report provides valuable information to the Council and the Public on the functions of the Standards Committee, and how this is closely connected to the promotion of good standards in public life.
- 6.3 ***Involvement (consultation, engagement, participation)***
N/A
- 6.4 ***Thinking for the Long term (forward planning)***
This information will be presented annually to Council.
- 6.5 ***Preventative focus***
N/A
- 6.6 ***Collaboration / partnership working***
N/A
- 6.7 ***Integration (across service areas)***
N/A
- 6.8 ***Decarbonisation and Reducing Carbon Emissions***
N/A

6.9 ***Integrated Impact Assessment***

N/A

7. **Monitoring Arrangements**

The Monitoring Officer will monitor compliance of the reporting statutory duty.

Background Documents /Electronic Links

- Appendix 1 – The Annual Report of the Blaenau Gwent Ethics & Standards Committee 2022/2023.