

Meeting of:	<b>Standards Committee</b>
Date of Meeting:	<b>Thursday, 20 November 2025</b>
Relevant Scrutiny Committee:	No Relevant Scrutiny Committee
Report Title:	<b>Monitoring Officer Meetings with Clerks of Town and Community Councils.</b>
Purpose of Report:	To provide the Committee with an update of the meeting held on 11 <sup>th</sup> November 2025 undertaken between the Monitoring Officer and Clerks of Town and Community Councils.
Report Owner:	V. Davidson, Monitoring Officer/Head of Legal and Democratic Services
Responsible Officer:	A. Rudman, Principal Democratic and Scrutiny Services Officer
Elected Member and Officer Consultation:	This report does not require consultation to be undertaken
Policy Framework:	This is a matter for decision by the Standards Committee
<p>Executive Summary:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• One of the roles of the Standards Committee is to promote and maintain high standards of conduct by Councillors, Co-opted Members and Church and Parent Governor representatives of the Council.</li> <li>• To assist in this process, the Monitoring Officer has held meetings with Clerks of Town and Community Councils to provide opportunities for discussion on matters of mutual concern, to have regard to the principles of standards in public life and to provide networking opportunities.</li> <li>• Reports of the Clerks meetings with the Monitoring Officer are provided to the Standards Committee following the meetings taking place with the last meeting having been held on 11<sup>th</sup> November 2025.</li> </ul>	

## **Recommendation**

1. T H A T the report in respect of the Monitoring Officer's meeting with Clerks held on 11<sup>th</sup> November 2025 be noted.

## **Reason for Recommendation**

1. Having regard to discussions held at the Monitoring Officer and Clerks of Town and Community Councils meeting on 11<sup>th</sup> November 2025.

### **1. Background**

- 1.1 The Monitoring Officer (MO) has previously informed the Standards Committee of the intention to hold six monthly meetings with Clerks of Town and Community Councils (TCCs) to provide a formal opportunity to discuss matters of mutual concern, to provide open discussion and networking opportunities.
- 1.2 In April 2024 Ms Victoria Davidson was appointed as the Monitoring Officer/Head of Legal and Democratic Services for the Vale of Glamorgan Council. As such, and during that transition period, an MO ad TCC meeting was not held in May/June 2025 as expected.
- 1.3 Prior to the 11<sup>th</sup> November 2025 meeting, the last MO and TCC meeting was held at 2pm on the 27<sup>th</sup> November 2024 via Microsoft Teams. Matters discussed at the 2024 meeting were as follows:
  - Welcome by Monitoring Officer Vicky Davidson and introducing Chair of Vale of Glamorgan Standards Committee,
  - Apologies,
  - Applications for Dispensation to the Standards Committee,
  - Public Services Ombudsman Annual Report,
  - Adjudication Panel for Wales Annual Report,
  - IRPW draft Annual Report,
  - Observations of Vale of Glamorgan and Town and Community Council meetings,
  - Any matters Town and Community Councils wish to raise, and
  - Any other Business.
- 1.4 Feedback received following previous MO and TCC meetings was that meetings were both useful and informative, and a frank exchange of views shared, which Clerks were grateful to the MO for hosting.

### **2. Key Issues for Consideration**

- 2.1 The last MO and TCC Meeting was held on the 11<sup>th</sup> November 2025. The agenda for that meeting is set out in **Appendix 1** to this report. The session was held to

support improved communication, governance practice and understanding of ethical standards across the sector. The meeting focused on strengthening early intervention in member conduct issues, improving complaint handling at the local level, and supporting Clerks in their advisory role.

- 2.2** Slides delivered by the MO during the meeting are also available at **Appendix 2** to this report.
- 2.3** Due to some Clerks unavailability to attend the meeting it was agreed by all present that the meeting be recorded for future viewing. A copy of the recording has since been forwarded to all Clerks for their information.
- 2.4** The meeting emphasised the value of addressing low-level conduct issues locally before escalation to the Ombudsman, in line with the Model Local Resolution Protocol promoted by One Voice Wales. Clerks were encouraged to support Members in addressing concerns constructively and to seek early advice where necessary. The meeting highlighted that complaints involving disrespect (Code paragraph 4(b)) and vexatious or frivolous behaviour (paragraph 6(1)(d)) are commonly suitable for local resolution, unless there is evidence of persistent or targeted conduct that requires referral.
- 2.5** Updates were provided on recent themes identified by the Public Services Ombudsman for Wales and the Adjudication Panel for Wales, including standards of behaviour in online and hybrid meetings, tone in communication (including on social media), and maintaining respectful debate.
- 2.6** Clerks were reminded of the role of dispensations and the criteria under which Members may apply to the Standards Committee to participate in business where they have a personal interest. Delegates were encouraged to ensure Members are aware of the process and apply in writing where needed.
- 2.7** The meeting also included an overview of current training opportunities provided by One Voice Wales, the Society of Local Council Clerks, Audit Wales, and the Monitoring Officer. Training priorities include the Code of Conduct, financial governance, meeting management and complaint handling. Clerks were encouraged to plan induction and refresher training in anticipation of the 2027 election cycle.
- 2.8** Further governance and financial management expectations were outlined, reflecting findings from recent Auditor General reports. Key areas for improvement across the sector include consistent record keeping, clear delegation arrangements, transparent decision making, budget monitoring, internal control frameworks and meaningful internal audit.
- 2.9** The meeting also summarised current Welsh Government policy work on strengthening governance and ethical standards in Town and Community Councils. This includes consideration of mandatory Code of Conduct training, enhanced local resolution arrangements, work on addressing abuse and intimidation in public life, and potential review of audit and oversight arrangements. Engagement on these proposals will continue through 2026, with changes expected to be phased and consultative.

- 2.10** Overall, the discussion reinforced the shared aim of promoting constructive culture, responsible leadership, and resilient governance arrangements within Town and Community Councils. Clerks expressed support for continued joint sessions.

### **3. How do proposals evidence the Five Ways of Working and contribute to our Well-being Objectives?**

- 3.1** The role of the Standards Committee is to promote and maintain high standards of conduct by Councillors, Co-opted Members and Church and Parent Governor representatives. It was intended that MO and TCC meetings aim to promote the role of the Committee.

### **4. Climate Change and Nature Implications**

- 4.1** None as a direct result of this report.

### **5. Resources and Legal Considerations**

#### **Financial**

- 5.1** There are no direct financial implications as a result of this report.

#### **Employment**

- 5.2** There are no direct employment implications as a result of this report.

#### **Legal (Including Equalities)**

- 5.3** There are no direct legal implications as a result of this report, however it is noted that the TCCs in the Vale of Glamorgan who subscribe to One Voice Wales are able to obtain legal and generic advice as required as a result of their subscription.

### **6. Background Papers**

Appendix 1 – Meeting Agenda: 11<sup>th</sup> November 2025

Appendix 2 – Meeting Slides: 11<sup>th</sup> November 2025

Notice of Meeting: **CLERKS OF TOWN AND COMMUNITY COUNCILS**

Date and time:  
of meeting **TUESDAY, 11<sup>TH</sup> NOVEMBER, 2025 AT 2.00 P.M.**

Venue: **REMOTE MEETING**  
[Microsoft Teams](#)

## **AGENDA**

- 1. Welcome and Introductions –**
  - Opening remarks and apologies for absence,
  - Overview of meeting objectives.
- 2. Updates on the Members' Code of Conduct (key learning points for Clerks) –**
  - Handling low-level complaints locally before escalation,
  - Local resolution and mediation approaches,
  - Standards of conduct – overview of recent issues and best practice – Public Service Ombudsman for Wales (PSOW) and Adjudication Panel for Wales (APW),
  - Updates on Declarations of Interest and observations from the Standards Committee,
  - Feedback from Independent Member observations.
- 3. Training and Development –**

Training opportunities for Clerks and Members on:

  - Standards of conduct,
  - Governance, finance and ethical leadership.
- 4. Governance, Transparency and Good Practice –**
  - Sharing MCC's recent and upcoming governance changes (minutes, decision notices, etc.);
  - Discussion on how learning can be transferred to Town and Community Councils;
  - Auditor General for Wales – key points from recent reports on governance and financial management of Town and Community Councils.
- 5. Welsh Government and Legislative Updates –**

Legal and regulatory updates including:

- Welsh Government consultation on proposed changes to the Local Government and Elections (Wales) Act 2021 – hybrid meetings,
  - Welsh Government workshop on governance of Town and Community Councils in Wales
  - Other relevant Welsh Government updates.
- 6. Collaboration and Communication –**
- Strengthening the relationship between the Principal Council and the Town and Community Council sector,
  - Sharing best practice on community engagement and communication,
  - Feedback from Town and Community Council self-assessment consultation – challenges and opportunities,
  - Community Liaison Committee – initial discussion on reviewing its role and purpose (and Request For Consideration process).
- 7. Local Issues and Emerging Themes –**  
Opportunity for Clerks to raise current challenges and priorities, including:
- Planning consultations and call-in timescales,
  - Replacement Local Development Plan (RLDP),
  - Community assets – updates via Assets Board workstream,
  - Public Services Board (PSB) and Vale of Glamorgan related matters,
  - Updates on Place Plans (including Barry Town Council's ongoing plan).
- 8. Themes for Future Agendas –**  
Identifying recurring issues, capacity needs, and topics for deeper discussion at future meetings.
- 9. Any Other Business.**
- 10. Date of Next Meeting (Expected in six months time).**

Rob Thomas  
Chief Executive

28<sup>th</sup> October, 2025.

Distribution:

All Vale of Glamorgan Town and Community Council Clerks  
V. Davidson (Monitoring Officer / Head of Legal and Democratic Services)  
J. Cass (Deputy Monitoring Officer)  
R. Hendicott (Chair of Standards Committee)  
A. Rudman (Principal Democratic and Scrutiny Services Officer)  
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# T&CC Clerks Meeting





# Strong Communities with a Bright Future





# Welcome and Introductions

## Overview of meeting objectives





# Updates on the Member Code of Conduct

- Handling low-level complaints locally before escalation
- Local resolution and mediation approaches
- Standards of conduct – recent issues and best practice – PSOW and APW
- Updates on declarations of interest and Standards Committee observations
- Feedback from Independent Member observations

# Training and Development



TRAINING OPPORTUNITIES  
FOR CLERKS AND MEMBERS



- STANDARDS OF CONDUCT



- GOVERNANCE FINANCE  
AND ETHICAL LEADERSHIP

# Vale 2030



Creating great places to live, work and visit



Respecting and celebrating the environment



Giving everyone a good start in life



Supporting and protecting those who need us



Being the best Council we can be

**Our missions to: Tackle climate & nature emergencies, poverty & inequalities**





# Working with Town and Community Councils

# Existing frameworks & relationships

- Formal link between Members of TCCs and Vale of Glamorgan Council
- Monitoring Officer support
- Meetings with TCC Clerks
- Town & Community Council Charter (2019)
- Public Services Board representation and TCC Liaison meetings







## **Governance Transparency and Good Practice**

**Sharing MCC governance changes (minutes, decision notices etc) – *21<sup>st</sup> Century Democratic Services***

**Transfer learning to TCC's Auditor General for Wales – key point on governance and financial management**



# 21<sup>ST</sup> CENTURY DEMOCRATIC SERVICES

Overview of how Democratic Services will be embracing digital technology to support Members and Council in fulfilling role.

*NB This is not an exhaustive list and is improvement activity that sits alongside business as usual and wider governance improvements activity.*

## FORMS

Register of Interests

Request for Public  
Consideration Form  
Call in Profoma

## POWERBI

Scrutiny Recommendations  
Tracker

Council Motions Tracker

Members Training Overview

## DECISION MAKING PROCESS

Committee Report  
Template  
Minutes  
Cabinet Clearance

## WEBSITE

Public webpage  
StaffNet  
MemberNet  
Council YouTube

# Improving Engagement in Democratic Functions

Potential Opportunities to Collaborate or Share Learning?

Youth Voice

Co-Option

Petition Scheme

Social Media

Participation Strategy



# WG and other updates



PSOW updates



WG workshop on governance  
of C&TC's Wales



WG updates for the sector

# Existing frameworks & relationships

- Formal link between Members of TCCs and Vale of Glamorgan Council
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**Local Issues and Emerging themes**

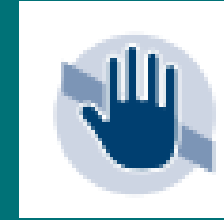
**Planning Consultations**

**Replacement Local Development Plan**

**Community Assets Board updates**

**PSB and Vale of Glamorgan related matters**

**Place Plans updates**







**Possible next topics**





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