

Report to	<b>North Wales Fire Authority</b>
Date	<b>15 April 2024</b>
Lead Officer	<b>Gareth Owens, Clerk</b>
Contact Officer	<b>Gareth Owens (01745 535286)</b>
Subject	<b>Annual Report 2023/24</b>



## **PURPOSE OF REPORT**

- 1 To receive the annual report of the Standards Committee (the Committee).

## **EXECUTIVE SUMMARY**

- 2 The Committee's nineteenth annual report includes a summary of its work during the financial year 2023/24.

## **RECOMMENDATIONS**

- 3 Members are asked to:
  - i) receive the annual report of the Standards Committee

## **OBSERVATIONS FROM THE EXECUTIVE PANEL/AUDIT COMMITTEE**

- 4 The annual report, being the Committee's account of its own activities over the last 12 months, has not been considered by the Executive Panel or Audit Committee.

## **BACKGROUND**

- 5 The Standards Committee has produced annual reports since its inception. Since 2021 it has also been a statutory duty to produce such a report.

## **INFORMATION**

- 6 The Standards Committee's annual report for the year 2023/24, is attached at Appendix 1.

- 7 Welsh Government has issued guidance on the production of such reports which is attached at Appendix 2. The Authority will note that the draft report complies with the requirements of the guidance as to the content which should be included in such reports.
- 8 The Committee continues to review the codes and protocols within the Constitution making recommendations where they need to be updated. During the year it has recommended updates to the gifts and hospitality protocol, the protocol on member/officer relations and the Councillors' Code of Conduct.
- 9 The Committee considers the findings of the Public Services Ombudsman for Wales (PSOW), as well as her annual report and the annual report of the Adjudication Panel for Wales. Where these documents contain lessons that could help to steer councillors away from poor behaviour, the Committee has, via the clerk, shared those messages.
- 10 The Committee also monitors member attendance on behalf of the authority and again, acting through the clerk, raises with councillors where their attendance has dipped below 50%.

## IMPLICATIONS

Wellbeing Objectives	Considered not relevant
Budget for 2023/24	The annual report can be produced within budget
Legal	The Committee has a duty under section 63 Local Government Act 2021 to produce an annual report, which must be considered by the fire authority within 3 months of receipt.
Staffing	Considered not relevant
Equalities/Human Rights/ Welsh Language	The report has been produced in bilingual format
Risks	The work of the Standards Committee described within its annual report should help to reduce the risk of authority members behaving in a manner that is inconsistent with the code and thus with best practice.