

<b>Report to</b>	Standards Committee
<b>Date of meeting</b>	22 <sup>nd</sup> July 2022
<b>Lead Member / Officer</b>	Gary Williams, Monitoring Officer
<b>Report author</b>	Gary Williams, Monitoring Officer
<b>Title</b>	National Standards Forum

## **1. What is the report about?**

1.1. A proposal to create a National Standards Forum.

## **2. What is the reason for making this report?**

2.1. To inform the Committee of the progress being made for the creation of a National Standards Forum for Wales.

## **3. What are the Recommendations?**

3.1. That the Committee confirms its support for the creation of a National Standards Forum and notes the progress made thus far.

## **4. Report details**

4.1. One of the recommendations made as part of the Penn Review of the Ethical Regime in Wales is that the current forum for Independent Members of Standards Committees, the Mid and North Wales Standards Forum, should be extended to cover the whole of Wales. This would be achieved by creating a National Forum for Standards Committees.

4.2. The Mid and North Wales Standards Forum was created as an opportunity for independent Chairs of Standards Committees to:

- Exchange ideas and best practice

Mae'r ddogfen hon ar gael yn Gymraeg. This document is available in Welsh.

- Establish a support network
- Debate issues and topics of common relevance
- Receive training

4.3. The body was originally created by the Monitoring Officers in North Wales. In 2019 the forum agreed to include 2 Councils from Mid Wales.

4.4. Support for the forum has, until now, been provided by the monitoring officers themselves on a rotation basis. Each council takes a turn “hosting” the meeting and the Monitoring Officer for that Council would prepare the agenda, advise the forum and draft the minutes. By convention other Monitoring Officers would not attend in order to save time and duplication of effort. Meetings of the forum notionally took place twice a year but that was subject to resource pressures in the Council next due to act as host.

4.5. Following the publication of the Penn report all the monitoring officers in Wales were asked whether their authority would support the expansion of the current forum to the whole of Wales. All authorities have responded positively and the WLGA may be willing to help support the expanded forum.

4.6. Previously meetings were peripatetic, moving from Council to Council. Given the wider geographical spread required for a national forum it would make sense for meetings to be hosted remotely. Any meetings taking place physically would need to be held at a central location accessible to all parts of Wales. This would result in an increase in the time commitment, cost and carbon footprint to attend.

4.7. If the WLGA is willing to provide the secretariat for the forum then this would represent a small reduction in the burden on this Council and provide a single, consistent point of contact for the administration of the forum.

## **5. How does the decision contribute to the Corporate Priorities?**

5.1. There is no direct impact on corporate priorities

## **6. What will it cost and how will it affect other services?**

6.1. There is likely to be a small reduction in administrative burden of the forum is supported by the WLGA. There would be a small increase in travel costs if the forum were to meet in person.

## **7. What are the main conclusions of the Well-being Impact Assessment?**

7.1. An assessment is not required.

## **8. What consultations have been carried out with Scrutiny and others?**

8.1. There have been no formal internal consultations with Scrutiny. Monitoring Officers across Wales have been asked to indicate whether their authority would be supportive of a national forum.

## **9. Chief Finance Officer Statement**

9.1. As stated in 6.1, there will be no substantial change to the net cost requirement for this service and will be met from existing budget allocations. There are therefore no direct financial implications

## **10. What risks are there and is there anything we can do to reduce them?**

10.1. There are no particular risks associated with this report.

## **11. Power to make the decision**

11.1. s111 Local Government Act 1972