

MEETING	STANDARDS COMMITTEE
DATE	23rd JANUARY 2017
TITLE	NORTH WALES STANDARDS COMMITTEES FORUM
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Background

1. The North Wales Standards Committee Forum was established in 2011. The aim of the Forum was to try and ensure consistency between the 6 Local Authorities in relation to the work of the Standards Committee. It was also for sharing good practice and solutions to problems. It could also be a conduit to convey a joint position e.e.to the Ombudsman.
2. The following terms of reference were agreed:
 - Membership – Chair, Vice-Chair and the Monitoring Officer with the Deputy Monitoring Officer or other Independent Members of Standards Committees attending as substitutes
 - Voting – one vote per Local Authority with the Chair of the Forum having the casting vote
 - Election of Chair and Vice Chair – every two years to provide consistency
 - Administration – could move with the Chair, but would require succession planning.
 - Frequency of Meetings – quarterly meetings with further meetings scheduled as and when required
3. The Forum now meets twice a year and the recent programme has included matters such as:
 - Consultation on the Ombudsman Bill
 - Revised Guidance on the Code of Conduct
 - Registration of interest and gifts and hospitality
 - Local Government reform consultations

In addition the Ombudsman has attended meetings to present and also to be questioned by the Forum. The Forum is unique in Wales.

4. Recently a request was also received on behalf of Powys and Ceredigion Councils Standards' Committees to join the Forum. This has generally been seen as a positive step forward. It will be a means of increasing the status of the forum as a consultative and development body. Obviously there are geographical implications which would mean that the area for meetings would be wider. On the other hand with meetings rotating between Authorities it's likely that this impact would be relatively low.

Recommendation

That the Committee accepts the information and their view on the development of the Forum.