

CYNGOR SIR POWYS COUNTY COUNCIL.

Standards Committee
7th September 2011

REPORT BY: Strategic Director – Law and Governance

SUBJECT: Matters appertaining to Standards Issues

REPORT FOR: Decision, Information and Discussion

A. General Training for Members**A1. Training of County Council Members – Member Development Strategy/Programme**

A1.1 Copies of notes of the meetings of the Member Development Working Group held on the 2nd and 24th June 2011 are attached to this report as **Appendix 1** for information. The Council has applied to the WLGA for the Wales Charter for Member Support and Development. The Council will be reviewed in September and the outcome will be reported to the next meeting.

B. Referral of Councillors to Public Services Ombudsman**B1. County Councillor Referrals**

B1.1 The Ombudsman has decided to investigate the complaint reported to the April Committee (ref 1/11CC).

The Ombudsman has advised that he has decided not to investigate the Code of Conduct complaint against one Member of Powys County Council (ref 3/11CC).

The Ombudsman has received a further complaint against one Member of Powys County Council (ref 4/11CC) which he has decided not to investigate.

B2 Ombudsman's Annual Report

The Ombudsman's Annual Report for 2010/11 was published on 28th June 2011. An electronic copy can be accessed at <http://www.ombudsman-wales.org.uk/>. A number of hard copies are available on request. A case relating to Powys County Council is reported on page 41. Details of complaints regarding the Members' Code of Conduct are outlined on pages 56 – 58 and is summarised below:

	County/Borough Council	Town/Community Councils
Decision not to investigate	92	98
Discontinued	36	7
No evidence of breach	6	7

No action necessary	16	21
Refer to Standards Cttee	9	12
Refer to Adjudication Panel	18	5
Withdrawn	10	6
Total	187	156

B3. Ombudsman's Decision Making Process

The letter from the Chairman sent to Assembly Members was circulated to the Chairmen of all the Local Authority Standards Committees in Wales. The replies that have been received to date are attached at **Appendix 2**.

Assembly Members Rebecca Evans and Kirsty Williams wrote to Carl Sargeant – Minister for Local Government and Communities and received a response on 13th July 2011.

Responses have also been received from Neath Port Talbot, Ceredigion, Carmarthenshire and Denbighshire.

A copy of an email is also attached from the Ombudsman's office outlining the Ombudsman's view on enhancing the role of the Standards Committees.

C. Other Standards Issues

C1.1 Use of laptops and electronic media during Council meetings

This will be included in the work on revisions to the Constitution now the proposed Local Government (Wales) Measure has come into force.

C1.2 Social Networking

The Member Development Working Group has considered an initial draft of this Protocol. There is a need to ensure that guidance to officers and members is uniform and therefore a joint protocol is being developed.

D. Minutes of Meetings

D1. Meeting of Chairs and Vice Chairs of Scrutiny, Audit and Standards Committees

Notes of the meeting held on the 14th July 2011 are attached as **Appendix 3**.

E. Dispensations

E1. Applications - County Councillors

E1.1 No applications for dispensation have been received.

F. Raising the profile of the Standards Committee/Sub-Committee

F1. Standards in Local Government

The Standards in Powys has been published on the Powys County Council website and can be accessed at <http://www.powys.gov.uk/index.php?id=11427&L=0>.

G Renewable Energy Issues (Electricity Sub Station, Pylons, Overhead Power Lines, Wind Farms etc)

Further responses have now been received from Members to the questionnaire on Windfarm interests. To date 46 replies have been received. 14 Members outline interests and 33 Members have no interests.

H Standards Conference

Booking forms have been circulated and bookings are beginning to be received. Members will receive a verbal update at the meeting.

I Attendance at Committee

I1 Details of Councillor Pritchard's non-attendance are attached at **Appendix 4**.

J. Meeting Dates

J.1 To note dates of future meetings as follows:

30th November, 2011

1st February 2012

4th April 2012

4th July 2012

5th September 2012

5th December 2012

All meetings to commence at 10.00am with the option of training available afterwards.

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