

MINUTES OF A MEETING OF THE STANDARDS COMMITTEE, HELD AT COUNTY HALL, LLANDRINDOD WELLS ON WEDNESDAY 30TH NOVEMBER, 2011.

PRESENT: P. Swanson. (Chair)

Mr R. Miller, Mrs M. Harris, Mrs S. Jarman, Mrs H. Rhydderch-Roberts, County Councillors K.W. Curry, Miss V.E. Evans and M.D. Hodges.

Observers: Community Councillors H. Evans and Revd A. Jevons.

Officers in Attendance: C. Meredith (Strategic Director – Law and Governance), Ms S. Tamboo (Solicitor – Corporate), W. Richards (Scrutiny Services Manager) and G. Petty (Strategic Director – Finance and Infrastructure) (for item 5 only).

1.	APOLOGIES	S21 - 2011
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An apology for absence was received from County Councillor F. Barker.

2.	MINUTES	S22 - 2011
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The Chairman was authorised to sign the minutes of the previous meeting held on 7th September, 2011 as a correct record.

3.	DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST	S23 - 2011
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There were no declarations of interests from Members.

4.	CORRESPONDENCE	S24 - 2011
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There were no items of correspondence of such urgency as to warrant consideration.

5.	MEMBERS EXPENSES	S25 - 2011
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The Committee received the report of the Chief Financial Officer and Monitoring Officer. (Copy filed with signed minutes)

The Committee were supplied with copies of the 2 Care Allowance claim forms referred to in the reports which were submitted during the 2010/11 financial year.

The Committee were advised that at their meeting on 29th April 2010 the Council had approved the Members Allowances Scheme for 2010/11 and had specifically approved an annual sum of £4836 in respect of the Care Allowance.

The Committee debated the issues in considerable detail and were of the view that the 2 claims should be paid and that Council should operate the care allowance system on the basis that it is an annual allowance.

RESOLVED:	Reason for Resolution:
(i) That the payment of the 2 claims referred to in paragraph 2.4 of the report and circulated at the meeting be approved.	(i) To authorise the payment of care allowance claims in accordance with the Scheme for Members' Allowances.

<p>(ii) That Members be reminded of the requirements of the Council Scheme for Members' Allowances in relation to the submission of claims for Care Allowances.</p>	<p>(ii) & (iii) To clarify issues around the Care Allowances system.</p>
<p>(iii) That the Committee supported the annualisation of the Care Allowance and recommended that the Council's Members Allowances Scheme should be operated on that basis for the remainder of 2011/12.</p>	

County Councillor M.D. Hodges requested that his vote against the decision in relation to Care Allowances be recorded.

<p>6.</p>	<p>REPORT OF THE STRATEGIC DIRECTOR – LAW AND GOVERNANCE</p>	<p>S26 - 2011</p>
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The Committee received the report of the Strategic Director – Law and Governance.
(Copy filed with signed minutes)

A. General Training for Members.

A1. Training of County Council Members – Member Development Strategy / Programme.

The Strategic Director expressed his thanks to the Scrutiny Services Manager and his team and the Member Development Working Group on the Council being awarded the Wales Charter for Member Support and Development, which was supported by the Committee.

The Committee asked what level of support would be provided to Members who might have specific needs. The Committee was advised that where specific needs were identified then individual support could be provided to Members e.g. where a Member was dyslexic then specialist software packages were available. Where a Member was disabled then the Council would also support them to be able to fully undertake their role. All such support was considered to be part of the Member Support and Development process.

B. Referral of Councillors to the Public Services Ombudsman.

The Chairman advised the Committee that during a conversation at the Standards Conference the Public Services Ombudsman had indicated that where his office found a breach but no action was suggested, it was within the remit of the Committee to request that member to attend before the Committee in relation to that breach.

F. Renewable Energy Issues.

The Committee noted the responses which had been received.

RESOLVED:	Reason for Resolution:
(i) that a further reminder be sent to Members requesting a response to the questionnaire.	In order that the complete picture can be gained of Members' interests in relation to renewable energy issues.

G. Standards Conference.

The Committee thanked officers for organising the successful Standards Conference held on 5th October. The Committee received a copy of a press release which was to be issued. The Committee asked whether the issues identified in the feedback report were being discussed with the Metropole Hotel. Officers confirmed that feedback had been made to the hotel and a further meeting with the manager was to be held.

H. Attendance at Committee.

The Committee received the attendance figures for the period 12th May 2011 to 31st October, 2011. The Committee that responses from Members would be presented to the next meeting. The Committee also asked whether it was possible to have actual and potential attendance figures presented, as some of the percentages which were low for Co-opted Members might be as a result of 1 in 3 potential meetings being missed only.

I. Local Dispute Resolution.

The Strategic Director advised the Committee that discussions had commenced between WLGA, Welsh Government, the Ombudsman, the President of the Adjudication Panel for Wales and Monitoring Officers regarding the possibility of a local resolution or filtering of low level issues which would normally have been sent to the Ombudsman for consideration. The Committee suggested that some of the issues which were raised should be dealt with by means of training for Councillors.

J. Meeting Dates.

The following dates for the Standards Committee were confirmed:

1st February, 2012
4th April, 2012
4th July, 2012
5th September, 2012
5th December, 2012

K. Appointment of Independent Member – Panel.

The Committee was asked to consider representation on the Shortlisting and Interviewing Panel to meet on 2nd and 6th December respectively.

It was resolved that County Councillor M. D. Hodges be appointed as the County Councillor representative on the Shortlisting Panel / Interviewing Panel and that Mrs H. Rhydderch-Roberts be appointed as one of the two Independent (Lay) Members of the Standards Committee to the Panel in substitution for the Chairman of the Standards Committee who had found it necessary to withdraw from the process in view of his connection with a number of the applicants.

The committee were advised that this 5 Member Panel would be chaired by the Lord Lieutenant and in addition to Councillor Hodges and Mrs H. Rhydderch-Roberts would comprise the Vice Chairman of the committee, Mr Ralph Miller, (being the second Independent (Lay) Member of the Standards Committee) and a representative of Town and Community Councils to be appointed at the subsequent meeting of the Sub-Committee.

P. SWANSON
Chairman