

MINUTES OF A MEETING OF THE STANDARDS COMMUNITY SUB-COMMITTEE HELD AT COUNTY HALL, LLANDRINDOD WELLS ON MONDAY 19TH JANUARY 2009

PRESENT: P. Swanson (Chairman)

Mrs S. Jarman, Mrs M. Harris, R. Miller and Community Councillors Ms C Evans and H. Evans.

Observers: County Councillors K. Curry, M. Hodges and W. G. Lewis.

Officers in attendance: Mr Clarence Meredith (Head of Legal, Scrutiny and Democratic Services), Mr W. Richards (Scrutiny Services Manager) and Mrs L. Patterson (Committee Clerk).

1.	APOLOGIES	STCS1-2009
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An apology was received from Community Councillor B. Couzens.

2.	MINUTES	STCS2-2009
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The minutes of the meeting held on 24th November 2008 were approved as a correct record.

The Sub-Committee noted that arising from the resignation of Independent Member Mr L. Morelli there was a vacancy for the post of Vice-Chairman of the Sub-Committee. The Sub-Committee agreed that this post should be filled at the earliest opportunity from amongst the Independent Members. All remaining 4 Independent Members were present. Only one nomination was forthcoming in respect of Mr R. Miller and therefore it was:

RESOLVED that Mr R. Miller be appointed Vice-Chairman of the Sub-Committee for the remainder of his term of office.

3	DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST	STCS3-2009
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No declarations of interest were received.

4.	REPORT OF THE HEAD OF LEGAL, SCRUTINY AND DEMOCRATIC SERVICES - STANDARDS COMMUNITY SUB-COMMITTEE BUSINESS	STSC4-2009
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The Sub-Committee received the report of the Head of Legal, Scrutiny and Democratic Services (Copy filed with the signed Minutes of the Standards Committee 19th January 2009).

1. Adoption of new Model Member's Code of Conduct (Item A1 of the report)

The Sub-Committee were advised that the Ombudsman's office had now sent to the Council all the documentation they had received.. This would be cross referenced against the list prepared and a final list of Community Councils who had not sent in

papers would be produced. It appeared that 3 out of 110 Community Councils had not sent in any documentation and some items were missing from a further 4 Community Councils. The local Member for each of these Community Councils would be contacted to assist in persuading the Community Councils to submit the remaining information. The possibility of making a press release regarding compliance with the Code of Conduct was discussed and it was agreed that if after engaging the assistance of the Local Member Community Councils still do not submit the information then this should be considered.

2. Training of Town and Community Council Clerks in respect of New Members' Code of Conduct (Item A2 of the report)

Three evening training sessions had been arranged in Brecon (19th January 2009), Llandrindod Wells (21st January 2009) and Welshpool (26th January 2009) for Clerks and Community Councillors.

Members of the Standards Committee and the Community Sub-Committee were invited to attend these sessions.

Two approaches had been received from Machynlleth Town Council and Ystradgynlais Town Council requesting that training be provided locally. The suggestion that Powys arrange training in conjunction with Gwynedd and Ceredigion in respect of the Machynlleth area and with Neath Port Talbot/Swansea in respect of the in Ystradgynlais was supported.

RESOLVED THAT	REASON FOR RECOMMENDATION
Contact be made with these adjoining authorities to investigate the possibility of providing cross-border training on the Members' Code of Conduct	To forward co-operative working in this area of activity and to ascertain the potential for joint working in the delivery of more localised training.

3. Town and Community Councillor Referrals to the Ombudsman (Item C2 of the report)

Since the last meeting no new referrals had been made to the Ombudsman.

4. Advice concerning Town and Community Councils (Item D2 of the report)

The Chairman had met with representatives of one Community Council and it was likely that he would meet with representatives of two further Community Councils shortly.

Town and Community Councils were increasingly seeking advice from the County Council as they became more aware of the ethical requirements. As the County Council does not have the capacity to provide unlimited support to Town and Community Councils it was hoped that a strengthening in the relationship with One Voice Wales would assist in taking this supportive role forward.

The detail of the stages undertaken when considering an application for dispensation was praised and it was suggested that a sample one be sent to Town and Community Council chairmen to assist them in advising if a Member has an interest.

RESOLVED THAT	REASON FOR RECOMMENDATION
<p>i) A draft press release be circulated to Members of the Sub-Committee outlining the work of the Sub-Committee</p> <p>ii) A letter be sent to Town and Community Council Clerks and Chairmen showing the steps to be taken when considering a application for dispensation</p>	<p>i) to advise the public of the work undertaken by the Sub- Committee.</p> <p>ii) to assist Clerks and Chairmen in advising on Members interests.</p>

5. Recording of Members Interests – Community Councillor Members of the Standards Community Sub-Committee (Item E1 of the report)

All three Members had completed and signed Members Interests forms which were now registered..

6. Applications for Dispensation – Town and Community Councils (Item G2 of the report)

No applications had been received. Given the changes introduced by the new code no action was deemed necessary at present in relation to granting blanked dispensations relating to the issue of funding for Village Halls

7. Town and Community Councils Consideration of Planning Applications (Item H of the report)

The advice prepared for Town and Community Councils to assist them in undertaking their consultee role contained in **Appendix 4** was considered. The advice centred around the requirement for consultee replies from Town and Community Councils to be submitted within 21 days which does not always tie in with the monthly or bi-monthly cycle of Town and Community Council meetings.

The requirement by Powys County Council to submit consultation comments within 21 days was questioned when planning applications were taking, in some cases, months to determine. It was explained that the Statutory timescale for consultation with Town and Community Councils was 14 days but Powys had decided to allow 21 days to assist Town and Community Councils. In practice a Clerk may be able to negotiate an extension to the deadline to tie in with a planned meeting. The advice in Appendix 4 would be sent to Town and Community Councils as guidance only.

RESOLVED THAT	REASON FOR RECOMMENDATION
<p>The Committee endorse the advice contained in the Appendix 4 regarding the role of Town and Community Councils in the planning process.</p>	<p>To assist Town and Community Councils in fulfilling their role as consultees to planning applications.</p>

8. Members Allowances Scheme (Item I in the report)

It was confirmed that the three Community Council Members were entitled to receive the new Co-opted Members Allowance.

They would also be provided with a Powys laptop and training to support the move to online agendas. See Standards Committee Minutes 19th January 2009.

Meeting closed 12.30pm

P. SWANSON
Chairman