

**MINUTES OF A MEETING OF THE STANDARDS COMMITTEE HELD AT
COMMITTEE ROOM A - COUNTY HALL, LLANDRINDOD WELLS, POWYS ON
WEDNESDAY, 15 FEBRUARY 2017**

PRESENT

Independent Member Mrs S Jarman
Independent Members Mrs J Evans, Mr S Hays,
County Councillors: K M Roberts-Jones, K S Silk and G I S Williams

1.	MINUTES	S1-2017
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The Chair was authorised to sign the minutes of the meeting held on the 5th October 2016 as a correct record subject to the following amendments:

In E.1 Member attendance to make it clear that it is Cllr P Harris to which this matter refers.

2.	APOLOGIES	S2-2017
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Apologies for absence were received from County Councillors Mrs H Rhydderch-Roberts (Chair) and Mrs C Jackson

In the absence of the Chair and Vice-Chair the Committee was asked to appoint an Independent Member to Chair the meeting.

Resolved that Independent Member Mrs S Jarman be appointed to Chair the meeting.

In order to comply with the Constitution which requires that at a meeting of the Standards Committee there should always be an equivalent or majority of Independent Members County Councillor Medicott indicated that he would be willing to act as an Observer.

3.	DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST	S3-2017
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No declarations of interest were received.

4.	REPORT OF THE SOLICITOR TO THE COUNCIL	S4-2017
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The committee received the report of the Solicitor to the Council (copy filed with signed minutes).

A General Standards Issues for County Councillors and Co-opted Members

A1 Code of Conduct Training

The Head of Democratic Services confirmed that two Councillors had now submitted responses which meant that there remained two Councillors who had not undertaken refresher training. Members were of the view that it would be appropriate for this training to take place within the current term of office and it was

RESOLVED that Cllr G Price and Cllr G Jones be invited to attend refresher training on the Members Code of Conduct prior to the end of this term of office.

B Referral of Councillors to the Public Services Ombudsman

B1 County Council Referrals

The current position regarding existing matters with the Ombudsman is as follows:

6/15/CC	With the Adjudication Panel for Wales
8/15/CC	Referred to the Standards Committee
9/15//CC	Referred to the Standards Committee
04/16/CC	Ombudsman investigating
07/16/CC	Investigation ended. No breach found.
09/CC/2016	Ombudsman investigating
10/CC/2016	Ombudsman investigating
15/CC/2016	Ombudsman investigating
16/CC/2016	Ombudsman investigating
17/CC/2106	Ombudsman investigating

C. Other Standards Issues

None.

D Dispensations

D1. Applications - County Councillors

No applications for dispensation have been received from County Councillors.

E. Attendance

E.1 Member attendance

The Head of Democratic Services presented full attendance data as recorded on the Council's 'Modern' system. It was noted that not all Member meetings are recorded on this system (such as attendance at Fostering Panel or Employment Hearings). Neither did this system include Member attendance at other meetings attended in their role as Councillor (such as Governing Bodies, Mid Wales Health Care Collaborative etc). It was noted that it would be inaccurate to publish attendance figures including some but not all of a Councillors workload.

RESOLVED that this matter be deferred to the next meeting of the Standards Committee when further detail of other meetings attended by Councillors will be sought.

F Ombudsman's Casebook

The Ombudsman had published the July 2016 – September 2016 Code of Conduct Casebooks which can be accessed at.

<http://www.ombudsman-wales.org.uk/en/publications/The-Code-of-Conduct-Casebook.aspx>

(Copy filed with signed minutes)

G Ombudsman's Annual Report

The Ombudsman had published his Annual Report for 2015-16 which could be accessed from the website of the Public Services Ombudsman for Wales at <http://www.ombudsman-wales.org.uk/en/publications/Annual-reports.aspx>

This report covers both service complaints and code of conduct complaints.

H Local Resolution

In 2013 the Public Services Ombudsman for Wales issued guidance on the Code of Conduct for Members of Local Authorities and recommended that a local resolution procedure was adopted to deal with low level complaints made by a Member against a fellow Member.

The Standards Committee adopted the Local Resolution, as contained within Section 25 of the Constitution on the 25th of June 2014.

The objective of the local resolution procedure adopted by the Council is to engage early and at a relatively informal level with a view to nipping issues in the bud with minimal involvement from the Monitoring Office and Standards Committee.

Since this was introduced the Council have only had two cases referred for Local Resolution but it is always offered in cases where it is thought it may be appropriate.

I. Training and Meeting Dates

To note dates of future training and meetings as follows:

Training.

Tuesday 16th May 2017 10.00am Code of Conduct Training

Wednesday 28th June 2017 10.00am Training for Standards Committee

Meetings.

Wednesday 28th June 2017 2.00pm Standards Committee

Wednesday 4th October 2017 10.00 Standards Committee

J Urgent matter for decision at discretion of Chair

J1 Declaration of Interest

County Councillor Medicott declared an interest in this matter as he is Member of the same group as the Member to which this matter relates.

J2 Confidential Matters

RESOLVED to exclude the public for the following item of business on the grounds that there would be disclosure to them of exempt information under category 8 of The Council's Access to Information Rules.

J3 Date for Hearing: Case Number 201504433

The Deputy Monitoring Officer advised that the Member had been offered three dates in February/March for the Hearing. The first date had been rejected on the grounds that he had farming commitments. The second and third dates had been rejected on the grounds that he had been unable to source the information he required.

The third date (15th March) is the last available date before purdah. The Member has indicated that he would not have a problem with holding the hearing during purdah.

One Member was of the opinion that the two cases currently coming to Hearing should be treated equally and if the other case was to be held outside purdah then this case should also be held outside purdah.

It was confirmed that the Member was aware that this case would proceed to a Hearing from the previous meeting of the Standards Committee on 16th December 2016 and that sufficient time had been available for the Member to source the information he required.

RESOLVED that the Hearing Date for this case be set for the 15th March 2017.