

MINUTES OF A MEETING OF THE STANDARDS COMMITTEE HELD AT BY TEAMS ON FRIDAY, 21 JANUARY 2022

PRESENT: Mr S Hays (Chair)

Independent Members: Mrs J Evans, Mrs C Moore and Mr N Steward

County Councillors: S McNicholas and K S Silk

1. APOLOGIES

Apologies for absence were received from County Councillor A Jenner who was on other council business and County Councillor K M Roberts-Jones.

The Chair advised that County Councillor K M Roberts-Jones was not at the meeting due to the death of her husband. The Committee paused for a minute's silence.

2. APPOINTMENT OF VICE CHAIR

RESOLVED that Independent Member Claire Moore be appointed as Vice Chair for her term of office.

The Committee noted that Chris Mulholland, previous Vice Chair had resigned as a lay member from the Committee in earlier January. The Committee acknowledged her contribution to the Committee and the Chair and Head of Legal and Democratic Services would write to her to thank her for her work.

3. MINUTES

The Chair was authorised to sign the minutes of the meeting held on 13 October 2021 as a correct record.

4. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

No declarations were received.

5. REPORT OF THE HEAD OF LEGAL AND DEMOCRATIC SERVICES

The Committee received the report of the Head of Legal and Democratic Services (copy filed with signed minutes). The Head of Legal and Democratic Services apologised for the late circulation of his report.

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

A1. Code of Conduct Training

The Committee noted that the member, who needed to complete this training, was being supported by officers and this had been partially completed. There had been some technical difficulties, but these had been overcome.

B. Referral of Councillors to the Public Services Ombudsman

B1. County Council Referrals

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

02/CC/2020 Ombudsman investigating

01/CC/2021 Ombudsman deciding whether or not to investigate

03/CC/2021 Ombudsman investigating

04/CC/2021 Ombudsman investigating

C. Dispensations

A dispensation regarding a proposed motion put to Council in December, was being considered by officers and would be considered by the Committee at the next meeting.

D. Independent lay member vacancy

The Committee noted the appointment process for the vacancy.

RESOLVED THAT

the Appointments Panel would consist of:

Independent Members – Stephan Hays and Nigel Steward and Claire Moore being reserve.

County Council representative – County Councillor Kathryn Silk

Community Council representative – Councillor Hugh Patrick and Councillor Joy Shearer reserve.

E. Late Payment of Expenses

There were no late claims for expenses.

F. Independent Review of the Ethical Standards Framework in Wales

The Committee noted the report which would be discussed at the next meeting. The Head of Legal and Democratic Services advised that one recommendation was that a national forum for the Independent Chairs of Standards Committees should be established. The Chair supported this recommendation.

G. Standards Conference Wales

The Committee noted the virtual Conference on 9 February 2022.

H. Ombudsman's Casebook

The Ombudsman had published the January 2021 – March 2021 Code of Conduct Casebooks.

I. Adjudication Panel for Wales

The Committee noted the Adjudication Panel for Wales report.

J. Correspondence – There was none.

K. Requirement for Standards Committee to make annual report to Council

The Committee noted that from 5 May 2022 Section 63 of the Local Government and Elections Act 2021 requires Standards Committees to make annual reports to Council as soon as reasonably practicable after the end of each financial year. The Head of Legal and Democratic Services advised the Committee will consider this at a future meeting and a report will need to be published as soon as practicable after March 2023.

L. Meeting dates

The Committee noted the 2022 meeting dates:

9 September 0930hrs – appointment of town and community representatives on the Community sub-committee and induction training.
15 September 1400hrs
5 December 1400hrs

The Head of Legal and Democratic Services advised that as the request for a dispensation would need to be considered an extra meeting would be arranged in the interim period.

Mr S Hays (Chair)