

MINUTES OF A MEETING OF THE STANDARDS COMMITTEE HELD AT HYBRID MEETING - ZOOM - COUNTY HALL ON WEDNESDAY, 21 JUNE 2023

PRESENT: Mr S Hays (Chair)

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

County Councillors: B Baynham and L Rijnenberg

County Councillor I McIntosh left the meeting to ensure that the meeting remained quorate when an Independent member left the meeting.

1.	APOLOGIES
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Apologies for absence were received from County Councillor W Powell, who had a long standing diary commitment prior to his appointment to the Committee.

2.	MINUTES
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The Chair was authorised to sign the minutes of the meeting held on 8 February 2023 as a correct record.

3.	DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST
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No declarations were received.

4.	REPORT OF THE HEAD OF LEGAL AND MONITORING OFFICER
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The Committee received the report of the Head of Legal and Monitoring Officer (copy filed with signed minutes).

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

There was no update.

B. Members attendance

The Committee noted that six members had attendance under 60% for the period 9 May 2022 to 17 May 2023 inclusive. Of these three had absences due to personal reasons. The Chair had written to the other three and as a result the Committee noted that the attendance details for one had been amended, which had resulted in their attendance rising to above 60%, one had absences for personal reasons and one had not responded to the letter and was now on holiday. The Committee noted that the Monitoring Officer would contact this member on their return.

In response to a question the Monitoring Officer advised that a reminder could be sent to members regarding seeking absences for personal reasons or seeking leave of absence.

C. Referral of Councillors to the Public Services Ombudsman

C1. County Council Referrals

The Committee noted the current position regarding referrals to the Ombudsman:

- 02/CC/2020 Ombudsman referred to Standards Committee
- 04/CC/2021 Referred to Adjudication Panel for Wales [APW] - APW hearing regarding former Councillor Karen Laurie-Parry will be held on 6 July 2023.
- 03/CC/2022 Ombudsman investigating
- 04/CC/2022 Ombudsman not investigating
- 05/CC/2022 Ombudsman investigating.

D. Dispensations**D1. Applications - County Councillors**

There were no applications for dispensation from County Councillors.

E. Appointment to the Standards Community Sub-Committee

Following nominations and an election for the vacancy of a Town and Community Councillor to represent Brecknockshire the Committee was advised of the successful candidate.

RESOLVED THAT	REASON FOR DECISION
<p>1. That Councillor Karen Coldrick elected by the Town and Community Councils in Brecknockshire, be appointed to the Standards Community Sub-Committee.</p> <p>2. That the term of office of the Town and Community Councillor be for the maximum term permitted by the existing regulations or by any amending regulations (currently a maximum of five years) or until they cease to be a Councillor or resign whichever shall first occur.</p>	<p>To constitute the Standards Community Sub-Committee.</p>

As previously advised, the Committee noted the vacancy on the Sub-Committee due to the resignation of Nigel Dodman as a councillor. The Committee noted the timescale for the nominations and election if required, as detailed in the report.

F. Ombudsman Wales – Our Findings

The Committee noted the Ombudsman Wales – our findings.

G. National Forum for Standards Committee

The Committee noted the minutes of the first meeting of the Forum. The next meeting was scheduled for 30 June 2023.

H. Consultation on the Penn Review response (Local Authorities Ethical Standards Framework and Code of Conduct)

The Monitoring Officer advised that the Monitoring Officers Group in Wales had already submitted comments. The Monitoring Officer asked that the Committee forward comments to him or the Democratic Services Officer to enable a response to be submitted by the consultation deadline.

I. Meeting dates

The next meeting date was noted:
25 October 2023 at 2pm.

5.	ANNUAL MEETINGS WITH GROUP LEADERS REGARDING THEIR NEW DUTIES
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The Committee considered the Summary of the main points from the meetings with Group Leaders regarding their new duties.

The Committee noted the action points which would be incorporated into its Work Programme for the next year and those actions which would be forwarded to others in the Council. The summary would be added to the Committee's Annual report.

6.	ANNUAL REPORT
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The Committee considered the draft Annual report and noted that the Summary of the meeting with Group Leaders would be added to the report as Appendix 3 and it would be noted that Group Leaders welcomed the opportunity to meet with the Standards Committee. Reference to councillors referred to the Committee and the Adjudication Panel Wales by the Ombudsman would be checked to ensure they are reported correctly.

RESOLVED that	Reason for decision
The draft Annual report be approved subject the Summary of the Committee's meeting with Group Leaders being added at Appendix 3 and that the Chair provides a short statement.	To enable the final Annual report to be presented to the Council meeting on 20 July 2023.

7.	ANNUAL REVIEW OF REGISTER OF INTEREST OF MEMBERS, CO-OPTED MEMBERS AND CHURCH AND PARENT GOVERNOR REPRESENTATIVES AND OFFICERS
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The Committee considered the report in respect of its Annual review of Register of Interest of members, Co-opted members and Church and Parent Governor representatives and Officers.

RESOLVED that	Reason for decision
1. To note the report 2. the Monitoring Officer to continue to remind the 3 Co-opted members and Church and Parent Governor Representatives to return their new forms.	To ensure the Committee undertakes an annual review of the Register of Interest of members, Co-opted members and Church and Parent Governor representatives and Officers as part of its work programme.

8.	ANNUAL REVIEW OF THE USE OF GENERAL DISPENSATIONS
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The Committee was advised that during the year 9 May 2022 - 17 May 2023 inclusive, the General dispensation - School Governors [councillors who are school governors appointed otherwise than by the Council] – was used by one councillor at a County Council meeting.

Mr S Hays (Chair)