

# Public Document Pack

Standards Committee  
29<sup>th</sup> June 2016

## MINUTES OF A MEETING OF THE STANDARDS COMMITTEE HELD AT COMMITTEE ROOM A - COUNTY HALL, LLANDRINDOD WELLS, POWYS ON WEDNESDAY, 29 JUNE 2016

PRESENT

Independent Member Mrs H Rhydderch-Roberts (Chair)

Independent Members: Mrs C Jackson, Mrs J Evans, Mr S Hays, Mrs S Jarman,  
P J Medlicott, K M Roberts-Jones, K S Silk and G I S Williams

<b>1.</b>	<b>APOLOGIES</b>	<b>S21-2016</b>
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No apologies for absence were received.

<b>2.</b>	<b>MINUTES</b>	<b>S22-2016</b>
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The Chair was authorised to sign the minutes of the meeting held on 24<sup>th</sup> February 2016 subject to the following amendments:

*PRESENT*

*Independent Member H Rhydderch-Roberts (Chair)*

*Independent Members: J Evans, S Hays, C Jackson, S Jarman*

*County Councillors M Mackenzie, P Medlicott and K Roberts-Jones*

County Councillor referrals

*01/16/CC Not investigating*

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*Independent Member H Rhydderch-Roberts (Chair)*

<b>3.</b>	<b>DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST</b>	<b>S23-2016</b>
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A declaration of interest was received from Independent Member C Jackson with regard to item E1 Member Attendance. Ms Jackson is a friend of Cllr G Ratcliffe and took no part in the debate regarding his attendance.

<b>4.</b>	<b>REPORT OF THE SOLICITOR TO THE COUNCIL</b>	<b>S24-2016</b>
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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**

It was still the case that four Members had not undertaken the refresher training despite being offered the opportunity to undertake the training by written response. The Committee expressed concern regarding the lack of response and suggested that the Chair write to those Members requesting an explanation as to why they have failed to undertake the

training. If no response was received the Member/s be invited to attend the next meeting of the Standards Committee.

**Resolved that the Chair of Standards Committee write to the four Members yet to complete refresher training on the Code of Conduct asking for an explanation as to why they have yet to complete the training. This response to be considered at the next meeting of the Standards Committee. If no response is received the Member/s be invited to attend the next meeting of the Standards Committee.**

## **A2 Local Government Ethical Framework – Amended Code of Conduct**

It was confirmed that the County Council had adopted the revised Code of Conduct on 20<sup>th</sup> April 2016 and a notice had been published in the press to this effect.

The revised regulations relating to Standards Committees allow for Joint Standards Committees to be formed but no other authority had approached the Standards Committee of Powys in this regard. The Powys Standards Committee could, if they wished, approach another Standards Committee to discuss forming a permanent Joint Standards Committee. There was no intention to make such an approach at this stage.

The Chair advised that she had been invited, along with the Vice-Chair, to an informal meeting of other Chairs and Vice-Chairs of Standards Committees in mid and west Wales. It was proving difficult to find a date for this meeting and at present this was expected to take place in October 2016.

## **B Referral of Councillors to Public Services Ombudsman**

### **B1 County Council referrals**

6/15/CC	Referred to the Standards Committee
8/15/CC	Ombudsman investigating
9/15/CC	Ombudsman investigating
01/16/CC	Not investigating
02/16/CC	Not investigating
03/16/CC	Not investigating
04/16/CC	Ombudsman investigating
05/16/CC	Not investigating
06/CC/CC	Not investigating
07/16/CC	Ombudsman investigating
08/16/CC	Not investigating

### **C Other Standards issues**

None.

### **D Dispensations**

## D1 Applications – County Councillors

An application for dispensation had been received from County Councillor Arwel Jones to speak and vote on matters relating to Llanfyllin High School. Councillor Jones holds the Portfolio for Education and is undertaking a review of secondary schools in Powys. He would be responsible for making recommendations to Cabinet and Council on the review of secondary schools.

Councillor Jones advised the meeting that he has two first cousins on the teaching staff at Llanfyllin High school. He confirmed that they lived in the same community as him and he would see them at family gatherings perhaps about every six weeks.

With regard to presentation of reports it was confirmed that in Powys reports are presented by Portfolio Holders rather than by Officers which does take place in some other authorities. Councillor Jones confirmed that another Cabinet Member had acted on his behalf on a recent matter relating to Llanfyllin High School given his interest (in this case the Portfolio Holder for Finance as the matter particularly related to this portfolio). In more general matters the Leader acts on behalf of a Portfolio Holder where an interest arises but whilst the Leader would have an overall understanding of the review of secondary schools he would not necessarily have the in-depth knowledge that the Portfolio Holder for Education has.

Councillor Jones left the room whilst the Standards Committee debated the matter and was invited to return to hear the decision.

RESOLVED THAT:	REASON FOR RESOLUTION
<p><b>i) a dispensation is not granted to Councillor Arwel Jones in relation to his personal and pecuniary interest in the Llanfyllin High School.</b></p>	<p><b>i) that the nature of Councillor Jones' interest is such that under 10 (2) (c) (i) (b) a decision on the matter might reasonably be regarded as affecting his well-being or financial position, or that of a person with whom he lives, or any person with whom he has a close personal association to a greater extent than the majority of in all other cases, other council tax payers, rate payers or inhabitants of the authority's area, and</b></p> <p><b>ii) that the nature of Councillor Jones' interest is such that under 10 (2) (c) (ii) (bb) a decision on the matter might reasonably be regarded as affecting any employment or business carried on by persons as described in 10 (2) (c) (i) to a greater extent than the majority of in all other cases, other</b></p>

	<b>council tax payers, ratepayers or inhabitants of the authority's area.</b>
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The Chair explained that the Standards Committee were of the view Councillor Jones would need to think carefully about whether his interests would also apply in relation to the review of other high schools in North Powys where there was a consequential knock on impact arising from the Committee's decision in relation to Llanfyllin High School.

## **E Attendance**

### **E1 Member attendance**

Attendance for Members at main Committees for the period 1<sup>st</sup> December 2015 to 11<sup>th</sup> May 2016 had been calculated.

Seven Councillors had attendance below 60% namely:

Cllr G Banks (43%)

Cllr P Harris (50%)

Cllr M Mackenzie (57%)

Cllr J Shearer (57%)

Cllr T Turner (27%)

Cllr A Holloway – known to have had a period of ill health

Cllr G Bowker – maternity leave

Cllr Ratcliffe provided information regarding the previous period for the meetings he had missed and the Committee thanked Cllr Ratcliffe for providing such a detailed response and accepted the reasons given.

Cllr Banks had provided information regarding the period where his attendance had been below 60%. He advised he had some health issues and problems with IT which had led to not picking up when meeting dates had changed. The Committee accepted his response, hoped he was feeling better and that his IT issues had been addressed.

Cllr M Mackenzie had provided an explanation for the meetings she had missed. Members acknowledged that there were times for Members with a busy workload when meetings conflicted and such an explanation was understood and accepted. It was also expected that Members would miss meetings from time to time due to holidays.

Cllr J Shearer had provided an explanation for the meetings she had missed which was accepted.

Cllr P Harris had provided an explanation which referred to previous correspondence. The previous letter was made available to Committee. Members noted the content of the letters and,

**Resolved to invite Cllr Harris to provide in writing a full explanation for each absence for the period 1<sup>st</sup> December 2015 to 10<sup>th</sup> June 2016.**

Cllr T Turner had provided an explanation for the meetings he had missed which were largely due to his shift work with the Ambulance Service. Members accepted the explanation.

## **E2 Calculating attendance**

A new system for managing meetings has been introduced which allows for additional reporting on attendance. There had been some initial issues with using the system which were being addressed. Members were provided with samples of the type of information which was available.

It was noted that Member attendance at all Committees and Working Groups was outlined within the Annual Member Reports which were available online.

Members discussed the opportunities for widening the meetings which are considered when looking at attendance and the merits of using percentage attendance against the number of meetings attended. It was agreed that for the next period the Committee would be provided with a full list of meetings and attendance details. Committee would examine this information and decide whether or not any Members should receive a letter asking for information regarding their attendance levels.

**Resolved that with regard to Member attendance absences due to other Council business should be recorded where the Member is attending a meeting to which they have been appointed on behalf of the Council.**

**Resolved that where individual Members receive correspondence regarding attendance this correspondence should be copied to the Group Leader and Deputy Group Leader of that Member's political group.**

## **F Gifts and Hospitality Register**

The Gifts and Hospitality register was received.

## **G Meeting dates**

To note the dates of future meetings as follows:

Wednesday 5<sup>th</sup> October 2016

The Council diary for 2017 was due for approval at County Council in July 2016 and once this had been confirmed the dates of Standards Committee would be circulated to Members.

**Independent Member Mrs H Rhydderch-Roberts (Chair)**

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