

**MINUTES OF A MEETING OF THE STANDARDS COMMITTEE HELD AT
COMMITTEE ROOM A - COUNTY HALL, LLANDRINDOD WELLS, POWYS ON
WEDNESDAY, 3 OCTOBER 2018**

PRESENT: Mrs H Rhydderch-Roberts (Chair)

Independent Members: Mrs C Jackson, Mrs J Evans, Mr S Hays and Mrs C Mulholland

County Councillors: S McNicholas, S Lewis, K M Roberts-Jones and K S Silk

Observers: Community Councillors M Morris, H Patrick and J Shearer

In attendance: Ms D Jones (Deputy Monitoring Officer) and Ms C Johnson (Democratic Services Officer).

1.	APOLOGIES
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Apologies for absence were received from Mr C Pinney [Monitoring Officer] and Mr W Richards [Head of Democratic Services].

2.	MINUTES
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The Chair was authorised to sign the minutes of the meeting held on 27 June, 2018 as a correct record, subject to the list of attendees being amended to refer to Mrs C Mulholland rather than C Mulholland. It was requested that the use of titles is consistent in the minutes.

3.	DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST
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No declarations of interest were received.

4.	REPORT OF THE SOLICITOR TO THE COUNCIL
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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

All Members and Co-opted Members have undertaken Code of Conduct training.

A2 Mandatory Training

The Committee noted the responses from the three Councillors who had not completed the Mandatory Treasury Management training, which had been provided on three occasions. The Committee noted that this mandatory training is not available as eLearning.

RESOLVED THAT	Reason for decision
1. The Chair write to	To ensure compliance with the

<p>Councillors M Alexander, M Barnes and N Morrison advising that they are required to attend the next Mandatory Treasury Management training scheduled for 10 January, 2019 and that they be advised of the sanctions open to the Committee and</p> <p>2. that if they fail to attend on 10 January 2019, they will be required to attend the Standards Committee on 20 February, 2019, where they will be required to provide a verbal explanation of their non-attendance at the training and depending on their explanation, sanctions may be considered by the Standards Committee in line with relevant Council Policy.</p> <p>3. that a diary invitation to the Mandatory Treasury Management training scheduled for 10 January, 2019 be made in these Councillors' outlook diaries.</p>	<p>Council's policy regarding Mandatory Training.</p>
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The Committee noted that even where some Members attend mandatory training sessions they may not always stay for the whole training. The Committee raised concerns that Members must attend for the whole training and discussed how this could be managed including, requiring Members to enter the time of their arrival at and departure from the training sessions on the attendance and asking trainers to ask those arriving late and leaving early to complete the attendance sheets with this information. It was noted, that in Committee meetings the committee clerks record when Members arrive and leave if this is during the meeting but no such officers are in attendance at training events. The Committee acknowledged the numerous commitments of Members, including those that work but noted that only a small number of mandatory sessions were held each year.

RESOLVED THAT	Reason for decision
<p>The Chair write to Members to raise the Committee's concerns that some Members do not attend for the whole of mandatory sessions and that they arrive late and leave early, which is not acceptable.</p>	<p>To remind Members that they must attend the whole mandatory session.</p>

B Referral of Councillors to the Public Services Ombudsman**B1 County Council Referrals**

02/CC/2017 Ombudsman investigating
 01/CC/2018 Ombudsman investigating
 02/CC/2018 Ombudsman investigating
 04/CC/2018 Ombudsman not investigating
 05/CC/2018 Ombudsman investigating
 08/CC/2018 Ombudsman deciding whether or not to investigate
 09/CC/2018 Ombudsman deciding whether or not to investigate

C. Dispensations**C1. Applications - County Councillors**

No applications for dispensation have been received from County Councillors.

D. Late Payment of Expenses

A claim for payment of expenses was submitted by Councillor Phil Pritchard for mileage expenses (submitted on 16 July, 2018 for mid-January to mid-February 2018).

The Committee approved this application (which was the first one for mileage made by this Member) and thanked the Member for the detailed explanation he had provided.

RESOLVED THAT	REASON FOR DECISION
the payment of the late claim submitted by Councillor Phil Pritchard for mileage be paid for the period mid-January to mid-February 2018.	To reimburse expenses incurred by Councillor Phil Pritchard

A further claim had been submitted in July 2018 by Councillor William Powell for mileage expenses (submitted on 20 July, 2018 for mid-January to mid-February 2018). However, this had only been received from Payroll on 2 October, 2018. The Chair had agreed to consider the application.

The Committee approved this application (which was the first one for mileage made by this Member) and thanked the Member for the detailed explanation he had provided.

RESOLVED THAT	REASON FOR DECISION
the payment of the late claim submitted by Councillor William Powell for mileage be paid for the period mid-January to mid-February 2018.	To reimburse expenses incurred by Councillor William Powell.

E Ombudsman's Casebook

The Ombudsman had published the April – June 2018 Code of Conduct Casebooks which can be accessed at.

(Copy filed with signed minutes).

F Adjudication Panel for Wales decision report

In August 2018 the Adjudication Panel for Wales published a decision report in respect of former County Councillor for Monmouthshire [currently Community Councillor] Graham Down. The Adjudication Panel for Wales had received the matter as a referral from the Public Services Ombudsman for Wales and dealt with the matter at a Case Tribunal on 19 July, 2018. The outcome of the Tribunal was to suspend Community Councillor Down from acting as a member of Mathern Community Council for a period of two months or, if shorter, the remainder of his term of office.

G Adjudication Panel for Wales Sanctions Guidance

The Committee noted the Sanctions Guidance which was published 1 September, 2018.

H Standards Conference – 14 September, 2018

The Members and officers who facilitated the Authority's Workshop indicated that they considered that this was well received. The following comments were noted for the Conference as a whole:

- The number of complaints regarding health services considered by the Ombudsman had increased but the number regarding local authorities had remained static.
- The Social Media workshop used too much redacted information which meant it was more difficult to discuss issues.
- At the Sharing Good Practice workshop, participants considered that where the Ombudsman finds a breach, but takes no further action, such cases should be referred back to the respective Standards Committee for consideration. The Committee noted that this issue had previously been raised with the Ombudsman. It was noted that in some Authorities, where such a situation occurs, the individual is followed up locally and offered training.
- It was considered that there were too many speakers in the morning and that more time should have been given to workshops.
- The sound in the main hall was not good as people indicated that they could not hear at the back of the room.

I Correspondence

The Committee received the letter from the Adjudication Panel for Wales regarding Legal Member Recruitment.

J Meeting dates

The Committee noted that the Council diary would be considered at the Council meeting on 18 October, 2018 after which the Committee's dates would be circulated.

5.	STANDARDS CONFERENCE 2018 - STANDARDS HEARINGS WORKSHOP - PRACTICAL ISSUES
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The Committee with the Standards Community Sub-Committee considered the questions used in the Conference Workshop facilitated by the Authority.

The Deputy Monitoring Officer advised that as the Chair's Term of Office comes to an end on 13 May, 2019 the process for agreeing the recruitment and appointment of a replacement independent member would be considered by Council at its meeting on 18 October, 2018.

The Committee thanked Liz Patterson, Scrutiny Officer for her support to the Committee.

Mrs H Rhydderch-Roberts (Chair)