

**CYNGOR SIR POWYS COUNTY COUNCIL.**

**Standards Committee  
2 October, 2019**

**REPORT BY:** Head of Legal and Democratic Services

**SUBJECT:** Standards Issues

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**REPORT FOR:** Decision, Information and Discussion

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

**A1 Code of Conduct Training**

Refresher training on Code of Conduct will be arranged in 2020 for all Members and co-opted members.

**A2 Mandatory Training**

**A2.1** As part of the ongoing Member development programme, Equalities and Diversity training has been provided. Seven half day sessions have been provided [three in February, two in March and one in both June and September 2019]. The sessions were provided by Council Training Officers and a maximum of 15 Members could book onto a session. Members were advised of the dates and that they had to book on a session and diary invitations were sent confirming their bookings.

Although booked onto the final session in September, the following Members did not attend this: Councillors Rosemarie Harris, Liam Fitzpatrick and Gareth Pugh. In addition Councillor Myfanwy Alexander left the training at 11.30am due to a pressing engagement. The session was scheduled for 10.00 a.m. – 12.30 p.m.

Where Members do not attend mandatory development, the Council agreed on 15 July, 2015 that:

- (i) Where a Member does not attend/complete a “Mandatory development” session they will receive an email from the Standards Committee advising them that they need to attend the next session. They will be given details of the session or how to access an appropriate session from another source and the required date for completion.
- (ii) Where a Member does not complete the second session they will be required to provide a verbal/written explanation of why they have failed to attend/complete the required development to the Standards Committee. The Standards Committee will require the Member to agree to complete the required “mandatory development” within a specified timescale.

- (iii) If a Member continues to fail to attend/complete the required training the Standards Committee can suspend that Member for a period of up to one month. During this period the individual will not receive their allowance and will not be able to act as a Councillor.
- (iv) The Standards Committee will however, take into account a Member's individual circumstances when considering the above.

The Standards Committee is asked to agree that an email be sent, as i) above, to the Members who did not attend or failed to complete the training session in September, advising them that they need to attend the next session. A session will be arranged with the Training Officers.

**A2.2** At the mandatory Corporate safeguarding – adults & children session on 2 September County Councillor Fitzpatrick signed the attendance sheet and then left at 1018 hrs. The session started at 1000 hrs. The time of his departure was noted on the attendance sheet by a number of members.

The Committee should note that the session was recorded to enable those Members who could not/did not attend to complete the mandatory development. Those doing this will be required to complete a questionnaire about the topics covered.

The Standards Committee is asked to:

- i. agree that an email be sent to Councillor Fitzpatrick advising him that he needs to complete this mandatory training. As this training was recorded and he will need to watch the recording and complete the questionnaire associated with this.
- ii. agree to send an email to all members to remind them that mandatory training sessions must be completed in full.

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

### **B1. County Councillor Referrals**

**B1.1** The current position regarding matters with the Ombudsman is as follows:

02/CC/2017 Concluded no breach

01/CC/2018 Referred to APW

08/CC/2018 Concluded not investigating

09/CC/2018 Concluded not investigating

12/CC/2018 Concluded no breach. Review requested.

03/CC/2019 Concluded not investigating

## **C Dispensations**

### **C1 Applications - County Councillors**

No applications for dispensation have been received from County Councillors.

#### **D Late Payment of Expenses**

One claim for late payment of expenses has been received from County Councillor Les George for travel claims. A copy of the claim will be circulated at the meeting.

#### **E Member attendance**

The Committee was advised at the last meeting that 10 Councillors have attendance below 60% for main Committees for the period 17 May 2018 to 15 May 2019. As agreed at the previous meeting, these Members were asked to provide an explanation as to their absences.

The Committee should note that:

- Councillor Mackenzie's attendance level is now above the required 60% after adjustments have been made to rectify recording errors and
- Neil Morrison resigned as a Councillor in September, 2019 and
- Councillor Sarah Lewis is resigning as of 27 September, 2019.

The responses from the other Members will be reported verbally to the meeting.

#### **F Whistleblowing Policy and Procedure**

At the last meeting the Committee made comments on the draft Whistleblowing Policy and Procedure. Since this meeting officers have considered the report further. The Committee is asked to consider the final draft [Appendix 1] prior to it being considered by Policy Forum.

#### **G Ombudsman's Casebook**

The Ombudsman has published Code of Conduct Casebooks for the following period:

- January – March 2019

A copy of the Casebook is attached at Appendix 2.

Back copies of the casebooks can be accessed from the website of the Public Services Ombudsman for Wales at:

<https://www.ombudsman.wales/code-of-conducts/>

#### **H The North Wales Standards Committee Forum**

The Chair attended the Forum meeting on 24 June, 2019. The Chair's notes of the meeting and the minutes of the meeting are attached as Appendix 3.

At this meeting it was suggested that the next meeting in November, could be hosted by Powys in Machynlleth. The Committee should note that the Standards Committee does not have a budget and so if the Committee does host the meeting, it will need to take place in the Council office in Welshpool. If the meeting is to be hosted the Committee is asked to consider whether it wishes refreshments to be provided.

**I Correspondence**

There was no correspondence.

**J Meeting dates**

To note dates of future meetings as follows:

Wednesday 12 February 2020

Wednesday 10 June 2020

Wednesday 7 September 2020

| Contact Officer Name:                              | Tel:         | Fax:         | Email:   |
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| Clive Pinney – Head of Legal & Democratic Services | 01597 826746 | 01597 826220 | <a href="mailto:clive.pinney@powys.gov.uk">clive.pinney@powys.gov.uk</a> |