

**MINUTES OF A MEETING OF THE STANDARDS COMMITTEE HELD AT
COMMITTEE ROOM A - COUNTY HALL, LLANDRINDOD WELLS, POWYS ON
WEDNESDAY, 12 FEBRUARY 2020**

PRESENT: Mr S Hays (Chair)

Independent Members: Mrs C Jackson, Mrs C Moore, Mrs J Evans and
Mrs C Mulholland

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

1. APOLOGIES

There were no apologies for absence.

2. MINUTES

The Chair was authorised to sign the minutes of the meeting held on 2 October, 2019 as a correct record.

3. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

No declarations were received.

4. 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).

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

A1. Code of Conduct Training

The Committee noted that the mid-term mandatory Code of Conduct training had been scheduled for 5 June, 2020.

A2. Mandatory Training

The Committee noted that all Members had completed the mandatory training as required at the previous meeting. The Committee thanked the members for completing the training.

B. Referral of Councillors to the Public Services Ombudsman

B1. County Council Referrals

The current position regarding matters with the Ombudsman is detailed below:

01/CC/2018 Adjudication Panel for Wales [APW] suspended for four months – 20/11/19 – 20/03/20. The Committee received the APW report.

- 12/CC/2018 Concluded no breach. Review requested – No further action and case closed
- 04/CC/2019 Ombudsman deciding whether or not to investigate
- 05/CC/2019 Not investigating
- 06/CC/2019 Ombudsman deciding whether or not to investigate
- 07/CC/2019 Concluded not investigating

C. Dispensations

C1. Applications - County Councillors

No applications for dispensation had been received from County Councillors.

D. Late Payment of Expenses

The Committee noted there were no late claims for expenses.

E. Independent lay Member on Standards Committee

The Committee noted the appointments process.

RESOLVED THAT	Reason for decision
<p>the Appointments Panel would consist of: Independent Members – Stephan Hays and Claire Moore County Council representative – County Councillor Kath Roberts-Jones or County Councillor Iain McIntosh, depending on their availability.</p>	<p>To enable the appointments process to continue.</p>

F. Ombudsman's Casebook

The Ombudsman had published the April – June 2019 and July – September 2019 Code of Conduct Casebooks.

G. The North Wales Standards Committee Forum

The Committee asked that the draft Local Government & Elections [Wales] Bill be considered. The Committee was asked to forward any other items to the Chair by the end of the week, for consideration.

H. Draft Local Government and Elections (Wales) Bill

The Committee noted the draft Bill and the implications for the Committee. In response to questions the Head of Legal and Democratic Services advised that the provisional timetable was that the Bill would be passed in the autumn and become effective in April 2021.

The Committee considered that it could write an annual report, even before the Bill came into law. Comment was made that not all councillors

understood the role of the Standards Committee. It was noted that the Committee's agendas and minutes were available to all councillors but an annual report could provide a useful summary of its work. It was suggested that a work programme could be developed for the Committee.

It was noted that leaders of political groups may be required to take steps to promote and maintain high standards of conduct by members of their groups. The Head of Legal and Democratic Services advised that the Committee would need to ensure that group leaders could access advice and training to understand any new duty. In response to questions he advised that if issues regarding conduct were brought to the Standards Committee, it would consider what actions a group leader had taken to promote good conduct. It was suggested that the Standards Committee could have annual meetings with Group Leaders to develop engagement.

I. Correspondence

The Committee noted the letter and Practice Direction - APW/PD/01/2020 published by the President of the Adjudication Panel for Wales.

J. Meeting dates

The dates of future meetings were noted:
Wednesday 10 June 2020
Wednesday 7 October 2020

Mr S Hays (Chair)