

CITY AND COUNTY OF SWANSEA

MINUTES OF THE STANDARDS COMMITTEE

HELD AT CIVIC CENTRE ON FRIDAY, 13 FEBRUARY 2015
AT 9.30 AM

PRESENT: A C Novis (Chair) Presided

Councillor(s)

J C Bayliss
P Downing
C E Lloyd
L G Thomas

Independent Members:-

J Burgess
M Howells
C Walton
J Gomes

Officers:-

T Meredith - Deputy Head of Legal, democratic Services and Procurement
H Evans - Head of Democratic Services
J Tinker - Democratic Services Coordinator

43 **APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE.**

No apologies for absence were given.

44 **DISCLOSURES OF PERSONAL AND PREJUDICIAL INTERESTS.**

In accordance with the provisions of the Code of Conduct adopted by the City and County of Swansea, no interests were declared.

45 **MINUTES.**

RESOLVED that the Minutes of the Standards Committee held on 9 January 2015, be accepted as a correct record.

46 **BEST WISHES**

Councillor C E Lloyd expressed his best wishes to A Novis (Chairman of Standards) and C Walton (Vice – Chairman) who's terms of office as members of the Standards Committee had come to an end. The Committee praised them both on their commitment , contribution and valuable advice given during this 10 year period.

47 **DISCUSSION REGARDING THE MEETING WITH COMMUNITY COUNCILS.**

At the last meeting of the Standards Committee it was agreed that a meeting be arranged with representatives of the Community Councils to discuss various matters identified in the workplan. A discussion took place regarding the format of this meeting. The following suggestions were put forward :

- What is your perception of the Standards Committee?
- What is the role of the Clerks?
- What do you consider to be the role of the Monitoring Officer?
- What are your views regarding signing the pledge?
- What are the main issues you face on the Community Council?
- What is your views regarding the Local Dispute Regulations?
- What is your commitment to training both for Community Councillors and Clerks?
- What is your interpretation of "Treating People with Respect"?

It was also suggested that the views of Community Councillors and Clerks be sought of those that had been asked to Group Leaders. It was considered beneficial if this meeting take place in May/ June after the new Standards Committee Independent Members and started.

RESOLVED that the format of this meeting take place as identified above.

48 **COMMUNITY/TOWN COUNCILS STANDARDS SUB COMMITTEE MERGER WITH STANDARDS COMMITTEE.**

The Head of Democratic Services presented a joint report regarding Community/Town Councils Standards Sub Committee merger with Standards Committee. The legislation relating to the Standards Committee together with the issues and process relating to the merger were detailed in the report. It was queried if there was a maximum period for the length of service for Community Councillors. It was stated that the Regulations would be checked to clarify this matter.

RESOLVED that the Standards Committee recommend to Council that the Community/ Town Councils Standards Sub Committee be merged with the Standards Committee.

49 **COUNCILLORS LOCAL DISPUTE RESOLUTION.**

The Head of Democratic Services presented a joint report which considered how to raise the profile of the Councillors Local Dispute Resolution mechanism and whether it could be used for Community/ Town Councils. The report and procedure in relation to the Councillors Local Dispute Resolution mechanism was appended as Appendix A. The views of the Committee were sought how to raise its profile and encourage

the use of the Councillors Local Dispute Resolution and if this could be adopted by the various Community/ Town Councils. It was queried if this Local Dispute Resolution could be used by members of the Public and if this was the case it may be more appropriate for the Chair of Standards to Chair the Councillor Mediation Panel. It was suggested that the Local Dispute Resolution be raised with the Community Council representatives in the forthcoming meeting.

RESOLVED that the Ombudsman's views be informally sought regarding whether it would be appropriate if the Local Dispute Resolution could be extended to members of the public.

50 **TREATING PEOPLE WITH RESPECT.**

The Head of Democratic Services submitted a joint report which considered how to tackle and co – ordinate the issue raised by a number of Political Group Leaders in relation to "Treating People with respect". The views of the Committee were sought. The definition of respect was discussed. The impact of the receiver was considered important and that it should be viewed from this point of view. The Officer/ Councillor Relations Protocol was highlighted. It was suggested that training for Chairs include specific reference to respect.

RESOLVED that a report be prepared setting out specific training for Chairs and ways that the profile of the Officer/ Councillor Relations Protocol could be raised, and if it was possible to extend this to Community Councils.

WORKPLAN.

The Committee considered the workplan plan and the key issues that were as raised to be incorporated into the workplan at the last meeting. It was suggested that as the 2 new independent members would be attending their first meeting on 17 April, that this be used as a training session. The frequency of meetings for the forthcoming municipal year was discussed. It was suggested that these meetings be held quarterly rather than every six weeks which was the current arrangement.

RESOLVED that

- (1) A refresher training session be scheduled for the next meeting on 17 April 2015.
- (2) Meetings for the forthcoming municipal year be held on a quarterly basis.

The meeting ended at 10.50 a.m.

CHAIR