

CITY AND COUNTY OF SWANSEA

MINUTES OF THE STANDARDS COMMITTEE

**HELD AT COMMITTEE ROOM 5, GUILDHALL, SWANSEA ON FRIDAY,
4 SEPTEMBER 2015 AT 9.30 AM**

PRESENT: Meirion Howells (Chair) Presided

Councillor(s)	Councillor(s)	Councillor(s)
J A Hale	C E Lloyd	L G Thomas

Independent Member(s)

Jill Burgess Margaret Williams	Gareth Evans	Jennifer Gomes
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Officers:

Patrick Arran	-	Head of Legal, Democratic Services & Procurement
Allison Lowe	-	Councillor Support Officer

9 **APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**

Apologies for absence were received from Councillor Phil Downing. In addition, Huw Evans, Head of Democratic Services, also offered his apologies as he was undertaking a Charity Cycle Ride for the Rachel Waters Remembrance Fund for a young boy who required an operation for robotic hands.

10 **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.

11 **MINUTES**

RESOLVED that the Minutes of the Standards Committee held on 5 June 2015 be accepted as a correct record.

12 **DISPENSATION REGIME (VERBAL)**

The Head of Legal, Democratic Services and Procurement circulated extracts from legislation in terms of the Standards Committee (Grant of Dispensations) Wales Regulations 2001.

County and County Borough Councils, Community Councils, Fire Authorities and National Park Authorities in Wales ("relevant authorities") are required by Section 51 of the Local Government Act 2000 ("the Act") to adopt a code of conduct for members and co-opted members which must incorporate any mandatory provisions of any model code of conduct issued by the National Assembly for Wales under section 50 (2) of the Act.

A short discussion ensued in relation to whether the Committee wished to consider the Dispensation Regime as part of its workplan.

Noted that:

The item be added as an agenda item for discussion at the next meeting of the Standards Committee.

13 **MEASURES TO ADDRESS ATTENDANCE AT COUNCILLOR TRAINING**

The Head of Legal, Democratic Services and Procurement presented this item in the absence of the Head of Democratic Services.

Members of the Standards Committee had attended the Democratic Services Committee on 16 June 2015 to discuss what sanctions, if any, could be utilised by the Authority to increase Councillor attendance at Councillor training events. Additionally, the Committee discussed the issue of making certain training compulsory. However it was noted that even if Council agreed to certain training being mandatory, it could only be "enforced" by political group discipline.

RESOLVED that:

- 1) The Standards Committee noted points 2.1 – 2.5 and endorsed the recommended list of mandatory training in point 3.5 of the report that the Democratic Services Committee would be recommending to Council.

14 **STANDARDS COMMITTEE ANNUAL REPORT 2014-2015**

The Chair of the Standards Committee presented a report which set out the work of the Standards Committee and Community / Town Councils Standards Sub – Committee between June 2014 and May 2015. The views of the Committee were sought before the report was submitted to Council on 24 September 2015.

RESOLVED that:

- 1) The date that Jill Burgess was appointed Vice Chair be included in paragraph 2.4.
- 2) The Annual Report of the Standards Committee for 2014-2015 be approved.

15 **DISCUSSION ON QUESTIONS FOR FUTURE GROUP LEADERS / CHAIRS MEETING (VERBAL)**

The Standards Committee discussed the format of the meeting scheduled for 13 November 2015, to which the 4 Political Group Leaders had been invited to attend. The questions asked during the 2014-2015 period were reviewed by the Committee.

It was also suggested by the Head of Legal, Democratic Services and Procurement that the Committee consider inviting the Chairs of Audit and Scrutiny to attend.

RESOLVED that:

- 1) The questions in relation to the Swansea Pledge and merger of the Standards Committee with the Community / Town Council Standards Sub-Committee be removed;
- 2) A question be added in relation to how to further develop the relationship between the Standards Committee and Community / Town Councils;
- 3) Additional / amended questions be forwarded to Allison Lowe by Monday, 14 September 2015.

16 **DISCUSSION ON JOINT COMMUNITY TOWN COUNCILS FORUM & STANDARDS COMMITTEE (VERBAL)**

The Head of Legal, Democratic Services and Procurement reported that the joint meeting between the Standards Committee and Community Town Councils Forum had been scheduled for Monday, 16 November 2015 at 5 pm.

The Head of Legal, Democratic Services and Procurement would provide Code of Conduct Training at the meeting, whereby he would focus on the various changes to the Guidance issued by the Public Services Ombudsman for Wales.

The Public Services Ombudsman for Wales had also accepted the invitation to attend the joint meeting.

17 **STANDARDS & ETHICS CONFERENCE WALES 2015 - 20 OCTOBER 2015 (VERBAL)**

The Chair of the Standards Committee reported that he was no longer able to attend the Standards & Ethics Conference scheduled for 20 October 2015, however places would be booked for the other members who had expressed an interest.

The Committee discussed the format of the Conference, including a Social Media Workshop that the Head of Legal, Democratic Services and Procurement would be taking part in, in conjunction with Daniel Hurford of the Welsh Local Government Association.

RESOLVED that:

The Head of Legal, Democratic Services and Procurement meet with the Vice Chair of Standards Committee in advance of the Conference to discuss whether she was in a position to facilitate this workshop.

18 **WORKPLAN 2015-2016**

RESOLVED that the Workplan be amended as follows:

Date	Issue
October 2015 (exact date tbc)	Shortlisting for Standards Committee Vacancy (as a result of the merger between Standards Committee & Community Town Councils Standards Sub Committee
13 November 2015 (Special Meeting)	Annual Meeting with Political Group Leaders
4 December 2015	Annual meetings with Chairs of Committees (Audit, Democratic Services, General Licensing, Planning and Scrutiny Programme) & Chief Executive.
4 December 2015	Review of Dispensation Regime.
4 December 2015	Treating People with Respect
4 December 2015	Inconsideration of Ombudsman's approach to Code of Conduct complaints and recent decisions
TBC	Declarations of Interest
TBC	Local Dispute Resolutions
TBC	Good governance and best practice

In addition, the Chair of the Standards Committee expressed his wish for the Standards Committee to respond to the recent Public Services Ombudsman for Wales Code of Conduct Casebook (July 2015). This would be dealt with via email correspondence between the Chair and other Standards Committee members with guidance from the Head of Legal, Democratic Services & Procurement.

The meeting ended at 10.58 am.

CHAIR