

CITY AND COUNTY OF SWANSEA

MINUTES OF THE STANDARDS COMMITTEE

**HELD AT COMMITTEE ROOM 5, GUILDHALL, SWANSEA ON FRIDAY, 4
MARCH 2016 AT 9.35 AM**

PRESENT: M Howells (Chair) Presided

Councillor(s)

J A Hale

Councillor(s)

C E Lloyd

Councillor(s)

Co-opted Member(s)

J Burgess
M Williams

Co-opted Member(s)

G Evans

Co-opted Member(s)

J Gomes

Officer(s)

Patrick Arran
Allison Lowe

Head of Legal & Democratic Services / Monitoring Officer
Democratic Services Officer

Apologies for Absence

Councillor(s): L G Thomas

Independent Member(s): P Crayford

32 **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.

33 **MINUTES**

RESOLVED that the minutes of the Standards Committee held on 4 December 2015 and the Special Standards Committee held on 22 January 2016 be approved as a correct record.

34 **FEEDBACK ON ANNUAL MEETINGS WITH POLITICAL GROUP LEADERS,
CHIEF EXECUTIVE AND CHAIRS OF COMMITTEES.**

The Chair reported on the feedback following discussions with the Political Group Leaders, Chief Executive and Chairs of Committees.

The Committee discussed the recurring themes and key issues raised.

Due to the new guidelines being issued by the Welsh Government in relation to the Local Authorities (Model Code of Conduct) (Wales) (Amendment) Order 2016, the Committee agreed to focus on points 2.5 and 2.6 of the report.

RESOLVED that:

- 1) The Standards Committee members continue to attend various Committees of the City & County of Swansea in order to promote good practice and ensure that respect is maintained;
- 2) The Independent Members of the Standards Committee attend Community / Town Council meetings as an evidence gathering exercise in relation to Code of Conduct issues.

35 **DISCUSSION ON RESPONSE FROM THE PUBLIC SERVICES OMBUDSMAN FOR WALES IN RELATION TO CHAIRS LETTER RE CODE OF CONDUCT CASEBOOK (JULY 2015).**

The Chair of the Standards Committee reported that the Public Services Ombudsman for Wales had responded to the letter from the Chair dated 21 December 2015 in relation to the PSOW Code of Conduct Casebook – July 2015.

The Committee discussed whether to respond further, however it was decided that owing to the forthcoming changes to the Model Code of Conduct, the Committee would continue to monitor the situation over the next few months.

RESOLVED that the contents of the letter are noted.

36 **THE LOCAL AUTHORITIES (MODEL CODE OF CONDUCT) (WALES) (AMENDMENT) ORDER 2016.**

The Monitoring Officer provided a verbal update to the Committee in relation to the Local Authorities (Model Code of Conduct) (Wales) (Amendment) Order 2016 which would come into effect on 1 April 2016.

The City & County of Swansea and all Community and Town Councils will have to adopt the new Model Code of Conduct by the 26 July 2016 at the latest and it is recommended that this will be done at the next available Council meeting. Until the new Model Code of Conduct is adopted, the existing one will continue to apply.

He outlined the main changes to the Order and stated he would circulate a briefing note to the Standards Committee.

RESOLVED that:

- 1) The update is noted;
- 2) The Monitoring Officer circulate a briefing note to the Standards Committee outlining the main changes to the Order.

37 **DISCLOSURE OF COUNCIL REPORTS TO THE PUBLIC.**

Gareth Evans, Independent Co-Opted Member referred to an article in the Evening Post dated 15 February 2016 regarding internal audit reports that appeared to have been published in advance of an Audit Committee meeting scheduled for 16 February 2016.

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Mr Evans queried the timing of the publication of these reports, ie in advance of the reports being considered by the Audit Committee.

It was confirmed that as the City & County of Swansea is a publicly accountable organisation, unless reports are deemed as commercially sensitive or "exempt" that all agenda packs for public meetings are published on the Authority's website 3 days (or 5 days in the case of Council and Cabinet) prior to the date of the meeting. This was to promote openness and transparency of Council business.

The meeting ended at 10.20 am

CHAIR