



City and County of Swansea

Minutes of the **Standards Committee**

Remotely via Microsoft Teams

Friday, 15 October 2021 at 10.00 am

Present: Jill Burgess (Chair) Presided

Councillor(s)

M B Lewis

Councillor(s)

L G Thomas

Co-opted Member(s)

Mike Lewis

Co-opted Member(s)

Margaret Williams

Officer(s)

Tracey Meredith

Huw Evans

Allison Lowe

Chief Legal Officer / Monitoring Officer

Head of Democratic Services

Democratic Services Officer

Apologies for Absence

Councillor(s): O G James

Independent Member(s): Philip Crayford and Michaela Jones

7 **Disclosures of Personal and Prejudicial Interests.**

In accordance with the Code of Conduct adopted by the City & County of Swansea, the following interests were declared:

Mike Lewis (Co-Optee) declared a personal interest in Minute 9 “Public Services Ombudsman for Wales (PSOW) Annual Report & Letter for 2020/2021.”

8 **Minutes.**

Resolved that the Minutes of the Standards Committee held on 19 March 2021 and 30 June 2021 be approved and signed as a correct record.

9 **Public Services Ombudsman for Wales Annual Report and Letter for 2020/2021.**

The Monitoring Officer provided a “For Information” report in order to update the Standards Committee on the Annual Report of the Public Services Ombudsman for Wales (PSOW) for 2020/21.

10 Standards Committee Annual Report 2020-2021.

The Monitoring Officer presented the Standards Committee Annual Report 2020-2021 which outlined the work undertaken by the Committee during the period.

The Monitoring Officer thanked Allison Lowe for the work undertaken in re-formatting the report.

The Committee also thanked the Monitoring Officer for the work undertaken during the year, including updating the Hearings Procedure which had been utilised during the current municipal year.

Resolved that:

- 1) The Annual Report 2020-2021 be approved;
- 2) The Annual Report be presented to Council on 2 December 2021 for information.

11 Code of Conduct Casebook.

The Monitoring Officer presented a "For Information" report outlining the latest Public Services Ombudsman for Wales Code of Conduct Casebook.

In particular she highlighted details of a case referred to the Adjudication Panel for Wales in relation to Sully and Lavernock Community Council.

Resolved that:

- 1) The Monitoring Officer circulate details of the case together with Social Media guidance to all City & County of Swansea Councillors and Community / Town Councils.

12 Breach of Code of Conduct - Complaints made to the Public Services Ombudsman for Wales (PSOW).

The Monitoring Officer presented a "For Information" report to update the Committee on decisions by the PSOW in relation to allegations that Local Authority and Community and Town Councillors had breached the Code of Conduct.

13 Workplan 2021-2022. (Verbal)

The Monitoring Officer provided a list of future items for consideration by the Standards Committee in 2021-2022 as follows:

- Interview Group Leaders regarding Local Government & Elections (Wales) Act 2021 responsibilities;
- Consultation with Community / Town Councils in relation to training/induction;
- Update the request for dispensation form;
- Social Media guidance for Councillors.

Minutes of the Standards Committee (15.10.2021)
Cont'd

In addition it was suggested that:

- The Questions for Group Leaders be revised;
- If investigations as to whether there were any potential trends in relation to the Code of Conduct Complaints for Swansea reported to the Public Services Ombudsman for Wales, with particular reference to those against Community / Town Councillors could take place.
- The Monitoring Officer write initially to the Clerks to the Community/Town Councils asking for details of training, particularly in relation to financial matters.

Resolved that:

- 1) The above items be added to the Work Plan for 2021-2022;
- 2) An additional meeting be arranged for December / January.

The meeting ended at 10.36 am

Chair