

Report of the Head of Democratic Services

Standards Committee – 9 January 2015

SWANSEA COUNCILLOR PLEDGE ON STANDARDS

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| Purpose: | To review the sign up to the Swansea Councillor Pledge on Standards following comments made by Political Group Leaders and Chairs of Committee to the Standards Committee. |
| Policy Framework: | None. |
| Reason for Decision: | To review sign up to the Pledge. |
| Consultation: | Finance, Legal. |
| Recommendation(s): | The views of the Committee are sought. |
| Report Author: | Huw Evans |
| Finance Officer: | Carl Billingsley |
| Legal Officer: | Tracey Meredith |
| Access to Services Officer: | Euros Owen |

1. Introduction

1.1 The Standards Committee of 12 April 2013 recommended to Council that:

- i) The “Swansea Councillor Charter and Councillor Pledge on Standards” be approved and adopted;
- ii) It be compulsory that Councillors sign the “Swansea Councillor Charter and Councillor Pledge on Standards”.

1.2 The Annual Meeting of Council of 9 May 2013 accepted the recommendation of the Standards Committee and passed a resolution as outlined above. The Pledge is attached as **Appendix A**.

2. Sign Up to the Pledge

2.1 During the following months 50 Councillors signed up to the pledge whilst 22 did not. At the time there were 49 Ruling Group Councillors and 23 Opposition Councillors and it became evident that sign up had split along Political lines. All of the Ruling Group had signed the Pledge, however only one Opposition Councillor had done so.

2.2 Despite this 4 Opposition Councillors prepared their own version of the pledge, signed them and returned them to the Head of Democratic Services. The Alternative Pledge is attached as **Appendix B**. I have been informed that more Opposition Group Councillors have signed their alternative pledge however I have never been passed them.

3. Standards Committee discussions with the Chief Executive, Political Group Leaders, Chairs of Regulatory Committees and the Chair of the Scrutiny Programme Committee

3.1 During the period 18 March to 10 October 2014, the Standards Committee held individual discussion meetings with the Chief Executive, Political Group Leaders, Chairs of Regulatory Committees and the Chair of the Scrutiny Programme Committee.

3.2 A recurring theme from these discussion meetings was a call for the Standards Committee to reconsider its recommendation to Council that the Pledge be compulsory.

3.3 The Standards Committee on 21 November 2014 asked that a report be presented to its next meeting in order that further consideration be given to the matter.

4. Equality and Engagement Implications

4.1 An Equality Impact Assessment (EIA) screening process took place prior to the consultation period. The outcome indicated that it was low priority and a full report was not required.

5. Financial Implications

5.1 There are no specific financial implications associated with this report.

6. Legal Implications

6.1 There are no specific legal implications associated with this report.

Background Papers: None.

Appendices:

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| Appendix A | City and County of Swansea - Councillor Pledge on Standards |
| Appendix B | Independent Councillor Pledge |

City and County of Swansea - Councillor Pledge on Standards

This Pledge is made in conjunction with the Members' Code of Conduct and forms part of an ethical code which binds all Councillors of the City and County of Swansea.

In accordance with the decision of Council on 9 June 2011 (Minute 29 refers) to adopt the "Dealing with Complaints by One Councillor against another" mediation process, I hereby confirm that I will always attempt to resolve any grievances through that mediation process.

As a Councillor elected to the City and County of Swansea, I am committed to the highest standards in public life and support the Nolan Principles of:

| | | | |
|----------------|------------------|------------|--------------|
| • Selflessness | • Objectivity | • Openness | • Leadership |
| • Integrity | • Accountability | • Honesty | |

In order to achieve the Nolan Principles, I Will:

Selflessness and Stewardship

- 1) Protect the interests of the Council, the City and County of Swansea and its people and never to act in my own interests in carrying out my duties as a Councillor.

Integrity

- 2) Act according to the highest standards of probity in carrying out my various duties as a Councillor.

Promotion of Equality and Respect for Others

- 3) Lead by example, promoting equality and respect for others whenever I am representing Swansea and its residents.

Objectivity and Propriety

- 4) Consider all issues and cases on their merits and follow the principles of good decision making set out in Article 13 of the Council's Constitution.
- 5) Carry out my duties and responsibilities with due regard to the principle that there should be equality of opportunity for all people and to consider all business of the Council whether it affects the interests of my Electoral Division (Locality) and / or the interests of the City and County of Swansea and its residents on this basis.

Duty to uphold the Law

- 6) Be fully aware of my duties and responsibilities under the Members' Code of Conduct and have regard to the advice and guidance issued by Standards Committee, Chief Executive, Monitoring Officer and Section 151 Officer.

Accountability and Openness

- 7) Be aware of and carry out my duty in dealing with confidential matters.
- 8) Support and Promote the conduct of the Council's business being carried out in an open and transparent manner.

Training and Personal Development

- 9) Regularly review my training needs and undertake appropriate development opportunities to properly fulfil my Councillor duties.

Leadership

- 10) Seek to work towards the City and County of Swansea becoming a beacon of best practice.

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| Councillor | |
| Date | |
| Signature | |

Independent Councillor Pledge

In accordance with a decision of Council, I hereby confirm that I will always attempt to resolve any complaints I have made against another Councillor through the mediation process that has now been adopted.

I also agree to review my training needs on a regular basis and to undertake appropriate development opportunities which I consider of value in order to improve and properly fulfil my Councillor duties.

I also undertake to put the interests of my ward and its residents at the forefront of my responsibilities as a Councillor.

In all other respects, I agree to uphold the Nolan principles embodied in the Code of Conduct and which I signed on becoming elected to the City and County of Swansea.

Signed: _____

Name & Title & Address: _____

Political Group (at City and County of Swansea Council): _____