



City and County of Swansea

Minutes of the **Standards Committee**

Multi-Location Meeting - Gloucester Room, Guildhall / MS

Teams

Wednesday, 22 March 2023 at 2.30 pm

Present: Mike Lewis (Chair) Presided

Councillor(s)

M B Lewis

Councillor(s)

L G Thomas

Co-opted Member(s)

Michaela Jones

Janet Pardue-Wood

Co-opted Member(s)

Mark Rees

Margaret Williams

Officer(s)

Tracey Meredith

Allison Lowe

Chief Legal Officer / Monitoring Officer

Democratic Services Officer

Apologies for Absence

Councillor(s): C Rabaiotti

45 Disclosures of Personal and Prejudicial Interests.

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

46 Minutes.

Resolved that the Minutes of the Standards Committee held on 20 January 2023, 17 February 2023 and 2 March 2023 be approved and signed as correct records.

47 Group Leaders Duty.

As part of the new duties for Group Leaders as part of the Local Government & Elections (Wales) Act 2021, the Standards Committee agreed to meet with political Group Leaders to discuss how they maintain high standards of behaviour within their group.

Group Leaders were requested to submit a completed template to the Standards Committee in advance of discussions (see Appendix A).

In addition to the completed templates, the Committee invited Councillors Lyndon Jones (Conservative) and Peter May (Uplands) to the meeting scheduled for 22 March 2023.

Councillors Jones and May provided the following supporting information during discussions:

Councillor Lyndon Jones

Councillor Jones stated that his group had very good relationships with the other political groups and Councillors in Swansea. He expected Councillors to treat others with respect - the same way you would expect to be treated by others. He was always mindful to thank officers for the hard work undertaken.

- Training

Councillor Jones felt that the training programme provided for Councillors was very good. In addition, the way Swansea operated its Scrutiny process was of a gold standard.

He had reminded his group to undertake any outstanding training by watching the recordings. Whilst he acknowledged that Social Media training was provided to Councillors, he suggested that perhaps more or enhanced training be considered.

- Code of Conduct

Councillor Jones stated that there was a good working relationship with all the Group Leaders and all the other Councillors and there were currently no code of conduct issues. Should any arise he would raise them with the relevant individuals immediately.

In order to maintain high standards he met with his group regularly. He is a member of the Disciplinary & Parliamentary Committee within his group and prospective candidates are advised of expected behaviours when applying for the role of Councillor.

Councillor Peter May

Councillor May reported that his group had doubled from 2 to 4 members at the last Local Government Election which allowed its members to engage in more Committees as its proportionality had increased as a result.

- Training

Councillor May suggested that training sessions could be more engaging and interactive in their delivery as the majority of the sessions were delivered via powerpoint presentation. This was very repetitive and not very exciting.

- Code of Conduct

Councillor May indicated that there were no code of conduct issues reported and he had not had to utilise the Internal Dispute Resolution Process, however he ensured that he was always courteous to others. He would ensure he kept up to date with any further legislation changes in respect of the duty on Group Leaders.

The Chair thanked both Councillors for attending the Committee to provide further feedback.

48 Community & Town Council Training Plans.

The Monitoring Officer presented a report to consider how to review Community & Town Council training plans and ensure that appropriate training is being undertaken in Community & Town Councils in Swansea.

Resolved that:

- 1) The report be noted;
- 2) The Standards Committee re-visit this item in 6 months.

49 Gifts & Hospitality.

The Monitoring Officer presented a report to consider harmonisation of gifts and hospitality thresholds so as to ensure consistency across Wales.

Resolved that the Standards Committee supports the proposal that Local Authorities in Wales should voluntarily harmonise their thresholds for registrations of gifts and hospitality so as to ensure consistency across Wales.

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

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

51 Workplan 2022-2023.

The Monitoring Officer presented the Work Plan for 2022-2023.

Resolved that:

- 1) The Work Plan be noted;
- 2) The outstanding items be included in the Work Plan for 2023-2024.

The meeting ended at 3.21 pm

Chair