



City and County of Swansea

## Minutes of the **Standards Committee**

Multi-Location Meeting - Lilian Hopkin Room, Guildhall / MS

Teams

Wednesday, 24 July 2024 at 2.45 pm

**Present:** Mike Lewis (Chair) Presided

**Councillor(s)**

O G James

**Councillor(s)**

M B Lewis

**Co-opted Member(s)**

Michaela Jones

**Co-opted Member(s)**

Janet Pardue-Wood

**Co-opted Member(s)**

Margaret Williams

**Officer(s)**

Huw Evans

Allison Lowe

Adrian Jeremiah

Head of Democratic Services

Democratic Services Officer

Lead Lawyer

**Also present**

R C Stewart

Leader of the Labour Group

**Apologies for Absence**

Councillor(s): L G Thomas

Independent Member(s): Mark Rees

---

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

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

**5 Minutes.**

**Resolved** that the Minutes of the Standards Committee held on 22 March 2024 be approved and signed as a correct record.

**6 Standards Committee Annual Report 2023-2024.**

The Chair presented the Standards Committee Annual Report 2023-2024. The report described how the Committee's functions had been discharged during the previous year.

**Resolved** that:

- 1) The report be approved and forwarded to Council for information.

## **7 Group Leader 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 continue discussions how they maintain high standards of behaviour within their group.

Group Leaders were provided with the themes for discussion in advance of the meeting as outlined in Appendix A.

Councillor Stewart provided the following supporting information during discussions:

He outlined the well-defined and well proven processes within the Labour Group in order to promote the best behaviours and actions for Members.

Whilst new Members received an induction from the Council, they also received a group induction to assist them politically to understand the requirements of the role and all the principles associated to people in public life.

He explained that there was a 'whip' system in place where the both the chief and deputy whip and would also fully support and guide members. He outlined the arrangements currently in place between the Group Leaders/Groups within the Council for issue resolution (Local Dispute Resolution Process) and stated that there were good relationships between the Group Leaders, who had been able to deal with issues as they arose.

'The Act' reinforced what they were already doing and the Labour Group would continue to review their processes where value could be added.

In respect of training, the Induction programme for new councillors was extremely comprehensive but could be difficult for new Councillors to fully absorb. The opportunity to have refresher sessions or opportunities to go back and redo training or to buddy up with their peers was welcomed.

Councillor Stewart confirmed that the support received from the Standards Committee, Chief Executive and Monitoring Officer was sufficient.

As Group Leader he led by example, demonstrating the highest standards in all aspects, including showing respect for other Members. Whilst there was robust debate on points of principle in Council meetings, there were cordial relations with the other groups. He would always try to support a member who found themselves facing an issue or a challenge by offering a pastoral role, trying to ensure that Members understood that they could be open and honest about issues they were facing in the knowledge that they would be supported.

The Chair thanked Councillor Stewart for his attendance.

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

The Head of Democratic Services 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.

**9 Work Plan 2024-2025. (Verbal)**

The Head of Democratic Services suggested the following items for the Work Plan 2024-2025:

- 1) Revised Hearings Procedure;
- 2) Feedback from the National Standards Committee Forum.

**Resolved** that the above items be considered at the next meeting of the Standards Committee.

The meeting ended at 3.13 pm

**Chair**