

CITY AND COUNTY OF SWANSEA

MINUTES OF THE STANDARDS COMMITTEE

**HELD AT COMMITTEE ROOM 3 - CIVIC CENTRE ON FRIDAY, 29
AUGUST 2014 AT 9.30 AM**

PRESENT: A Novis (Chair) Presided

Councillor(s)

J C Bayliss
P Downing
C E Lloyd

Independent Members:-

J Burgess M Howells
J Gomes C Walton

Officers:-

T Meredith – Deputy Head of Legal, Democratic Services and Procurement
J Tinker - Democratic Services Coordinator

17 **APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE.**

An apology for absence were received from Councillor G Thomas.

18 **DISCLOSURES OF PERSONAL AND PREJUDICIAL INTERESTS.**

In accordance with the provisions of the Code of Conduct adopted by the City and County of Swansea, the following interest was declared:-

Councillor C E Lloyd declared a personal and prejudicial interest in Minute No 23 – Request for Dispensation and left prior to discussion thereof.

19 **MINUTES.**

RESOLVED that the Minutes of the Standards Committee held on 18 July 2014 be accepted as a correct record.

20 **MATTERS ARISING FROM THE MINUTES (FOR INFORMATION).**

Minute 6 – Meeting with Chairs of Regulatory Committees

It was stated that Councillor M Day, Chair of the Scrutiny Programme Committee would be attending the next meeting of this Committee on 10 October 2014.

21 **PUBLIC SERVICES OMBUDSMAN FOR WALES ANNUAL REPORT 2013/14.**

The Monitoring Officer submitted a report the purpose of which was to advise the Committee of the publication of the Public Services Ombudsman for Wales' Annual Report for 2013/14.

A full copy of this report was circulated. Section 4 of the report dealt with Code of Conduct complaints . At annex C of his report the Ombudsman provided a statistical breakdown code of conduct complaint outcomes by Local Authorities. In relation to Swansea Council there were 30 cases closed of which 22 were closed after initial consideration. The question of how the Ombudsman logging complaints was raised as previously the Standards Committee had written to the Ombudsman regarding this matter.

In relation to Community/ Town Councils of the 115 cases closed 26 related to Mumbles Community Council all of which were closed after initial consideration. Concern was expressed regarding this high number and it was suggested that this should be raised by the Ombudsman.

The Committee noted the reduction in the number of cases referred to either the authority's Standards Committee or the Adjudication Panel for Wales and that this was partly attributable to the Calver Case in 2012. The Committee felt that this was something they would like to address further with the Ombudsman.

The Committee were disappointed that this Authority had not been mentioned in the Ombudsman's Report in respect of Local Resolutions. It was queried if the decrease in the time taken in dealing with complaints was a result in an increase in staff. The indemnity cap referred to in the Ombudsman report was discussed.

It was suggested that the Ombudsman be invited to this Committee to discuss his Annual Report and any issues arising.

RESOLVED that :-

- (1) the report be noted.
- (2) The Ombudsman be invited to the meeting of Standards Committee to be held on 21 November to discuss the points raised above.

22 **EXCLUSION OF THE PUBLIC.**

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The Committee were requested to exclude the public during consideration of the item of business identified in the recommendation of the report on the grounds that it involves the likely disclosure of exempt information as set out in the Exclusion paragraph of Schedule 12A of the Local Government (Access to Information) (Variation) (Wales) Order 2007, relevant to the items of business as set out in the report.

The Committee considered the Public Interest Test in deciding whether to exclude the public from the meeting for the items of business where the Public Interest Test is relevant as set out in the report.

RESOLVED that the public be excluded for the following item of business.

(CLOSED SESSION)

23 **REQUEST FOR DISPENSATION.**

The Monitoring Officer submitted a report which sought consideration of an application from Councillor C Lloyd under the Standards (Grant of Dispensation) (Wales) Regulations 2001.

RESOLVED that Standards Committee grant Councillor C Lloyd dispensation under paragraph 2 (d) of the Standards Committee (Grant of Dispensation) (Wales) Regulations 2001, as follows:-

To stay, speak and vote on any item relating to Social Services matters other than those that directly affect his grandmother who is a service user of adult social care.

The meeting ended at 9.50a.m.

CHAIR