

CITY AND COUNTY OF SWANSEA

MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE STANDARDS COMMITTEE

**HELD AT COMMITTEE ROOM 3, CIVIC CENTRE, SWANSEA ON FRIDAY 17
JANUARY 2014 AT 9.30 A.M.**

PRESENT: A Novis (Chair) presided

Councillor(s): **Councillor(s):**

P Downing J W Jones

Independent Members:

J Burgess M Howells C G Walton
J Gomes

Officers:

T Meredith - Deputy Head of Legal, Democratic Services and Procurement
H Evans - Head of Democratic Services
J Tinker - Democratic Services Co-ordinator

50. **APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors C E Lloyd and J A Raynor.

51. **BEST WISHES**

The Committee wished best wishes to Councillor C E Lloyd for a speedy recovery following his recent illness.

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

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

53. **MINUTES**

RESOLVED that the Minutes of the Meeting of the Standards Committee held on 15 November 2013 be accepted as a correct record.

54. **MATTERS ARISING FROM THE MINUTES**

Minute No. 41 - Members Indemnity for Code of Conduct Hearing

The Deputy Head of Legal, Democratic Services and Procurement updated the Committee regarding the response from the Ombudsman. It was stated that this response would be circulated to the Committee.

Minute No. 42 - Annual Meeting with Group Leaders

The Head of Democratic Services stated that various queries had been received from Group Leaders and the Chief Executive regarding what would be expected from them when they attend this Committee and that it would be advantageous if the Committee agree the actual framework and expected outcomes. The Committee considered this and suggested that views regarding the following be sought at this meeting with Group Leaders :

- How Group Leaders saw the role of the Standards Committee.
- Did they understand this role?
- How they could help in promoting standards and good governance.
- How they see the future role of Standards Committee.
- Their views regarding training in respect of the Code.
- How they considered the Regional Dispute Regulations worked.

The separate role of the Chief Executive and Group Leaders was discussed.

RESOLVED that:

- (1) the Group Leaders be informed that their views regarding the above would be sought;
- (2) Committee Members contact Democratic Services with any further questions;
- (3) the Group Leaders be invited collectively initially and the Chief Executive be invited to a separate meeting.

55. **UPDATE ON CASES**

The Head of Democratic Services provided an update on current breach of the Code of Conduct investigations.

56. **COMMUNITY/TOWN COUNCILS STANDARDS SUB-COMMITTEE - SITUATION IN WALES**

The Head of Democratic Services presented a joint report regarding the issues relating to merging the Standards Committee with the Community/Town Council Standards Sub-Committee, the policies that must be followed together with the situation with regard to Standards Committees throughout Wales.

RESOLVED that the views of the Group Leaders be sought when they are invited to this Committee.

57. **EXCLUSION OF THE PUBLIC**

The Committee were requested to exclude the public during consideration of the items of business identified in the recommendation to the report on the grounds that they involve 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 item 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 items of business.

(CLOSED SESSION)

58. **OMBUDSMAN NON-ACCEPTANCE OF ALLEGATION**

The report of the Monitoring Officer advised the Committee of the decision by the Ombudsman not to investigate the allegation of a breach of the Code of Conduct against the Councillor(s) indicated in the report.

RESOLVED that the decision of the Ombudsman be noted.

59. **FINDING OF THE OMBUDSMAN - NO EVIDENCE OF A BREACH**

The report of the Monitoring Officer advised the Committee of the decision by the Ombudsman that there was no evidence of a breach of the Code of Conduct against the Councillor(s) indicated in the report.

RESOLVED that the decision of the Ombudsman be noted.

The meeting ended at 10.10 a.m.

CHAIR