



City and County of Swansea

Minutes of the **Standards Committee**

Room 235 (Councillors Meeting Room) - Guildhall, Swansea

Thursday, 7 February 2019 at 10.00 am

Present:

Councillor(s)

J A Hale

Councillor(s)

M B Lewis

Councillor(s)

L G Thomas

Co-opted Member(s)

Jill Burgess

Michaela Jones

Co-opted Member(s)

Gareth Evans

Margaret Williams

Co-opted Member(s)

Mike Lewis

Officer(s)

Huw Evans

Allison Lowe

Tracey Meredith

Head of Democratic Services

Democratic Services Officer

Chief Legal Officer

Apologies for Absence

Councillor(s): Nil

Independent Member(s): Philip Crayford

Margaret Williams (Vice Chair) Presided

18 Disclosures of Personal and Prejudicial Interests.

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

19 Minutes.

Resolved that the Minutes of the Standards Committee held on 16 November 2018 be approved and signed as a correct record.

Matters Arising:

Minute 16 Code of Conduct Casebook

The Monitoring Officer confirmed that following discussions at the last meeting she had written to the Public Services Ombudsman for Wales (PSOW) to enquire how the Standards Committee could widen their role in order to assist in the complaints process. To date she had not received a response but would follow up.

Co-Opted Member Mike Lewis stated that he had an informal discussion with the PSOW whilst both had been attending a recent event. The PSOW reiterated his stance that if complaints made were in the public interest, then he would investigate accordingly.

Jill Burgess (Chair) Presided

20 Code of Conduct Casebook.

The Monitoring Officer updated the Committee on the latest Public Services Ombudsman for Wales Code of Conduct Casebook.

The latest issue – issue 18 October 2018 covered the period July to September 2018 and was attached at Appendix A.

Resolved that:

- 1) The report be noted;
- 2) The report be circulated to all Councillors.

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

The Monitoring Officer advised the Committee of the decisions made by the Public Services Ombudsman for Wales in relation to allegations that Local Authority Councillors had breached the Code of Conduct.

Resolved that the report be **noted**.

22 Exclusion of the Public.

The Committee was requested to exclude the public from the meeting during the consideration of the item(s) of business identified in the recommendation to the report on the grounds that it involved the likely disclosure of exempt information as set out in the exemption paragraph of Schedule 12A of the Local Government Act 1972, as amended by the Local Government (Access to Information) (Variation) (Wales) Order 2007, relevant to the item(s) of business set out in the report.

The Committee considered the Public Interest Test in deciding whether to exclude the public from the meeting for the item(s) of business where the Public Interest Test was relevant as set out in the report.

Resolved that the public be excluded for the following items of business.

(Closed Session)

23 Requests for Dispensation.

The Monitoring Officer provided a report to consider applications for dispensation in relation to the Councillors E J King and J A Raynor.

In considering the granting of dispensations, the Committee sought to balance the public interest in preventing members with prejudicial interests from taking part in decisions, against the public interest of decisions being taken by a representative group of members of the Authority.

A failure to grant a dispensation which results in an authority or committee not achieving a quorum, can constitute grounds for granting a dispensation.

Resolved that:

- 1) Councillor E J King be granted the following dispensation under paragraphs 2 (d) and (e) of the Standards Committee (Grant of Dispensations) (Wales) Regulations 2001 (as amended):
 - i) To Stay, Speak (but not in relation to his husband's employment) but not Vote when considering the Authority's budget.
- 2) Councillor J A Raynor be granted the following dispensation under paragraphs 2 (d) and 2 (f) of the Standards Committee (Grant of Dispensations) (Wales) Regulations 2001 (as amended):
 - i) To Stay, Speak but not Vote on matters relating to the Appointment of Local Authority Governors.
 - ii) This dispensation shall not apply if the Councillor is or becomes aware of any impact on a closely associated person (within the meaning of paragraph 10 (2) (c) of the Code of Conduct) that relates to and is specific to the Appointment of Local Authority Governors.

The meeting ended at 10.33 am

Chair