

## MINUTES OF A MEETING OF THE STANDARDS COMMITTEE, HELD AT COUNTY HALL, LLANDRINDOD WELLS ON WEDNESDAY 17<sup>th</sup> JUNE 2015.

**PRESENT:** H. Rhydderch-Roberts (Chair)  
J. Evans, C. Jackson, S. Jarman, R. Miller, County Councillors M. Mackenzie, P. Medlicott, K. Roberts-Jones and G. Williams.

**Observers:** Community Councillors C. Evans, H. Patrick, D. Pugh.

**Officers in Attendance:** C. Pinney (Solicitor to the Council), N. Vaughan (Professional Lead – Legal), W. Richards (Scrutiny Manager and Head of Democratic Services) and E Patterson (Scrutiny Officer).

### ELECTION OF CHAIR

**RESOLVED** that Independent Member H Rhydderch-Roberts be appointed as Chair for her term of office.

1.	<b>APOLOGIES</b>	<b>S5 – 2015</b>
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No apologies were received.

2.	<b>MINUTES</b>	<b>S6 – 2015</b>
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The Chair was authorised to sign the minutes of the previous meeting held 25<sup>th</sup> February 2015 as a correct record subject to amendments to the resolution relating to Council Tax Discount namely:

- (i) ***A dispensation be granted to a Member who personally has (or has a close relative, person living with him/her or a close personal associate who has) a property in Powys available or potentially available to sell or let to make written representation to the Monitoring Officer by 5.00pm on 21<sup>st</sup> October 2014. Such Representations may not attempt to persuade Members on the outcome of the debate but may give information or scenarios that should be taken into account. Any representations received to be made available to Members eligible to participate in the debate.***

3.	<b>DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST</b>	<b>S7 – 2015</b>
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No declarations of interest were received.

4.	<b>REPORT OF THE SOLICITOR TO THE COUNCIL</b>	<b>S8 – 2015</b>
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The Committee received the report of the Solicitor to the Council. (Copy filed with signed minutes)

### **A General Standards Issues for County Councillors and Co-opted Members**

## **A1 Code of Conduct Training**

The second round of Code of Conduct training was undertaken on 27<sup>th</sup> April 2015 which was attended by 8 County Councillors and 1 Co-opted Member. 1 Co-opted Member has resigned (Church representative) and an appointment for this post has been made together with a new appointment of a further Co-opted Member (Parent Governor Representative). These two Co-opted Members received their Code of Conduct training on 26<sup>th</sup> March 2015. Thus there remain 10 County Councillors yet to undertake the Mandatory Code of Conduct Training.

It is proposed that these Members are given a date in September when a third and final training session will be available to them.

## **A2 Member Development**

A report on Mandatory Training was considered at Council on 23<sup>rd</sup> April 2015 where it was referred back to the Democratic Services Committee for further consideration. The Democratic Services Working Group had an initial discussion regarding Mandatory Training on the 8<sup>th</sup> June 2015 and this will then be considered by the Democratic Services Committee on 9<sup>th</sup> July 2015 with a view to taking the matter back to Full Council on 15<sup>th</sup> July 2015.

## **B Referral of Councillors to Public Services Ombudsman**

### **B1 County Councillor Referrals**

**B1.1** The following matters are with the Ombudsman:

1/15/CC	Case closed
2/15/CC	Found no breach but training requirement identified regarding planning protocol training for non-Planning Committee members
3/15/CC	Not investigating
4/15/CC	Ombudsman referred the complaint for local resolution however, the Complainant has declined to use the local resolution process and therefore the Complaint is effectively withdrawn
5/15/CC	Not investigating
6/15/CC	Awaiting decision whether or not investigating

## **C Other Standards Issues**

At a meeting of Powys County Council held on 23<sup>rd</sup> April 2015 Independent Member Helen Rhydderch-Roberts was reappointed for a second term of officer for a period of four years expiring on 13<sup>th</sup> May 2019.

At the Annual Meeting of Powys County Council on 13<sup>th</sup> May 2015 County Councillor Kath Roberts-Jones was appointed to the Standards Committee in place of County Councillor Stephen Hayes.

## D Dispensations

### D1.1 Applications - County Councillors

An application for dispensation from County Councillor G Bowker was received. Cllr Bowker wished to speak and vote and meetings of the Council on discussions regarding the review of early years provision in Powys. County Councillor Bowker has a young son who is currently accessing early years provision. However, when the proposals are implemented Councillor Bowker's child will be above the age of early years provision.

RESOLUTION	REASON FOR RESOLUTION
That no dispensation be granted to Cllr Gemma Bowker regarding matters relating to early years provision at meetings of the Council.	That she has a pecuniary interest in potential changes to the provision

### E Later payment of expenses

No applications have been received.

### F Attendance

#### F1 County Councillor attendance statistics

Officers confirmed that a total of five Members had attendance below 60% for the period 1<sup>st</sup> December 2014 – 12<sup>th</sup> May 2015. Officers confirmed that in the following four cases mitigating circumstances were known.

- Councillor Eldrydd Jones – personal circumstances
- Councillor Kathryn Silk – personal circumstances
- Councillor Liam Fitzpatrick – personal circumstances
- Councillor Peter Harris – personal circumstances

The reasons for the following Members having attendance below 60% was not known and Members were asked to provide information for the Committee:

- Councillor Jeff Holmes 20% (had missed three meetings whilst on holiday and had missed one meeting attending a funeral)
- Councillor Keith Tampin 59% (has missed meetings in December whilst on holiday)
- Cllr R George 34% (provided details regarding his need to be in Cardiff on Tuesday and Wednesday and some Thursdays at the Assembly. He outlined his commitments in Cardiff on those days when he had missed meetings of the County Council)
- Cllr G Price 55% - no response.

The Committee accepted the reasons where given but wished to stress the importance of attending meetings of the Council.

## **F.2 Attendance**

A new system would be introduced for agenda and minute management which would include the recording of attendance. The system allows recording as:

- Present
- Apologies
- Absent
- On other Council Business

The Committee agreed to define 'on other Council Business' as attending formal meetings where the Member has been appointed or is representing the local authority.

## **G Whistleblowing Policy**

The Whistleblowing policy was agreed at Council on 24<sup>th</sup> April 2015.

## **H Standards Conference**

The Standards Conference has been arranged for 20<sup>th</sup> October 2015 and will be hosted by Cardiff Council with support from the Vale of Glamorgan and Newport Councils. The County Council had been offered four places and places for Town and Community Councillors were being offered directly to Town and Community Councils.

The following people expressed an interest in attending:

Independent Member H Rhydderch-Roberts  
Solicitor to the Council C Pinney  
Independent Member R Miller  
Independent Member C Jackson

Reserve members:  
County Councillor K Roberts-Jones  
County Councillor M Mackenzie  
Independent Member Jackie Evans

## **I Ombudsman's Office**

### **I1 New Guidance on Code of Conduct**

This had been published on the website of the Public Services Ombudsman for Wales.

### **I2 Ombudsman's Casebook**

This had been published on the website of the Public Services Ombudsman for Wales.

**J The Local Government (Democracy) (Wales) Act 2013 (Commencement No 2) Order 2015**

This had been published on 1<sup>st</sup> May 2015. It included an enabling power for Standards Committees to join with neighbouring Standards Committees but there was not requirement to pursue this.

**K Meeting Dates**

The following dates for the Standards Committee were confirmed:

Wednesday 25<sup>th</sup> November 2015

All meetings to commence at 10.00am with the option of training available afterwards.

**H Rhydderch-Roberts  
Chair**