

CYNGOR SIR POWYS COUNTY COUNCIL.

**Standards Community Sub- Committee
3rd July 2013**

REPORT BY: Solicitor to the Council

SUBJECT: Matters appertaining to Standards Issues

REPORT FOR: Decision, Information and Discussion

A. Referral of Councillors to Public Services Ombudsman

A1. Town and Community Councillor Referrals

Since the last meeting the Ombudsman has advised that:

18/12/TCC – referred the matter to the Adjudication Panel for Wales.

01/13/TCC – remains under investigation

02/13/TCC – a decision into a potential breach of the Code identified by the Ombudsman has been issued. The decision is that no formal action needs to be taken however, the Councillor was reminded of their obligations under the Code and urged to seek advice from their Clerk or Monitoring Officer should any clarification be required.

03/13/TCC – a new complaint was received which the Ombudsman has decided not to investigate.

B. Dispensations

B1. Applications - Town and Community Councillors

No applications for dispensation have been received from Town and Community Councillors.

C. Other Standards Issues

C1.1 Social Networking

The WLGA provided training for Members on blogging and social networking on 19th April 2013. Unfortunately this clashed with the Standards Conference which meant that Members of the Standards Committee would not have been able to attend.

C1.2 Local Government (Democracy) (Wales) Bill

To note that within the provisions of the Bill (Part 5), including

- i) Amendments regarding the publishing of Registers of Members' interests,
- ii) Enabling the Council to establish Joint Standards Committees with other authorities
- iii) Enabling a Standards Committee to refer a report or recommendation by its Monitoring Officer to another Standards Committee.

C1.3 Standards and Standards Community Sub-Committee

Prior to 2008 the Council had a Standards Committee with three Sub-Committees covering the three Shire areas which met on an ad-hoc basis to determine applications for dispensation. For the purposes of standardisation of decision-making it was agreed to change the makeup of the Sub-Committees to a single sub-committee for Town and Community Council matters which would consider applications for dispensation from across the county.

The issues which affect Town and Community Councillors are often similar to those which affect County Councillors. It is necessary to ensure that decisions are made which are not contradictory.

It has been custom and practice since 2008 for all Members of the Standards Committee and the Standards Community Sub-Committee to attend both meetings and indeed the Chair has welcomed comment from all Members at those meetings ensuring however when it comes to matters for decision that only those Members who are entitled to vote by virtue of being Members of the Committee/Sub-Committee to which the decision relates take part in the decision. In addition, only Members of the committee to which the matters relate will consider confidential items.

C1.4 Public Services Ombudsman for Wales – Annual Report 2012-13

The Annual Report of the Public Services Ombudsman for Wales 2012-13 has been published and is available from the web-site www.ombudsman-wales.org.uk. A number of hard copies of the report are available on request.

D. Meeting Dates.

D1. To note dates of future meetings as follows:

4th September 2013

4th December 2013

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

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