

**MINUTES OF A MEETING OF THE STANDARDS COMMITTEE HELD AT
COMMITTEE ROOM A - COUNTY HALL, LLANDRINDOD WELLS, POWYS ON
WEDNESDAY, 2 OCTOBER 2019**

PRESENT: Mr S Hays (Chair)

Independent Members: Mrs J Evans, Mrs C Moore and Mrs C Mulholland

County Councillors: S McNicholas, K M Roberts-Jones and K S Silk

In attendance: Ms D Jones (Deputy Monitoring Officer) and Miss C Johnson
[Democratic Services Officer]

1. APOLOGIES

Apologies were received from Mrs C Jackson.

The Committee noted that Sarah Lewis had resigned as a Councillor in September, 2019. The Committee noted that a replacement had been sought from the respective Group and the nomination would be approved by Council at its meeting on 10 October, 2019.

2. MINUTES

The Chair was authorised to sign the minutes of the meeting held on 5 June, 2019 as a correct record.

3. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

County Councillor K Roberts-Jones declared a personal interest in Item 4 F as she is a member of the Policy Forum which discusses and compiles policies for the Council.

4. REPORT OF THE SOLICITOR TO THE COUNCIL
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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 Committee noted that refresher training on Code of Conduct will be arranged in 2020 for all Councillors and co-opted members.

A2. Mandatory Training

A2.1 The Committee noted that four Councillors had not attended or completed the mandatory Equalities & Diversity training. The Committee noted that Councillor Harris, was due to attend the last session, but her afternoon appointment had arrived early and that Councillor Alexander was unable to complete the session due to urgent business.

Officers advised that the training would be provided by Council officers and a suitable date would need to be agreed, to ensure the four Councillors could attend. The Committee agreed that, taking this into account the training should be provided before Christmas, if possible.

RESOLVED	Reason for decision
that an email be sent from the Chair of Standards to Councillors Rosemarie Harris, Liam Fitzpatrick and Gareth Pugh who had not attended the mandatory training and to County Councillor Myfanwy Alexander who had not completed the training session in September, advising them that they need to attend the next session.	To comply with the Council policy.

- A2.2 The Committee noted that Councillor Fitzpatrick had signed in and left the mandatory Corporate safeguarding training in September. Officers advised that this training had been recorded and a self-assessment form had been developed by officers.

RESOLVED	Reason for decision
That an email be sent from the Chair of Standards to Councillor Liam Fitzpatrick requiring him to undertake the mandatory training by watching the video and completing the self-assessment form, within one month of receiving the video.	To comply with the Council policy.

The Committee agreed that Councillors should be reminded that they were required to complete mandatory development.

RESOLVED	Reason for decision
That an email be sent from the Chair of Standards to Councillors reminding them they were required to complete mandatory training in full.	To comply with the Council policy.

B. Referral of Councillors to the Public Services Ombudsman

B1. County Council Referrals

The current position regarding matters with the Ombudsman is detailed below:

02/CC/2017 Concluded no breach

01/CC/2018 Referred to APW
 08/CC/2018 Concluded not investigating
 09/CC/2018 Concluded not investigating
 12/CC/2018 Concluded no breach. Review requested.

03/CC/2019 Concluded not investigating

C. Dispensations

C1. Applications - County Councillors

No applications for dispensation have been received from County Councillors.

D. Late Payment of Expenses

A claim for payment of expenses was submitted by Councillor L George for mileage expenses (submitted on 25 September, 2019, the paperwork having previously been returned to Councillor George as it was incomplete), for mid-October 2018 to mid-November, 2018.

The Committee approved this application (which was the first one for mileage made by this Councillor) and thanked him for the explanation.

RESOLVED THAT	REASON FOR DECISION
the payment of the late claim submitted by Councillor George for mileage be paid for the period 25 October 2018 to 14 November, 2018.	To reimburse expenses incurred by Councillor George.

E. Member attendance

The Deputy Monitoring Officer reminded the Committee that as reported at the last meeting 10 Councillors had attendance levels below 60% for main Committee meetings for the period 17 May 2018 to 15 May 2019.

The Committee noted the following:

- Councillor Mackenzie's attendance level is now above the required 60% after adjustments have been made to rectify recording errors,
- Councillor Jeremy Pugh's attendance level is now above the required 60% after an adjustment was made to rectify a recording error,
- Sarah Lewis and Neil Morrison resigned as Councillors in September, 2019.

The Deputy Monitoring Officer advised that responses had been received from the other Councillors regarding their attendance levels. The Chair advised that he had considered the responses received from Councillors G Morgan and J Wilkinson, as these had contained personal information. The Committee noted that their attendance had been affected by family health reasons.

The Committee noted the following:

- Councillor L Fitzpatrick – advised that he had missed two meetings due to his attendance at friend’s funerals.
- Councillor C Mills – provided an explanation for the meetings she had missed. The Committee noted that the Group Leader had confirmed that he had not taken Councillor Mills off the Scrutiny Committee when requested, due to her other work commitments and this had affected her attendance levels.
- Councillor G Pugh – provided an explanation for the meetings he had missed and had advised that the Health and Social Housing Scrutiny Committee was a committee on which he felt he could bring little expertise. Having indicated this, he was removed from it by his Group.
- Councillor S Williams – The Group Leader provided an explanation for the meetings she had missed and commented on the changes in Committees and meeting dates over the period in question and the impact this had on working members.

The Committee thanked the Councillors for their explanations and accepted these. The Committee hoped that when Councillors consider their appointment to a Committee they are provided with a clear explanation of the role of the Committee so that they can consider whether they are able to make a meaningful contribution to the Committee.

F. Whistleblowing Policy and Procedures

The Committee noted the changes to the draft policy and procedures.

RESOLVED THAT	REASON FOR DECISION
The draft Whistleblowing Policy and Procedures be agreed.	To agree the policy.

G. Ombudsman’s Casebook

The Committee noted the Ombudsman’s Code of Conduct Casebooks for the period January – March 2019.

H. The North Wales Standards Committee Forum

The Committee received the Chairs notes and the draft minutes of the Forum meeting held on 24 June, 2019.

The Committee noted that it had been suggested that the next meeting could be hosted by Powys County Council. After discussion the Committee agreed that a meeting would be held in Neuadd Maldwyn, Welshpool, with a start time of 9.30 a.m. It was noted that the next meeting was scheduled for November, but this may not be feasible due to the availability of rooms and potential speakers.

I. Correspondence

There was no correspondence.

J. Meeting dates

The following Committee dates were noted:

Wednesday 12 February 2020

Wednesday 10 June 2020

Wednesday 7 October 2020 [rather than September as indicated in the officer's report].

Mr S Hays (Chair)