

STANDARDS COMMITTEE

Decision Notice – Remote Meeting, 2nd February, 2024.

The Committee agenda is available [here](#).

The recording of the meeting is available [here](#).

Present: R. Hendicott (Chair), L. Tinsley (Vice-Chair), R. Alexander, G. Watkins (Independent Members); Councillor P. Summers (Town and Community Council Representative); Councillors R.M. Birch, J.E. Charles and C.P. Franks.

AGENDA ITEM 1. APOLOGY FOR ABSENCE –

This was received from Mrs. P. Hallett (Independent Member).

AGENDA ITEM 2. MINUTES –

RESOLVED – T H A T the minutes of the meeting held on 23rd November, 2023 be approved as a correct record.

AGENDA ITEM 3. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST –

No declarations of interest were received.

AGENDA ITEM 4. APPLICATIONS FOR DISPENSATION (MO/HLDS) –

RESOLVED – T H A T the dispensations as set out in the schedule below be granted up to the date of the next Local Government Elections:

Member Requesting Dispensation	Paragraph(s) of the Standards Committee (Grant of Dispensations) (Wales) Regulations 2001 Under Which Dispensation is Granted and as applied for	Decision
Councillor W.A. Hennessy	(d) and (f)	To speak, vote and remain in meetings when matters relating to Community centres are to be discussed at Vale of Glamorgan

		Council and Barry Town Council meetings.
Councillor E.J. Goodjohn	(d) and (f)	To speak, vote and remain in meetings when matters relating to Community Centres are to be discussed at Vale of Glamorgan and Barry Town Council meetings.

Reason for decisions

Having regard to the applications and discussions at the meeting.

N.B. Since the publication of the Decision Notice an error was noted in that the decision of the Standards Committee in respect of the dispensations should have read

Councillor W.A. Hennessy – “To speak, vote and remain in meetings when matters relating to Community centres are to be discussed, and speak only when financial matters relating to Celtic Way Community Centre, Rhose, are to be discussed at Vale of Glamorgan Council and Barry Town Council meetings.”

Councillor E.J. Goodjohn – “To speak, vote and remain in meetings when matters relating to Community centres are to be discussed, and speak only when financial matters relating to Buttrills Community Centre, Barry, are to be discussed at Vale of Glamorgan and Barry Town Council meetings.”

AGENDA ITEM 5. OBSERVATIONS BY INDEPENDENT MEMBERS OF TOWN AND COMMUNITY COUNCIL MEETINGS (MO/HLDS) –

RESOLVED –

(1) T H A T the report and the feedback received in respect of the observation visit undertaken by an Independent Member of the Standards Committee to a Town and Community Council meeting be noted.

(2) T H A T it be accepted that where matters following observation visits of Town and Community Council meetings are highlighted by Independent Members as issues requiring further attention or further visits and / or requests are made by the Monitoring Officer / Head of Legal and Democratic Services for visits to be undertaken these be arranged as and when required.

Reasons for decisions

(1) Having regard to the observations undertaken and the role of the Standards Committee.

(2) To maintain a watching brief having regard to the role of the Standards Committee and the Monitoring Officer.

AGENDA ITEM 6. OVERVIEW REPORT FOLLOWING OBSERVATIONS BY INDEPENDENT MEMBERS OF TOWN AND COMMUNITY COUNCIL COMMITTEE MEETINGS (MO/HLDS) –

RESOLVED –

(1) T H A T the report and the feedback received in respect of observation visits undertaken by Independent Members be noted with an amendment to paragraph 2.14 of the report to include further context relating to the two issues identified in the current report having been less than those highlighted in the report of March 2022 and as mentioned in paragraph 2.10 of the report.

(2) T H A T having regard to a previous recommendation of the Committee that for Town and Community Council meetings where no material considerations have been raised, observation visits be undertaken on a biennial basis and that a schedule of observation visits by Independent Members be arranged to commence from April 2025.

(3) T H A T it be accepted that during the period i.e. January 2024 – April 2025 the Monitoring Officer may advise that additional meetings of Town and Community Councils be observed as considered appropriate.

Reasons for decisions

(1) Having regard to the contents of the report and the discussions at the meeting.

(2&3) Having regard to the observations undertaken, previous decisions and the role of the Standards Committee.

AGENDA ITEM 7. UPDATE ON NATIONAL STANDARDS COMMITTEE CHAIRS FORUM (MO/HLDS) –

RESOLVED –

(1) T H A T the Agenda for the meeting of the National Standards Committee Chairs Forum be noted.

(2) T H A T the verbal update provided by the Chair relating to the discussions held at the forum meeting on 29th January, 2024 be noted.

Reasons for decisions

(1) To apprise Committee.

(2) Having regard to the contents of the report and the Chair's verbal update in respect of the Forum meeting held on 29th February, 2024.

AGENDA ITEM 8. CORRESPONDENCE WITH THE PUBLIC SERVICES OMBUDSMAN FOR WALES (MO/HLDS) –

RESOLVED – T H A T the contents of the report be noted having regard to the fact that an update on the correspondence received from the Public Services Ombudsman for Wales and any matters arising under Part II of the report would be considered under Part II of the agenda.

Reason for decision

To apprise Members of the Committee.

AGENDA ITEM 9. REVIEW REPORT – PANEL OF INDEPENDENT MEMBERS OF THE STANDARDS COMMITTEE (MO/HLDS) –

RESOLVED – T H A T the Standards Committee considers the Review Report under the Part II report on the agenda.

Reason for decision

For the Standards Committee's consideration and approval.

EXCLUSION OF PRESS AND PUBLIC –

RESOLVED – T H A T under Section 100A(4) of the Local Government Act 1972, the press and public be excluded from the meeting for the following item of business on the grounds that it involves the likely disclosure of exempt information as defined in Part 4 of Schedule 12A (as amended) of the Act, the relevant paragraphs of the Schedule being referred to in brackets after the minute heading.

AGENDA ITEM 11. CORRESPONDENCE WITH THE PUBLIC SERVICES OMBUDSMAN FOR WALES (MO/HLDS) (EXEMPT INFORMATION – PARAGRAPHS 12, 13 AND 14) -

RESOLVED – T H A T the confidential information provided by the Monitoring Officer at the meeting be noted.

Reason for decision

Having regard to correspondence received from the Ombudsman, noting that it was confidential at this stage.

AGENDA ITEM 12. REVIEW REPORT – PANEL OF INDEPENDENT MEMBERS OF THE STANDARDS COMMITTEE (MO/HLDS) (EXEMPT INFORMATION – PARAGRAPH 12) –

RESOLVED –

(1) T H A T the recommendations of the Standards Committee Review Panel Report be approved as below, that -

- DBS checks be applied for within two weeks of Elected Members (and relevant Scrutiny Committee Co-opted Members with voting rights) being appointed to office and/or within two weeks of any renewals being required, and that the candidate handbook be amended accordingly.
- All Elected Members receive Code of Conduct refresher training midway through their elected term of office and be part of the ongoing Member Development.
- It should be a requirement that each Member should undertake any mandatory training within one month of taking office.
- The training should specifically cover the risk of any behaviour occurring in the future which would be in breach of the Code of Conduct,
- Efforts should be made to ensure that 100% of the workforce know of the Whistleblowing Policy, possibly by including it in the induction and refresher packs.

(2) T H A T the personal information contained within the Review Panel Report be redacted prior to the report being placed in the public domain.

(3) T H A T the resolution above, for all staff to be made aware of the Whistleblowing Policy and for the policy to be a part of the Staff Induction and Refresh Programme be referred to the Governance and Audit Committee.

(4) T H A T the above resolutions together with the Review Panel report, be referred to Cabinet.

Reasons for decisions

(1) Following consideration of the report and the discussions at the meeting.

(2) Having regard to the personal information contained within the report.

(3&4) For consideration.