

No.

STANDARDS COMMITTEE

Minutes of a Remote meeting held on 26th September, 2024.

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

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

Present: R. Hendicott (Chair); G. Olphert and G. Watkins (Independent Members) and Councillors R.M. Birch, J.E. Charles and C.P. Franks.

Also present: Councillor E. Williams (Cabinet Member for Social Care and Health).

390 ANNOUNCEMENT –

Prior to the commencement of the business of the Committee, the Principal Democratic Services Officer read the following statement: “May I remind everyone present that the meeting will be live streamed as well as recorded via the internet and this recording archived for future viewing”.

391 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE –

These were received from R. Alexander, Mrs. L. Tinsley (Independent Members) and Councillor P. Summers (Town and Community Council Representative).

392 MINUTES –

RESOLVED – T H A T the minutes of the meetings held on 29th July, 2024 at 9.30 a.m. and 10.00 a.m. be approved as a correct record. Having regard to the minutes at 10.00am of 29th July, 2024, the Chair advised Committee that the Councillor had not appealed the Committee’s decision and requested that a note be added at the end of the minutes to that effect.

393 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST –

No declarations of interest were received.

394 APPLICATIONS FOR DISPENSATION (MO/HLDS) –

The purpose of the report was to consider an application for dispensation from Councillor Malcolm Wilson of Cowbridge Town Council as attached at Appendix 1 to the report.

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RESOLVED – T H A T the dispensation 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 M. Wilson | (d) and (f) | To speak and vote on general matters and speak only on finance matters at meetings of Cowbridge with Llanblethian Town Council when matters relating to the Cowbridge and District Museum Trust and Charter Trust Cowbridge are to be considered. |

Reason for decision

Having regard to the application and discussions at the meeting.

395 PUBLIC SERVICES OMBUDSMAN FOR WALES ANNUAL REPORT AND ACCOUNTS 2023/24 (MO/HLDS) –

The purpose of the report was to present to Members the Annual Report and Accounts for the Public Services Ombudsman for Wales (PSOW) for the year ending 31st March, 2024. The link to the PSOW's report was included within the Committee report and attached as an Appendix for Members' consideration were extracts from the report relating to Members' Code of Conduct matters.

Committee Members were requested to consider the references detailed in the Ombudsman's Report in respect of complaints of Members of Local Authorities who had breached their Authority's Members' Code of Conduct.

The Monitoring Officer in particular drew Members' attention two examples that had been referred to the Adjudication Panel for Wales by the Ombudsman relating to Councillors of Town and Community Councils in Wales. During consideration of the report, it was also suggested that the report be brought to the attention of Clerks of Town and Community Councils at the next meeting of the Monitoring Officer with Clerks of the Vale of Glamorgan. The Chair, in referring to the time / delays taken to investigate reports, advised that comments had been made at the

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Standards Forum where the Ombudsman had been present and suggested that the Committee wait to receive an update on any further progress on this matter in due course.

RESOLVED –

(1) T H A T the aspects within the Annual Report of the Public Services Ombudsman for Wales referring to Code of Conduct matters within the remit of the Standards Committee be noted.

(2) T H A T the link to the report be forwarded to all Members of the Vale of Glamorgan Council for their information and the report be brought to the attention of all Clerks of the Vale of Glamorgan at the Monitoring Officer's next meeting with Clerks.

Reason for decisions

(1&2) Having considered the report and having regard to discussions at the meeting.

396 ADJUDICATION PANEL FOR WALES – ANNUAL REPORT 2023/24 (MO/HLDS) –

The report provided Committee with an update in respect of the work of the Adjudication Panel for Wales. The report covered the period 1st April, 2023 – 31st March, 2024. Members' attention was drawn to Case summaries at section 3 of the document which detailed the case referrals and their outcomes.

RESOLVED –

(1) T H A T the Annual Report April 2023 to March 2024 of the Adjudication Panel for Wales be noted and forwarded to Members of the Vale of Glamorgan Council for their information.

(2) T H A T a briefing note with regard to aspects of the Annual Report be provided to all Clerks at the next meeting of the Monitoring Officers meeting with Clerks of the Vale of Glamorgan.

Reason for decisions

(1&2) Having considered the report and discussions at the meeting.

397 CIVILITY IN PUBLIC LIFE – PROGRAMME OF WORK (MO/HLDS) –

The purpose of the report was to update Members of the Committee of the ongoing work associated with the Civility in Public Life Programme ("the programme") being led by the Local Government Association (LGA) in conjunction with the Welsh Local Government Association (WLGA).

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A report had previously been considered by the Standards Committee on 23rd November, 2023. The current report provided an update to Members of the Committee in respect of the ongoing programme of work being undertaken relating to Civility in Public life. It was noted that the Monitoring Officer attended the All-Wales Monitoring Officers Group meetings and would continue to monitor the programme and report further to the Standards Committee as and when required. The Chair of the Standards Committee again suggested that this report be referred to all Members of the Council and that they be reminded of Appendix 2 to the report.

RESOLVED – T H A T the further work being undertaken by the Local Government Association and Welsh Local Government Association on the programme of work be noted and that a copy of the report be forwarded to all Members of the Council for their information.

Reason for decision

Having considered the report and discussions at the meeting.

398 CORRESPONDENCE WITH THE PUBLIC SERVICES OMBUDSMAN FOR WALES (MO/HLDS) –

In line with the Committee's Forward Work Programme, it had previously been agreed that a standing item would appear on the Committee's agenda so that Committee could be apprised of correspondence with the Public Services Ombudsman for Wales and any matters arising.

RESOLVED – T H A T the contents of the report be noted, having regard to the fact that any update on 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.

399 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.

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400 CORRESPONDENCE WITH THE PUBLIC SERVICES OMBUDSMAN FOR WALES (MO/HLDS) (EXEMPT INFORMATION – PARAGRAPHS 12, 13 AND 14) –

As outlined at Part I of the agenda, it had been agreed by the Standards Committee that a standing item appear on the Committee's agenda in order that the Monitoring Officer / Head of Legal and Democratic Services would be able to apprise Standards Committee Members of correspondence received from the Public Services Ombudsman for Wales (the Ombudsman) on any matters arising, the items being confidential in nature in line with the Ombudsman's procedure.

RESOLVED – T H A T the confidential information provided by the Monitoring Officer / Head of Democratic and Legal Services at the meeting be noted.

Reason for decision

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