

No.

## STANDARDS COMMITTEE

Minutes of a Remote meeting held on 27<sup>th</sup> March, 2025.

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

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

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

### ANNOUNCEMENT –

Prior to the commencement of the business of the Committee, the Democratic and Scrutiny 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”.

### APOLOGY FOR ABSENCE –

This was received from L. Tinsley (Vice-Chair and Independent Member).

### MINUTES –

RESOLVED – T H A T the minutes of the meeting held on 30<sup>th</sup> January, 2025 be approved as a correct record.

### DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST –

No declarations of interest were received.

### APPOINTMENTS COMMITTEE RE: STANDARDS COMMITTEE –

The minutes of the Appointments Committee re Standards Committee held on 4<sup>th</sup> March, 2025 were presented by the Democratic and Scrutiny Services Officer.

The Officer advised that, both Mr. G. Watkins and Mr. R. Alexander were appointed to the Standards Committee on 13<sup>th</sup> March, 2019, for a six year term of office, which was due to expire on 12<sup>th</sup> March, 2025 respectively, however, both Independent Members had advised Democratic Services that they were prepared to be re-appointed for one further consecutive term not exceeding four years in accordance with legislation.

No.

It was therefore proposed to the Appointments Committee that both Independent Members, as referred to above, be reappointed as Independent Members to the Standards Committee for a further four years in accordance with the legislation until 12<sup>th</sup> March, 2029.

The Appointments Committee subsequently agreed to the proposal and their decision presented to the Standards Committee for noting.

With no concerns or queries raised, the Standards Committee subsequently

RESOLVED – T H A T the minutes of the Appointments Committee re: Standards Committee held on 4<sup>th</sup> March, 2025 be noted.

Reason for decision

Having regard to the minutes submitted and discussions held at the meeting.

APPLICATIONS FOR DISPENSATION (MO / HLDS) –

The purpose of the report was to consider applications for dispensation received from Councillors L. Burnett and R. Sivagnanam of the Vale of Glamorgan Council as detailed in Appendix 1 of the report.

Following a query raised by Mr. Olphert in relation to a reference made within Councillor Burnett's application of a historical expiry, the Monitoring Officer / Head of Democratic and Legal Services confirmed that Councillor Burnett's application was in fact an amendment to an already granted dispensation and that there had been no gap in the historical dispensation awarded. Therefore, Officers apologised for any confusion caused by the wording included within the application which referred to the process of re-establishing dispensations following a Local Government Election, for which Councillor Burnett was a returning Elected Member in 2022.

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:

<b>Member Requesting Dispensation</b>	<b>Paragraph(s) of the Standards Committee (Grant of Dispensations) (Wales) Regulations 2001 Under Which Dispensation is Granted and as applied for</b>	<b>Decision</b>
Councillor L. Burnett	(d), (e), (f) and (i)	To speak, vote and remain in meetings where issues are raised at meetings of the Council (including budgets and Sustainable Communities for

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		Learning) in respect of Oak Field Primary and St Richard Gwyn High School.
Councillor R. Sivagnanam	(d), (f) and (g)	To speak and vote when matters concerning Community Centres are raised at any Council meetings.

Reason for decision

Having regard to the applications submitted and discussions held at the meeting.

**MONITORING OFFICER UPDATE REPORT RE INDEPENDENT REVIEW BY PSOW, REVIEW OF STANDARDS COMMITTEE PROCEDURES AND WLGA EVENT HELD ON 5<sup>TH</sup> MARCH 2025 (MO / HLDS) –**

The Monitoring Officer / Head of Democratic and Legal Services presented the report to provide Committee with an update in respect of the following matters, for which comprehensive details were set out within the report:

- The Public Service Ombudsman for Wales' (PSOW) response to recommendation 2 of the Independent Review of Investigations by PSOW into Code of Conduct Complaints;
- Arrangements for the Review of Standards Committees Procedures to be undertaken following a Motion at Full Council on 2<sup>nd</sup> December, 2025;
- Local Democracy Event organised by the Welsh Local Government Association (WLGA) on 5<sup>th</sup> March, 2025.

To begin, the Monitoring Officer / Head of Democratic and Legal Services highlighted a correction in paragraph 2.5 of the report in that the Ombudsman's Chief Legal Officer was in fact present at the recent Monitoring Officer meeting held on 7<sup>th</sup> March, 2025 rather than Michelle Morris.

Following the Monitoring Officer's presentation of the report, and in particular paragraphs 2.7 – 2.18 on a review of the Council's current Local Dispute Resolution Procedure (LDRP) as well as the Procedure for Dealing with Allegations Made Against Councillors and Referred to the Standards Committee, as found at Appendix 3 to Section 19 of the Council's Constitution, Councillor Summers queried whether such review work would also encompass the same procedures adopted by Town and Community Councils across the Vale of Glamorgan.

In response, the Monitoring Officer / Head of Democratic and Legal Services advised that the proposed review was only in relation to the Vale of Glamorgan Council however, noted that they would continue to provide advice and guidance to Town and Community Councils, on request, in relation to their own adopted procedures that would often be modelled around procedures adopted by the Vale of Glamorgan Council.

No.

The Chair subsequently asked for any interested members of the Committee to nominate themselves for inclusion within a small working group to review Standards Procedures and confirmed, via the Monitoring Officer, that relevant terms of reference for the Working Group would be drawn up for future consideration.

RESOLVED –

(1) T H A T both the contents of the report and the Monitoring Officer’s verbal update on the same be noted.

(2) T H A T the membership of the Standards Procedures Working Group be confirmed as follows:

<b>Name</b>	<b>Capacity</b>
Richard Hendicott	Independent Member Standards Committee Chair
Gerwyn Watkins	Independent Member Standards Committee Member
Councillor Phil Summers	Independent Member Standards Committee Member Town and Community Council Representative
Councillor Rhiannon Birch	Vale of Glamorgan Elected Member Standards Committee Member

(3) T H A T terms of reference be drawn up for the Standards Procedures Working Group for future consideration.

(4) T H A T the conclusions of the Monitoring Officers Group be referred to the established Working Group for consideration when reviewing the Local Dispute Resolution Procedure (LDRP).

Reasons for decisions

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

(2&3) In order that a working group of Standards Committee Members can be established to undertake a review of the Council Procedures.

(4) To assist the review.

**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.

No.

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.

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 items of business on the grounds that they involve 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.

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.

MONITORING OFFICER UPDATE REPORT RE INDEPENDENT REVIEW BY PSOW, REVIEW OF STANDARDS COMMITTEE PROCEDURES AND WLGA EVENT HELD ON 5<sup>TH</sup> MARCH.2025 (MO / HLDS) (EXEMPT INFORMATION – PARAGRAPHS 12, 13 AND 14) –

The report had been prepared having regard to the information provided relating to a review of Standards Committee Procedures under the Part I report of the same title on the Committee's agenda to provide Committee with details of Counsel's opinion on Appendix 1 to the report as it contained confidential information.

No.

RESOLVED – T H A T the contents of the report be noted having regard to Counsel's opinion regarding reviewing both the Local Dispute Resolution Procedure and Procedure for dealing with allegations made against Councillors and referred to the Standards Committee.

Reason for decision

Having regard to the contents of the report and discussions held at the meeting.