

STANDARDS COMMITTEE

Minutes of a meeting held on 24th January, 2019.

Present: Mr. A. Lane (Chairman), Mr. R. Hendicott (Vice-Chairman); Mrs. L. Tinsley (Independent Members); Councillor M. Cuddy (Town and Community Councillor Representative) and Councillors L. Burnett, R. Crowley and B.T. Gray.

Also present: Councillor Mrs. S.M. Hanks.

683 APOLOGIES –

These were received from Mr. D. Carsley and Mrs. P. Hallett (independent Members).

684 MINUTES –

RESOLVED – T H A T the minutes of the meeting held on 22nd November, 2018 be approved as a correct record.

685 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST –

Mr. Hendicott advised that in relation to Agenda Item 5 he had raised an issue with the Monitoring Officer / Head of Legal and Democratic Services regarding consideration of dispensation applications by fellow Members of the Standards Committee. The Monitoring Officer / Head of Legal and Democratic Services stated that following the discussion she had been satisfied that there was no close personal acquaintance as referred to within the Members' Code of Conduct. However, in appreciating the query, the Monitoring Officer / Head of Legal and Democratic Services advised that she would pursue discussions with Bridgend Council to consider joint working arrangements should such types of situations arise in the future and report back to a future Committee meeting.

686 MINUTES OF THE APPOINTMENTS COMMITTEE RE STANDARDS COMMITTEE: 20TH DECEMBER, 2018 (MO / HLDS) –

The minutes of the Appointments Committee re Standards Committee meeting held on 20th December, 2018 were presented for the Committee's information.

It was noted that Mr. R. Alexander and Mr. G. Watkins had been recommended for appointment as Independent Members of the Standards Committee by the Appointments Panel of the Standards Committee and this had been confirmed by the Appointments Committee at its meeting on 20th December, 2018. The terms of office to be for six years respectively to commence from 13th March, 2019, subject to the submission of two appropriate references per applicant. The Monitoring Officer /

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Head of Legal and Democratic Services informed the Standards Committee that two appropriate references had been received for both the applicants and these had been approved by herself in conjunction with the Chairman of the Appointments Committee.

RESOLVED – T H A T the minutes of the Appointments Committee re Standards Committee meeting held on 20th December, 2018 and the appointment of the two independent members be noted.

Reason for decision

To advise the Committee.

687 APPLICATION FOR DISPENSATION (MD / HLDS) –

The Standards Committees (Grant of Dispensations) (Wales) Regulations 2001 permitted Members to apply to the Standards Committee to speak and, if appropriate, to vote on issues which due to prejudicial interests, they might not otherwise be able to speak or vote on or remain in the room.

An application had been received from Vale of Glamorgan Council Councillor L. Burnett to speak and vote in relation to Ysgol Sant Baruc as a result of the proposal to increase the number of primary Welsh medium school places in Barry. Councillor Burnett's application also stated that If the proposals to increase the number of primary Welsh medium school places in Barry were agreed, this would allow participation in future discussions on the 21st Century Schools proposals which specifically included Ysgol Sant Baruc.

Councillor Burnett was requesting the dispensation in relation to paragraphs (a), (c), (d), (f) and (g) of the Regulations due to the fact that her great niece had recently become a pupil at Ysgol Sant Baruc. The request was being made for meetings of the Learning and Culture Scrutiny Committee and Full Council where discussions may take place. An Independent Member on the Standards Committee queried whether other Members of the Council could also have a similar interest. Although not aware of all Members' interests in relation to the schools, the Monitoring Officer / Head of Legal and Democratic Services in response stated that she had written to Councillor N.P. Hodges, the Vice-Chairman of the Learning and Culture Scrutiny Committee, having been made aware that his wife was a Governor of Ysgol Sant Baruc, and had provided him with her advice and guidance as well as the date of the Standards Committee meeting. In order to clarify the nature of a close personal acquaintance, the Committee requested that the Monitoring Officer / Head of Legal and Democratic Services write to all Vale Councillors providing advice in respect of such matters.

Following consideration of the report and the comments made at the meeting it was

RESOLVED –

(1) T H A T Vale of Glamorgan Council Councillor L. Burnett be granted dispensation to speak and vote and take part in any discussion in relation to Ysgol Sant Baruc at Learning and Culture Scrutiny Committee and Full Council meetings. Dispensation granted in accordance with paragraphs (c), (d), (f) and (g) of The Standards Committees (Grant of Dispensations) (Wales) Regulations 2001 and granted until the next Local Government elections.

(2) T H A T the Monitoring Officer / Head of Legal and Democratic Services be requested to write to all Members of the Vale of Glamorgan Council advising of the Committee's decision in such matters.

Reason for decisions

(1&2) Having regard to the contents contained therein.

688 OBSERVATIONS BY INDEPENDENT STANDARDS COMMITTEE MEMBERS AT VALE OF GLAMORGAN COUNCIL MEETINGS (MO / HLDS) –

As part of the Committee's work programme it was agreed that Independent Members would attend a number of Vale of Glamorgan Council meetings during the Municipal year 2018/19 to observe meetings with a view to promoting and maintaining high standards of conduct in line with the Members' Code of Conduct.

Mrs. Tinsley informed the Committee that she had intended to attend a Council meeting prior to the Christmas break but due to illness had unfortunately been unable to attend.

The Principal Democratic and Scrutiny Services Officer stated that she would arrange for the new calendar of meetings for the Municipal Year 2019/20 that had recently been approved by the Council's Cabinet to be forwarded to all Members of the Committee for their information in order to consider attendance at future meetings.

RESOLVED – T H A T the report be noted.

Reason for decision

Having regard to the decision of the Standards Committee for Independent Members to attend meetings of the Vale of Glamorgan Council to observe.

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

The report outlined that the Monitoring Officer / Head of Legal and Democratic Services would provide an update for Members of the Committee at the meeting

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under Part II of the agenda in relation to recent correspondence and matters arising in line with the procedures of the Ombudsman which were confidential in nature.

The item was a standing item on the agenda in order that the Monitoring Officer / Head of Legal and Democratic Services could apprise Members as appropriate.

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 the Part II report would be considered under the Part II report on the agenda.

Reason for decision

To apprise Members of the Committee.

690 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.

691 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 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.

The Monitoring Officer / Head of Legal and Democratic Services proceeded to apprise the Committee verbally of recent correspondence that had been received and also referred to a press release that had been provided prior to the Christmas break in relation to a Member of the Vale of Glamorgan Council who had been charged and had been before the Magistrate's Court in Cardiff on 15th January, 2019. The Member had pleaded not guilty to ten counts of indecent assault and the matter had been referred to Cardiff Crown Court to be considered on 12th February, 2019.

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

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Reason for decision

Having regard to the correspondence received from the Ombudsman, noting that this was confidential at this stage and having regard to a press release that had been made prior to the Christmas break as outlined above.