

## STANDARDS COMMITTEE

Minutes of a remote meeting held on 27<sup>th</sup> May, 2021.

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

**Present:** Mrs. P. Hallett, Mr. R. Hendicott, Mrs. L. Tinsley and Mr. G. Watkins (Independent Members); Councillor M. Cuddy (Town and Community Council Representative) and Councillors Ms. R.M. Birch, B.T. Gray and A.R. Robertson (Vale of Glamorgan Council).

### 70 APPOINTMENT OF CHAIRMAN –

RESOLVED – T H A T Mr. R. Hendicott be appointed Chairman of the Standards Committee for the current Municipal year.

### 71 APPOINTMENT OF VICE-CHAIRMAN –

RESOLVED – T H A T Mrs. L. Tinsley be appointed Vice-Chairman of the Standards Committee for the current Municipal year.

Due to the Chairman currently recuperating following an admission to hospital the Vice-Chairman took the Chair for the duration of the meeting.

### 72 APOLOGY FOR ABSENCE –

This was received from Mr. R. Alexander.

### 73 MINUTES –

RESOLVED – T H A T the minutes of the meeting held on 25<sup>th</sup> March, 2021 be approved as a correct record.

### 74 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST –

No declarations of interest were received.

### 75 APPLICATION FOR DISPENSATION (MO / HLDS) –

The Standards Committee (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 for Dispensation from Sully and Lavernock Community Councillor D.W. Sylvester to speak and vote in meetings where issues were raised in respect of Playing Field Matters had been received and was attached at Appendix 1 to the report. The Monitoring Officer in presenting the report also drew Members attention to the letter attached to the application in respect of a previous dispensation that had been granted to Cllr Sylvester.

Having fully considered the report and the application attached, it was subsequently

RESOLVED – T H A T Sully and Lavernock Community Councillor D.W. Sylvester be granted dispensation to speak only at meetings of the Sully and Lavernock Community Council where issues are raised in respect of Playing Field Matters, in accordance with paragraphs (d) and (f) of The Standards Committees (Grant of Dispensations) (Wales) Regulations 2001, until the next Local Government elections.

#### Reason for decision

To comply with the regulations and obligations for the grant of dispensations to speak and vote.

#### 76 REPORT FOLLOWING OBSERVATIONS AT TOWN AND COMMUNITY COUNCIL COMMITTEE MEETINGS (MO / HLDS) –

One of the roles of the Standards Committee was to promote and maintain high standards of conduct by Councillors, Co-opted Members and Church and Parent Governor representatives of the Council. To assist this process, in March 2018, the Standards Committee agreed that Independent Members of the Committee undertake observations at Vale of Glamorgan Council meetings. In March 2019 this had been extended to include observations of Town and Community Council meetings. Following such observations, Independent Members are requested to report verbally on a regular basis their findings to the Standards Committee.

Mrs Hallett commenced by advising that she had attended virtually the Llandough CC meeting on 20<sup>th</sup> May 2021 which she stated had been a very good meeting. The meeting had been Chaired well and had been supported by the Clerk, the discussions had been focussed to the matters at hand, the meeting finished in a timely manner with Members being friendly and courteous throughout and in conclusion Mrs Hallett advised that it had been one of the best meetings that she had observed.

Mr Watkins had attended the AGM for Pendoylan CC on 20<sup>th</sup> May 2021, the tone of the meeting had been light, but business like with his lasting impression being a Community Council which worked together in harmony.

Mrs Tinsley had visited Colwinston CC in April which had been an extremely well-run meeting.

Following the above updates, it was subsequently,

RESOLVED –

(1) T H A T the verbal updates provided by Standards Committee Independent Members at the meeting be noted.

(2) T H A T the intention to continue to undertake observations of Town and Community Council and Vale of Glamorgan Council meetings by Standards Committee Independent Members be noted.

Reason for decisions

(1&2) Having regard to the observations undertaken and the role of the Standards Committee.

77 MONITORING OFFICER MEETINGS WITH CLERKS OF TOWN AND COMMUNITY COUNCILS (MO/HLDS) –

One of the roles of the Standards Committee was to promote and maintain high standards of conduct by Councillors, Co-opted Members and Church and Parent Governor representatives of the Council.

To assist in this process, the Monitoring Officer held meetings with Clerks of Town and Community Councils to provide opportunities for discussion of matters of mutual concern, to have regard to the principles of standards in public life and to provide networking opportunities. As a result of the pandemic the Clerks meetings were put on hold, however they had recently resumed, with a meeting having been held on Wednesday, 19<sup>th</sup> May, 2021.

The Monitoring Officer provided a verbal update advising that the purpose of such meetings included the sharing of good practice and the sharing of generic observations of TCC meetings undertaken by Independent Members of the Standards Committee. Other matters discussed at the meeting on 19<sup>th</sup> May included the Local Government and Elections (Wales) Act 2021 and the sharing of the Vale Council's working group's action plan regarding the provisions and timescales for implementation. The MO also advised that she would be taking a report for information / consideration to the next Community Liaison Committee regarding the observations undertaken by Independent Members as suggested by Cllr Robertson at the last Standards Committee meeting. Mrs Tinsley also requested that a summary report be presented to a future meeting of the Standards Committee detailing the key learning points from the observations, suggested areas for improvement, the introduction of an annual review report and benchmarking opportunities. Following a query as to which Clerks had attended the Clerks meeting on 19<sup>th</sup> May the MO agreed to share the list of attendees and the minutes of the meeting with Standards Committee members via email.

Cllr Cuddy enquired as to the discussions that may have taken place at the Clerks meeting regarding the General Power of Competence provision within the 2021 Act which he stated provided opportunities for TCC's but that had not necessarily been

viewed that way by some of the TCC's that had been present at the recent One Voice Wales conference. The MO in response advised that the discussion with the Clerks in respect of the General Power of Competence had focussed on the eligibility criteria for TCC's, it being noted that the regulations to the provisions were still awaited.

RESOLVED – T H A T the report and the Monitoring Officer's verbal update in respect of the Clerks meeting held on 19<sup>th</sup> May 2021 be noted.

Reason for decision

Having regard to the contents of the report, the verbal update provided by the Monitoring Officer and discussions at the meeting.

78 LOCAL DISPUTE RESOLUTION HEARING – APPOINTMENT OF CHAIRMAN (MO/HLDS) –

The purpose of the report was to consider the granting of delegated powers to the three Independent Standards Committee Panel members of a hearing under the Local Dispute Resolution Procedure (LDRP) to appoint a Chairman for a hearing.

The MO in presenting the report advised that to assist with some procedural matters that may be required prior to a hearing it would be beneficial that once the availability of the three Panel members was confirmed that a Chairman be appointed from amongst the three members.

During the discussion it was also confirmed that Panel members, as had been agreed at a previous Standards Committee meeting, were appointed on a rota basis.

Following consideration of the report, the Committee subsequently

RESOLVED – T H A T delegated powers be granted to the three members of a Local Dispute Resolution Procedure Panel to appoint a Chairman from amongst themselves prior to the hearings taking place.

Reason for decision

To allow for decisions to be made regarding any arrangements or procedural matters that may require to be put in place prior to a hearing.

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

The report outlined that the Monitoring Officer would provide an update to Members of the Committee at the meeting 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 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 Part II of the report would be considered under Part II of the agenda.

Reason for decision

To apprise Members of the Committee.

80 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.

81 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 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 therefore provided the Committee with a verbal update in respect of recent confidential correspondence with the Ombudsman. There being no questions in relation to the information provided at the meeting, it was

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

Reason for decision

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