

No.

STANDARDS COMMITTEE

Minutes of a Hybrid Meeting held on 29th July, 2024 held at 9.30am.

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

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

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

279 ANNOUNCEMENT –

Prior to the commencement of the business of the Committee, the Principal 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”.

280 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE –

These were received from L. Tinsley (Vice-Chair) and R. Alexander (Independent Members).

281 MINUTES –

RESOLVED – T H A T the minutes of the meeting held on 10th June, 2024 be approved as a correct record.

282 DECLARATION OF INTEREST –

Councillor C.P. Franks declared an interest in Agenda Item 4 – Applications for Dispensation. The nature of his interest was personal and prejudicial in that he had previously made a similar application for dispensation to Councillor Hennessy as a Trustee of a Community Library and would therefore withdraw from the meeting for the item.

283 APPLICATION FOR DISPENSATION (MO/HLDS) –

The report was presented by the Monitoring Officer / Head of Legal and Democratic Services, the purpose of which was to consider the application for dispensation from Councillor W. Hennessy to speak and vote at Vale of Glamorgan Council and Barry Town Council meetings as attached at Appendix 1 to the report.

No.

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 W.A. Hennessy	(d), (e) and (f)	To speak and vote on general matters relating to Rhoose Library and to speak only on matters regarding property or finance at both Vale of Glamorgan Council and Barry Town Council meetings.

Reason for decision

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

284 VERBAL REPORT BY CHAIR OF STANDARDS COMMITTEE RE MEETING OF THE STANDARDS COMMITTEE FORUM – JUNE 2024 (MO/HLDS) –

The Chair of the Standards Committee provided a verbal update following his online attendance at the meeting of the National Standards Committee Chairs Forum held on 24th June 2024. Judge Claire Sharp, the outgoing president of the Adjudication Panel for Wales (APL) and her successor, Judge Meleri Tudur, had been in attendance, with Judge Sharp commenting on the issues she looked for when deciding whether to permit an appeal against a decision by a Standards Committee.

Mr. Lyn Cadwallader, Chief Executive, and Paul Egan, Deputy Chief Executive of One Voice Wales (OVW), the principal organisation for Community and Town Councils in Wales provided the Forum with details of the support provided by OVW to Town and Community Councils and the training, support and information the organisation provided in relation to standards of behaviour and Code of Conduct matters.

The Public Services Ombudsman for Wales, Michelle Morris, provided an update on the work of the Ombudsman’s Office, advising that in the last year they had had 8,000 enquires and 3,000 complaints received in relation to the Public Sector, which included the NHS etc. There had been 328 Code of Conduct complaints received and they tried to deal with such cases within 12 months but this was not always possible. With regard to the inappropriate social media posts by a now ex-

No.

employee, the final report on this matter was expected to be completed in the autumn.

The Forum also discussed the Group Leader duty in the Local Government and Elections (Wales) Act 2021 and how this was being managed in the 22 Local Authorities. The Forum was informed that it was being developed differently in the majority of Local Authorities, with the Chair advising the Standards Committee that the Vale appeared to be progressing well with its interpretation and management of the provision.

RESOLVED – T H A T the verbal report provided by the Chair of the Committee at the meeting be noted.

Reason for decision

To apprise members of the Standards Committee of the Standards Committee Forum meeting held on 24th June, 2024.

285 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.

The Monitoring Officer / Head of Legal and Democratic Services advised that no correspondence had been received since the last meeting of the Committee.

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.

286 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.

No.

287 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.

The Monitoring Officer / Head of Legal and Democratic Services advised the Committee that no correspondence had been received since the last meeting. It was however noted that the Standards Committee had considered two investigation reports by the Ombudsman at its March meeting, with it being agreed that the Councillors involved be given the opportunity to make representations at a future meeting of the Standards Committee, either orally or in writing in respect of the findings of the investigation and any complaint that they had failed, or may have failed, to comply with the Vale of Glamorgan Council's Members' Code of Conduct.

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.