

RHONDDA CYNON TAF COUNTY BOROUGH COUNCIL

STANDARDS COMMITTEE

Minutes of the meeting of the Standards Committee held at the County Borough Council Offices, The Pavilions, Clydach Vale on Friday, 10 July 2015 at 10.00 a.m.

PRESENT

Independent Members

Mrs.A.Jones and Mr.M.Jehu, OBE

County Borough Councillor

G.Stacey

Community Councillor

R.Butler

Officers in Attendance

Mr.P.J.Lucas – Monitoring Officer

1 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were received from Mr.Guy Smith (Independent Member) and County Borough Councillor C.Davies.

2 ELECTION OF CHAIRMAN OF THE STANDARDS COMMITTEE

The Monitoring Officer advised the Committee of the need to elect a new Chairman owing to Mr.Guy Smith, who was unable to attend the meeting today, standing down from this position.

The Monitoring Officer and Committee Members wished to place on record their thanks to Mr.Smith for all his work during his term of office as Chair.

It was **RESOLVED** to elect Mr. Melvin Jehu,OBE to the position of Chairman of the Standards Committee.

3 APPOINTMENT OF VICE-CHAIRMAN OF THE STANDARDS COMMITTEE

RESOLVED to appoint Mrs.Anne Jones to the position of Vice-Chairman of the Standards Committee.

4 DECLARATIONS OF INTERESTS

There were no declarations of interests in matters pertaining to the agenda.

5 MINUTES

RESOLVED to approve as accurate records, the minutes of the meetings of the Standards Committee held on 13 April 2015.

6 STANDARDS CONFERENCE 2015

The Monitoring Officer stated that final details of this year's Standards Conference to be held in Cardiff on 20th October 2015 were still awaited, however, he provided an outline of the Programme for the Event including the themes of the planned Workshops. Once final details were received, further information would be provided to the Standards Committee Members.

7 ANNUAL REPORT OF THE PUBLIC SERVICES OMBUDSMAN FOR WALES 2014/15 – CODE OF CONDUCT COMPLAINTS

In his report, the Monitoring Officer highlighted figures relating to Code of Conduct Complaints to the Public Services Ombudsman for Wales during 2014/15 as reported in the Ombudsman's Annual Report for the year.

The Monitoring Officer stated that in addition to his Annual Report, the Ombudsman sends an Annual Letter to each Local Authority in Wales and when this was received by the Council, a copy would be forwarded to the Standards Committee Members for information.

Following consideration of the report, it was **RESOLVED** to note the information.

8 PUBLIC SERVICES OMBUDSMAN FOR WALES – 2ND CODE OF CONDUCT CASEBOOK

In his report, the Monitoring Officer advised the Committee that the Public Services Ombudsman for Wales had produced his 2nd Code of Conduct Casebook and this was attached to his report as Appendix 1. It was noted that the Ombudsman would be publishing quarterly editions of his Casebook during 2015/16.

With regard to the Code of Conduct, the Monitoring Officer reported that the Clerk of Llantrisant Town Council had recently enquired as to whether her Members could be provided with refresher training especially with regard to 'declarations of interests at meetings'. The Monitoring Officer planned to hold a training session for the Town

Council Members on 8th September 2015 and would report back on the event at the next meeting.

It was **RESOLVED** –

- (1) To note the contents of the 2nd Code of Conduct Casebook published by the Public Services Ombudsman for Wales.
- (2) To receive a report back on the Code of Conduct training event at Llantrisant Town Council.
- (3) That Standards Committee Members be provided with the latest guidance issued by the Public Services Ombudsman for Wales on the revised two stage test that he will use when deciding whether to investigate a complaint that the Code has been breached or to continue with an investigation to the stage of referring the matter to a Standards Committee or the Adjudication Panel for Wales.

9 STANDARDS COMMITTEE – WORK PROGRAMME

In considering its work programme for the coming months, the Standards Committee **RESOLVED** –

- (1) To continue to monitor Members' training and development in respect of the Code of Conduct.
- (2) To request the Monitoring Officer to present a report to the next meeting on the issue "Members' Attendance at Meetings".
- (3) To receive feedback from the Standards Conference and consider any matters arising from the event at the next meeting.

10 PROPOSED MERGER OF LOCAL AUTHORITIES IN WALES – POTENTIAL ISSUES FOR STANDARDS COMMITTEES

With the permission of the Chairman, the Monitoring Officer stated that the above-mentioned matter could be picked up in discussions at the forthcoming Standards Conference and that he would intend to submit a report to the next meeting on relevant legislation relating to the setting up of Joint Standards Committees.

**M.JEHU, OBE
CHAIRMAN**

The meeting terminated at 11.15 a.m.