



STANDARDS COMMITTEE

MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD AT THE COUNCIL OFFICES, TREDOMEN ON MONDAY, 8TH MAY 2006 AT 5.00 PM

PRESENT:

M.G. Warrender - Chairman

Councillors:

N. Dix and A.J. Pritchard

Community Councillor C. Roberts

Messrs. L.G. Davies, D.R. Parry and Mrs. E.J. Rowlands

Together with:

I.G. Medicott (Monitoring Officer) and J.A. Fairfax (Members Services Manager).

APOLOGIES

Apologies for absence were received from Councillor L.R. Rees and Mr. K.C. Mock.

1. MINUTES

RESOLVED that the minutes of the meeting held on 27th March 2006 (minute nos. 1 – 2, page nos. 1 – 2) were approved and signed as a correct record.

2. GRANTS OF DISPENSATION

No applications had been received.

3. Procedure for Dealing with Allegations of a Breach of the Code of Conduct

RESOLVED that the report of the Monitoring Officer including the procedure for dealing with allegations that a member has failed to comply with the provisions of the code of conduct be approved, with a minor grammatical correction to the procedure.

EXEMPT MATTERS

In accordance with section 100A(4) of the Local Government Act 1972 the public were excluded from the remainder of the meeting because of the likely disclosure to them of exempt information as defined in paragraphs 7 and 12 of the Local Government Act 1972.

3. ALLEGATION OF A BREACH OF THE CODE OF CONDUCT

Consideration was given to the exempt report of the Monitoring Officer which included the referral from the Public Services Ombudsman for Wales.

RESOLVED that:-

- (i) in the opinion of the Committee there is evidence of a failure to comply with the Code of Conduct and the Member should therefore be given the opportunity to make representations either orally or in writing in respect of the findings of the investigations and any allegation that the Member has failed or may have failed to comply with the Authority's Code of Conduct;
- (ii) a hearing date be arranged wherever practicable within two months at which the Member can put these representations.

4. WHISTLEBLOWING

The Committee received a verbal report from the Monitoring Officer on a Seminar he and the Chairman had recently attended facilitated by Public Concern at Work. A detailed discussion ensued on the whistleblowing policy and whether in practice this was effective. The Committee considered that the policy needed to be more user friendly and it was agreed that as previously agreed the External Auditors should be invited to make a presentation to the Committee and Councillors generally to determine what, if any improvements, could be made.

5. FUTURE MEETINGS

It was agreed that the following topics should be included on the Agenda for a future meeting:-

- (a) Identification of Training Needs for the Code of Conduct including that for Community Councillors;
- (b) Mechanisms for dealing with applications for dispensations;
- (c) Ways by which the Committee could become more proactive in its methods of working.

6. GWENT JOINT STANDARDS COMMITTEE

It was noted that the next meeting was to be hosted by Monmouthshire County Council and was likely to take place during week commencing 5th June 2006.

(Note: this has since been changed to week commencing 12th June)

The meeting closed at 6.10 pm.

CHAIRMAN