



STANDARDS COMMITTEE

MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD AT DYFFRYN HOUSE, YSTRAD MYNACH ON WEDNESDAY, 23RD MAY 2007 AT 5.00 PM

PRESENT:

M.G. Warrender - Chairman
K.C. Mock - Vice-Chairman

Councillors:

Councillor L. Rees
Community Councillor C. Roberts
L.C. Davies and Mrs. E.J. Rowlands

Together with:

Monitoring Officer (I.G. Medicott), Head of Legal Services (D. Perkins) and Members Services Manager (J.A. Fairfax).

APOLOGIES

Apologies for absence were received from Councillor A.J. Pritchard and his substitute Councillor K. Etheridge and Mr. D.R.G. Parry who, it was reported, had recently been unwell and had received hospital treatment.

RESOLVED that a letter be sent to Mr. Parry conveying the best wishes of the Committee for his speedy recovery.

1 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

The Chairman declared an interest (as a complainant) in one of the cases referred to in the Monitoring Officer's report on Complaints to the Ombudsman and took no part in the discussion thereon.

2. MINUTES

The minutes of the meeting held on 16th October 2006 (minute nos 1-5, page nos 1-2) were approved and signed as a correct record.

3. GWENT STANDARDS COMMITTEE

The minutes of the meeting held on 4th December 2006 at County Hall, Cwmbran were noted.

Although it had been agreed that the next meeting should be hosted by Caerphilly County Borough Council in June 2007, the Chairman reported that as he would be unavailable the meeting should now be held during July 2007.

4. APPLICATION FOR DISPENSATION – COMMUNITY CENTRES

Consideration was given to the report of the Monitoring Officer on an application for dispensation in relation to Members who were sitting on a Task and Finish Group which was undertaking a review of the operation and support for community centres.

RESOLVED that a dispensation to speak and to vote be granted to not only those Members of the Task and Finish Group as identified in the report but any substitutes or other Members of the Task and Finish declaring an interest and all Members of the Council declaring an interest because of membership of the Management Committee of a community centre, when considering recommendations from the Task and Finish Group/Scrutiny Committee on the following grounds: -

- (iv) the nature of the Member's interest is such that the Member's participation in the business to which the interest related would not damage public confidence in the conduct of the relevant authority's business;
- (v) the interest is common to the Member and a significant proportion of the general public;
- (vi) the participation of the Member in the business to which the interest relates is justified by the Member's particular role or expertise;
- (vii) In relation to the Task and Finish Group and Scrutiny Committee Members only the business to which the interest relates is to be considered by an Overview and Scrutiny Committee of the relevant authority and the Member's interest is not a pecuniary interest.

5. COMPLAINTS TO THE OMBUDSMAN

As indicated in minute no 2 above the Chairman declared an interest (as a complainant) in one of the cases referred to in the Monitoring Officer's Report and the Vice-Chairman took the Chair for this item.

Details of the complaints made to the Ombudsman which had been rejected as not accepted for formal investigation or that he was satisfied with the action taken and of those which remained at the enquiry stage or were awaiting determination were noted.

The Head of Legal Services reported on a meeting he had attended earlier in the day at which the Ombudsman addressed representatives of a number of authorities in South Wales on the working practices of his office and the ways in which he wished to progress cases referred to him in collaboration with the local authorities. There had been a question and answer session at which a number of the issues previously raised were discussed.

6. TRAINING

The Monitoring Officer updated the Committee on the situation with regards to training on the Code of Conduct and that all Members of the Council had undertaken this. He had written to the Clerks of all the Community Councils and of the replies so far received a number had requested training. This would be arranged when all replies had been received.

7. CODE OF CONDUCT

The Monitoring Officer reported on the current situation regarding to the introduction of a new Code of Conduct and the delays experienced in the legislative procedures. The new Code was now unlikely to take effect until after the elections in May 2008 and progress reports would be made to the Committee at future meetings.

8. IAN MEDLICOTT – MONITORING OFFICER

The Chairman advised the Committee that Mr. Medicott was shortly to retire from the Council's employment and that this was likely to be the last meeting of the Committee which he would attend.

Mr. Medicott was thanked for the valued advice the guidance he had given to the Chairman and the Committee over many years and for always dealing with matters in a professional and helpful manner.

He was wished every success and happiness for the future.

The meeting closed at 6.00 p.m.