



## **STANDARDS COMMITTEE**

### **MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD AT DYFFRYN HOUSE, YSTRAD MYNACH ON WEDNESDAY, 29TH AUGUST 2007 AT 5.00 PM**

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#### **PRESENT:**

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

#### **Councillors:**

Councillor L.R. Rees

Community Councillor C. Roberts

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

#### **Together with:**

Monitoring Officer (D. Perkins), Deputy Monitoring Officer (Mrs. G. Williams) and Members Services Manager (J.A. Fairfax).

#### **APOLOGIES**

Apologies for absence were received from Councillor A.J. Pritchard and his substitute Councillor Etheridge.

#### **WELCOME**

The Committee welcomed Dan Perkins and Gail Williams to their first meeting of the Committee since their appointments.

#### **1. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

The Chairman declared an interest (as a Complainant) in sub-paragraph 2(g) of agenda item 4, Complaints to the Ombudsman, and took no part in the discussion thereon.

The Vice Chairman declared an interest (as a local resident) in agenda item 4 and left the room when the report was discussed.

## **2. MINUTES**

The minutes of the meeting held on 23rd May 2007 (minute nos. 1-8, page nos 1-3) were approved and signed as a correct record.

## **3. APPLICATIONS FOR DISPENSATION – ST. ILAN SCHOOL, CAERPHILLY**

The Vice Chairman, K.C. Mock, declared an interest in this item and left the room when the report was discussed.

Consideration was given to the report of the Monitoring Officer on applications for dispensation from Councillor P.J. Bevan, M. Newman and M. Prew to enable them to speak and vote at any meetings of the authority on the future use of the site of the former St. Ilan School, Caerphilly. The Council was currently in the process of developing detailed proposals for the future use of the site.

A location plan was circulated at the meeting which not only identified the site but the homes of the three Councillors in relation to this. It was noted that Councillor Newman was also a Member of the Planning Committee.

The application for dispensation had been made on the statutory ground that the nature of the Members' interest was such that their participation in the business to which the interest relates would not damage public confidence in the conduct of the relevant authority's business. A detailed discussion ensued particularly in relation to this.

After a full and frank exchange of views it was considered that, because of the proximity of their properties to the site, to permit the three Councillors to participate and vote at any future meetings of the Council would undermine confidence in the decision making process of the authority and it was: -

RESOLVED that a dispensation for Councillors P.J. Bevan, M. Newman and M. Prew to speak and vote at any meetings of Caerphilly County Borough Council on the future use of the site of the former St. Ilan School be not granted as in the opinion of the Committee the nature of the Members' interests, namely the proximity of their properties to the site, was such that their participation in the business to which the interest related would damage public confidence in the conduct of the authority's business.

## **4. COMPLAINTS TO THE OMBUDSMAN**

As indicated in minute no 2 above the Chairman declared an interest (as a Complainant) in sub-paragraph 2(g) of the report of the Monitoring Officer and took no part in the discussion on that particular item.

Details of 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 that remained at the enquiry stage or were awaiting determination were noted.

It was reported that in relation to the complaint referred to in 1(d) – Disabled Parking Bay, after a very length communication and investigatory process the Ombudsman had initially found against the Council.

The Officers had been extremely perturbed at this decision and a meeting was requested to discuss the issues raised.

The meeting was subsequently held in the Ombudsman's office on 1st August 2007 and was attended by the Monitoring Officer, Chief Housing Officer and Transportation Engineering Manager and a detailed discussion relating to this case took place. The Ombudsman was sympathetic to the views of the Officers and to the attempts made by the Chief Housing Officer over a long period of time to overcome the problems experienced by the resident concerned and has now altered his decision and is no longer minded to uphold the complaint.

## **5. OTHER BUSINESS**

Discussion took place on a number of issues including the timetabling of meetings and it was agreed that the following should be included on the next agenda: -

- (a) Timetabling of meetings – quarterly;
- (b) Future Role of the Committee;
- (c) Constitution including terms of reference;
- (d) Code of Conduct- Training issues / Community Councils;
- (e) Dispensations;
- (f) Gwent Standards Committee;
- (g) Scrutiny Training.

## **6. NEXT MEETING**

RESOLVED that, unless any urgent matters arise in the meantime, the next meeting be held in November 2007 on a date to be agreed by the Chairman.

The meeting closed at 6.40 p.m.