



STANDARDS COMMITTEE

MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD AT PENALLTA HOUSE, TREDOMEN ON WEDNESDAY, 21ST JANUARY 2009 AT 2.00 P.M.

PRESENT:

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

Councillors:

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

Community Councillor I.L. Racz

Together with:

Monitoring Officer (D. Perkins), Deputy Monitoring Officer (Mrs. G. Williams), Assistant Director of Adult Services (A. Elliott), Customer Services Manager (J. Morgans) and Members Services Manager (J.A. Fairfax).

APOLOGIES

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors G.G. Hibbert, L.R. Rees MBE and J.B. Criddle (substitute).

1. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no declarations of interest.

2. MINUTES

The minutes of the meeting held on 30th October 2008 (minute nos. 1-6, page nos. 1-2) were approved and signed as a correct record.

3. GRANTS OF DISPENSATION

No applications had been received.

4. COMPLAINTS TO THE OMBUDSMAN

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

5. REPORT FROM THE PUBLIC SERVICES OMBUDSMAN FOR WALES

Consideration was given to the reports of the Monitoring Officer and the Public Services Ombudsman for Wales on a maladministration complaint made against the Authority.

The Assistant Director of Adult Services and Customer Services Manager attended the meeting and a detailed discussion ensued. Information was given about the working practices followed in this and other similar cases and of changes to procedures which had been made since the introduction of the Mental Capacity Act. Details were also given of the partnership working practices adopted between the Council and the Gwent Healthcare NHS Trust.

It was noted that much of the criticism levelled in the report referred to the actions of the NHS Trust and that the latter had accepted the recommendations of the Ombudsman.

RESOLVED that the report and observations from the Officers be noted and the Gwent Healthcare NHS be asked for its comments on the report and what actions it will be taking to prevent similar problems arising in the future.

6. MEMBERS CODE OF CONDUCT

Consideration was given to the report of the Monitoring Officer and details were given of those who attended the additional training session held on 10th December 2008.

The Committee again expressed its concern that 13 County Borough Councillors and a number of Community/Town Councillors had not attended one of the sessions and considered that it was essential in their role as a Councillor for them to undertake this training.

RESOLVED that this matter be referred to Cabinet with a request that it advises those Members that have so far not attended one of the sessions that it is essential for them to do so and officers then arrange a further session for those and the Community/Town Councillors who have not attended.

7. OPEN AND CLOSED MINDS

In accordance with a request at the last meeting the Monitoring Officer presented a paper on "Open and Closed Minds" particularly with regards to the subjects of Pre-Disposition and Pre-Determination.

The Committee thanked the Monitoring Officer for the explanation given.

8. STANDARDS COMMITTEE CONFERENCE, ABERYSTWYTH

K.C. Mock, the Vice Chair reported details of papers presented at the recent Conference and it was agreed that copies of the documentation should be circulated to all Members of the Committee.

9. WORKSHOP

It was agreed that arrangements should be made for an informal workshop to be arranged for members of the Committee during February so that a future work plan could be agreed.

10. J.A. FAIRFAX, MEMBERS SERVICES MANAGER

It was reported that John Fairfax was retiring from the Council on 30th January 2009 and the thanks of the Members was placed on record for the work he had undertaken and support given to the Committee since its inception. In response John thanked the Committee and wished it well in its future deliberations.

The meeting closed at the 3.20 pm.

CHAIRMAN