



STANDARDS COMMITTEE

MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD AT PENALLTA HOUSE, TREDOMEN PARK ON WEDNESDAY, 1ST AUGUST 2010 AT 10.00 A.M.

PRESENT:

Mr L.C. Davies - Chairman
Professor S.M. Griffiths - Vice-Chairman

Councillors Mrs A. Collins and H.W. David

Mr P. Morgan and Community Councillor Mrs G. Davies

Together with:

G. Williams (Deputy Monitoring Officer), A. Jones (Complaints Officer), R.J. Thomas (Committee Services Officer)

Also in attendance for agenda item number 6:

Customer Services and Performance Co-ordinator (J. Morgans) and the former Continuing Health Care Co-ordinator (S. Davies)

APOLOGIES

Apologies for absence were received from Mrs M. Evans and Mrs D. Holdroyd.

1. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no declarations of interest made at the beginning or during the course of the meeting.

2. MINUTES

RESOLVED that the minutes of the last meeting held on 9th March 2012 (minute nos. 1 – 8, on page nos. 1 – 3) be approved as a correct record.

MATTERS ARISING

3. Standards Committee – Annual Report (minute no. 4)

The Chairman confirmed that the report had been finalised and presented to Council. Other items arising from the minutes would be discussed during the course of the meeting.

4. REVIEW OF THE MEMBERS REMUNERATION SCHEME

The Chairman referred Members to the way in which independent members of the Committee were now paid. This had changed from an annual fee to a daily fee (with provision for a ½ day payment). Questions remained however, around the eligibility of some payments.

The Deputy Monitoring Officer advised that the Independent Remuneration Panel (the Panel) for Wales had made its determinations for 2012/2013, and independent members were entitled to receive remuneration as prescribed by them. The introduction of a daily fee was to take account of the variation in workloads across authorities in Wales.

Payments are to be made for Committee meeting times only, inclusive of preparation time and travelling, and it was agreed that members attending meetings as observers would not be eligible to claim a payment for these. A debate was continuing as to whether members would be eligible to receive a payment for attending the Standards Conference, but as the next Conference was not until April 2013, a determination would be received in good time.

The Deputy Monitoring Officer proposed that the Committee meet on a quarterly basis, with additional meetings arranged if necessary. An expenses claim sheet had been devised for independent members and this were circulated to the appropriate parties present. Members were asked to return these to the Deputy Monitoring Officer.

Members discussed the most convenient times and dates for the Committee to meet and it was agreed that the Chairman and Deputy Monitoring Officer would review this outside the meeting.

In addition, brief discussions took place in regard to further proposals and the potential impact upon the Committee's workload. These included possible local resolutions being brought before the Standards Committee, rather than being dealt with by the Public Services Ombudsman for Wales.

5. REVIEW OF RECENT LEGISLATION

The Deputy Monitoring Officer presented a paper that reviewed the main sections of the Local Government (Wales) Measure 2011, and the impact of the Measure on the Authority.

The Chairman presented a paper on the Standards Committee Performance Monitors. This detailed Committee Members' responsibilities, the work required and the frequency with which each needed to be actioned. Included were tasks ranging from attendance at meetings to publicising the work of the Committee.

The Committee discussed the paper and it was noted that not all County Borough Councillors had attended the recent Code of Conduct training sessions. A "mop up " session is to be arranged shortly for all members who have not previously attended. However, if after this session, there are still members who have not attended it was suggested that the Committee write to leaders of each party to encourage full member attendance at a final session. The Deputy Monitoring Officer confirmed she would advise the Chairman if this was required.

The Deputy Monitoring Officer informed Members that a new members' portal was being developed and would be located on the CCBC website. This would allow members of the public to access information such as the upfront declarations of interest and receipt of gifts.

She then advised that she would be happy to give a presentation to the Committee on any topic that the Members had concerns about.

6. REPORT FROM THE PUBLIC SERVICES OMBUDSMAN FOR WALES

Consideration was given to the report from the Public Services Ombudsman for Wales in relation to a maladministration complaint made against Caerphilly County Borough Council and the Aneurin Bevan Health Board.

A detailed discussion took place on the report that had been issued under Section 21 of the Public Services Ombudsman (Wales) Act 2005. Members noted that the report includes a partial finding of maladministration against the Authority. However they noted that the Ombudsman has confirmed that Mr F. was happy with the service provided by both the social worker and the Council's team of carers.

The Customer Services and Performance Co-ordinator and former Continuing Health Care Co-ordinator were present to respond to the questions asked and to advise on the action taken to ensure that internal procedures were improved to avoid a recurrence of similar issues in the future.

RESOLVED that the Ombudsman report, including his recommendations, be accepted.

7. ANY OTHER BUSINESS

The Chairman asked all parties present if there were any other matters they wished to discuss. None were raised.

The meeting closed at 11.25 a.m.

CHAIRMAN