



STANDARDS COMMITTEE

MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD AT PENALLTA HOUSE, TREDOMEN PARK ON THURSDAY, 3RD OCTOBER 2013 AT 1.30 P.M.

PRESENT:

Professor S. M. Griffiths - Chairman
Mrs. D. Holdroyd - Vice-Chairman

Councillors H. David and Mrs. M.E. Sargent

Mr. V. Brickley, Mr. P. Morgan and Community Councillor Mrs. G. Davies

Together with:

G. Williams (Interim Monitoring Officer), L. Lane (Solicitor) C. Evans (Committee Services Officer)

1. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no declarations of interest received at the commencement or during the course of the meeting.

2. MEETING - 10TH JUNE 2013

The minutes of the previous meeting were not available to present to the Committee.

RESOLVED that the minutes of the meeting held 10th June 2013 and 3rd October 2013 be presented at the next meeting.

3. ANNUAL LETTER FROM PUBLIC SERVICE OMBUDSMAN FOR WALES 2012-13

Consideration was given to the Annual Letter received from the Public Services Ombudsman for Wales that provided a breakdown of all complaints received and investigated by his Office during 2012/13 and the response times to requests for information.

Members were informed that there was an error in the Annual Letter from the Ombudsman regarding the level of premature complaints received, in fact the number had decreased not increased. An amended letter had been received earlier in the day from the Ombudsman's office confirming the error.

The Interim Monitoring Officer explained the data contained in the letter and confirmed that its content will be presented to Council on 8th October 2013 for information.

Members were informed that overall the picture was positive. They were very pleased to note that all information requested by the Ombudsman had been submitted within the relevant timescales and asked that this achievement be recognised in the minutes.

The Committee discussed the Report and duly noted the contents of the Public Services Ombudsman for Wales's Annual Letter.

4. APPLICATION FOR DISPENSATION

The report outlined the decision made by the Chairman and Vice Chairman of the Standards Committee following a request for dispensation made by a County Councillor. The applicant requested a dispensation to participate fully in the debate and vote when the report in relation to Phase 1 - Secondary Rationalisation is being considered at Council on 23rd July 2013.

Members were asked to note the decision made to decline the application for dispensation.

5. UPDATE ON REVIEW OF CONSTITUTION

The report provided an update on the review of the Council's Constitution currently being undertaken by the Interim Monitoring Officer in conjunction with the Cross Party Working Group nominated by Council.

The Committee was advised that in response to the Wales Audit Office Report in the Public Interest reported to Council in March 2013, an Action Plan has been implemented, as agreed by Council on 23rd April 2013, to strengthen and improve the Council's governance processes and procedures and review the Constitution.

In order to undertake the review Members were informed that the Group is utilising the All Wales Framework Model Constitution prepared by external lawyers in conjunction with the WLGA. This document will form the basis of the new Constitution for Caerphilly.

The relevant sections in the Framework document relating to the Standards Committee were highlighted and detailed discussions ensued on this and the contents of the document as a whole.

It was agreed that a further report be presented and a meeting be convened in four weeks in order that the views of the Committee can be fed into the review. Members requested they be provided with hard copies of the Council's Constitution.

Members noted the report and were advised to contact the Interim Monitoring Officer with any queries.

6. MEMBERS' DECLARATION OF GIFTS AND HOSPITALITY

Members discussed and noted the contents of the report which provided details of the gifts and hospitality declared by elected Members for the period of June to September 2013.

7. ANY OTHER BUSINESS

It was noted that if possible, and given the deadline for the preparation of reports, a meeting of the Standards Committee would be scheduled in four weeks.

Approved as a correct record and subject to any amendments or corrections agreed and recorded in the minutes of the meeting held on 27th November 2013 they were signed by the Chairman.

CHAIRMAN