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Date: 23rd February 2015

Dear Sir/Madam,

A meeting of the **Standards Committee** will be held in the **Sirhowy Room, Penallta House, Tredomen, Ystrad Mynach** on **Monday, 2nd March, 2015** at **1.30 pm** to consider the matters contained in the following agenda.

Yours faithfully,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads 'Chris Burns'.

Chris Burns
INTERIM CHIEF EXECUTIVE

AGENDA

	Pages
1 To receive apologies for absence.	
2 Declarations of interest. Councillors and Officers are reminded of their personal responsibility to declare any personal and/or prejudicial interest(s) in respect of any item of business on this agenda in accordance with the Local Government Act 2000, the Council's Constitution and the Code of Conduct for both Councillors and Officers.	
To approve and sign the following minutes: -	
3 Standards Committee held on 24th November 2014 (minute nos. 1 - 15).	1 - 4
4 Members Training Programme 2015.	5 - 10

A greener place Man gwyrddach



Correspondence may be in any language or format | Gallwch ohebu mewn unrhyw iaith neu fformat

- 5 Annual Report of Members' Declarations of Gifts and Hospitality - January - December 2014. 11 - 14
- 6 To receive training on the Whistle Blowing Policy.
- 7 To receive an update on the Constitution.

Circulation:

Councillors: H.W. David and C.P. Mann

Mr V. Brickley, Mrs M. Evans, Mrs D. Holdroyd, Mr D. Lewis and Mr P. Morgan

Community Councillor Mrs G. Davies

Copy for information only to:

Councillors Mrs P. Cook and Mrs M.E. Sargent. Community Councillor C. Choo Yin

And Appropriate Officers



STANDARDS COMMITTEE

MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD AT PENALLTA HOUSE, TREDOMEN PARK ON MONDAY 24TH NOVEMBER 2014 AT 2PM.

PRESENT:

Mrs D. Holdroyd - Chair
Mr V. Brickley - Vice Chair

D. Lewis and Community Councillor Mrs G. Davies

Councillors Mrs P. Cook and Mrs M.E. Sargent

Together with:

G. Williams (Interim Head of Legal Services and Monitoring Officer), L. Lane (Solicitor),
H. Morgan (Senior Committee Services Officer)

Also in attendance for agenda item number 4:

Graham North (Public Sector Housing Manager) and Craig Singler (Allocations Officer)

1. **APOLOGIES**

Apologies for absence were received from Mrs M. Evans and Councillors H.W. David and C.P. Mann.

2. **DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

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

3. **MINUTES - 23RD SEPTEMBER 2014**

RESOLVED that the minutes of the meeting held on 23rd September 2014 (minute nos. 1 - 8) be approved as a correct record.

4. **COMPLAINT MADE TO THE PUBLIC SERVICES OMBUDSMAN FOR WALES - CASE NUMBER 201301753**

Consideration was given to the report of the Monitoring Officer with that of the Public Services Ombudsman for Wales regarding a maladministration complaints made against Caerphilly County Borough Council. It also detailed the action to be taken regarding outstanding recommendations.

A detailed discussion took place on the report which had been issued under Section 21 of the Public Services Ombudsman (Wales) Act 2005. It was noted that the complainant's complaint centred on the Council's handling of her housing application over the preceding years and the way it had let properties on Street 1. Her caring responsibilities meant she only wished to be considered for accommodation in Street 1. Furthermore the complainant expressed dissatisfaction with the way the Council had dealt with her complaint.

The Ombudsman's investigation identified shortcomings in the Council's administration of the complainant's housing application and found that there was a failure by the Council to recognise when its statutory homelessness duties were engaged and to that extent this aspect of the complaint was upheld. Given the failings identified, the Ombudsman concluded that the Council's response to the complainant had not been as robust, transparent or open as it could have been in acknowledging failings in the administration of her housing application. The Ombudsman therefore upheld this aspect of her complaint.

Reference was then made to the recommendations of the Ombudsman. The Public Sector Housing Manager and Allocations Officer were present to respond to the questions asked by Members of the Committee and to advise on the action taken to ensure that internal procedures were improved to avoid a recurrence of similar issues in the future. By way of background information, an explanation was given on the current allocation policy, the points system, the annual review process, the choice of an individual in selecting a specific area and to the information which is provided for each applicant. It was confirmed to Members by Officer's that the Council's website also provides information on how to apply for council housing, the allocation scheme and the prospects of being rehoused in different areas and property types.

It was noted that the Housing Department have accepted the findings and have agreed to implement the recommendations. It was explained that of the recommendations, three were required to be actioned within one month of the receipt of the report and have been completed. Of those that remain (with a two or three month timescale) all are being progressed. Guidance is being developed on the factors when considering applying discretion in relation to the removal of time points and training will be provided for housing allocation staff. Training is also in situ on the circumstances when the Council's homelessness duties may be triggered and the steps that should be taken. Housing Services have reviewed its documentation to satisfy itself that it supported the early recognition of when the Council's homelessness duties may be triggered and thus engaged. Managers have also held team meetings with staff to highlight the importance of the Corporate Records Management Policy and made specific reference to good record keeping within their offices.

It was noted that in the interim period before the Council's Housing Services introduces its new lettings policy in 2015, where its housing allocation staff have reason to review a housing application that has had time points removed, the application will be reviewed against the guidance that is being developed.

The Interim Head of Legal Services and Monitoring Officer advised that the Standards Committee can determine whether the matter should be referred to the appropriate Scrutiny Committee. Whilst the grounds for referral are where, in the opinion of the Standards Committee, there has been a serious failure in service delivery that would benefit from further consideration by the appropriate Scrutiny Committee, it was agreed that as several of the recommendations refer to implementation within two/three months from the receipt of the report, it would be beneficial for Members to monitor progress at the meeting of the Policy and Resources Scrutiny Committee in January.

It was moved and seconded that the recommendations in the report be approved and that the report be referred to the Policy and Resources Scrutiny Committee. By show of hands this was unanimously agreed.

RESOLVED that for the reasons contained therein:-

- (i) the contents of the report and progress made to date in respect of the recommendations contained in the Ombudsman's report and action to be taken regarding outstanding recommendations be noted;
- (ii) the report be referred to the Policy and Resources Scrutiny Committee for consideration.

5. OVERVIEW OF THE COUNCIL'S CORPORATE COMPLAINTS POLICY

Consideration was given to the report which provided an overview of the Council's Corporate Complaints Policy and detailed how it links to the Standards Committee when considering and referring reports from the Public Services Ombudsman for Wales.

The Interim Head of Legal Services and Monitoring Officer advised that on 1st April 2013 the Council implemented a new Corporate Complaints in order to reflect the model policy introduced by the Welsh Government. It was introduced to ensure that complaints are dealt with in a consistent manner across Wales.

The Policy has introduced a two-stage process - stage 1 complaints are intended to be dealt with within 10 working days and Stage 2 within 20 working days. If a complainant remains dissatisfied with the outcome of a Stage 2 response, he/she will have the opportunity to refer the matter to the Public Ombudsman for Wales. Members were advised that the Corporate Complaints Policy is available to view on the Council's website. In addition, a booklet entitled "How to Make a Complaint" has been published and is available from Council offices, libraries, customer first centres etc. Complainants can make a complaint in a number of ways including by telephone, by post in writing, by using the complaint form included in the booklet or by email.

To coincide with the implementation of the new Policy a Learning from Complaints Group was established. The Group is chaired by the Interim Head of Legal Services and Monitoring Officer, and includes Complaints Officers from across the Council, a representative from the Council's Performance Management Unit and the Council's Senior Policy Officer Equalities and Welsh Language. The Group meet on a quarterly basis and details of its Terms of Reference were noted.

Reports are regularly presented to the Audit Committee and detail the total number of corporate complaints received across the authority during the specific reporting period and a breakdown of the number of complaints received at Stage 1 and 2 in each of the Directorates. It also advises whether the target response times have been met and the outcomes of each complaint ie. whether the complaint has been upheld, not upheld or partially upheld and complaints referred to the Ombudsman. A copy of the most recent report had been sent to the members of the Standards Committee for information and it was agreed that this practice would continue.

As previously discussed, the terms of reference of the Standards Committee have been recently expanded and the Committee may now consider referring a report from the Public Services Ombudsman for Wales, where there is a finding of maladministration, to the appropriate Scrutiny Committee, where in the opinion of the Standards Committee there has been a serious failure in service delivery that would benefit from further consideration by the appropriate Scrutiny Committee.

During the course of the debate, and in noting that it had been agreed that the previous report (Case number 201301753) be referred to the Policy and Resources Scrutiny Committee, it was agreed that a further report be presented to the Standards Committee in order that Members can be reassured that those recommendations that have a longer timescale have been implemented.

In agreeing the forgoing, Members noted the content of the report.

Approved as a correct record and subject to any amendments or corrections agreed and recorded in the minutes of the next meeting they were signed by the Chair.

CHAIR



STANDARDS COMMITTEE – 2ND MARCH 2015

SUBJECT: MEMBERS TRAINING PROGRAMME 2015

REPORT BY: INTERIM HEAD OF LEGAL SERVICES/MONITORING OFFICER

1. PURPOSE OF REPORT

- 1.1 To provide members of the Standards Committee with an overview of the Members Training Programme for 2015 as set out in Appendix 1.

2. SUMMARY

- 2.1 This report provides an overview of the Members Training Programme for 2015 as set out in Appendix 1.

3. LINKS TO STRATEGY

- 3.1 The introduction of the Members Training Programme has assisted in the implementation of the Council's Governance Improvement Action Plan in order to improve Members training and support arrangements.

4. THE REPORT

- 4.1 Members will recall receiving a report on Member Training and Support at its meeting on 26th February 2014. The report proposed improvements to members training and support arrangements by recommending the implementation of a new scheme made up of three categories namely, Mandatory Training, Recommended Training and Requested Training together with a suite of training courses under these headings. As part of the implementation of this scheme the report sought the views of the Standards Committee on proposed arrangements for reporting Members who fail to attend mandatory training and seeking agreement for a reporting protocol contained in that report.

- 4.2 The views of the Standards Committee together with those of the Council's Democratic Services Committee were presented to Full Council on 22nd April 2014, which, endorsed the following recommendations

- (i) the introduction of Mandatory Induction, Regulatory, Audit and Personnel Committee Training be approved;
- (ii) the membership of Regulatory, Audit and Personnel Committees be dependent on attending Mandatory Training be approved;
- (iii) the introduction of Mandatory Training be approved;

- (iv) Members commitment to participating in appropriate Recommended Training and completing a Training Needs Analysis undertaken every 2 years be approved;
- (v) those who refuse to attend Mandatory Training or who do not have good reasons for being unable to attend Mandatory Training be reported to the Standards Committee be approved;
- (vi) proposals be developed for appropriate training to be provided to Cabinet Members and Senior Officers to support the scrutiny function.

4.3 With regard to the training to support the scrutiny function in accordance with the recommendation (vi) above following the decision by Council on 27th January 2015, (see background paper) the current scrutiny arrangements are under review, consequently this additional training will be picked up as part of the review and an update will be provided for members of the Committee at a later date.

4.4 All of the remaining training requirements set out in paragraph 4.2 above have been incorporated in the attached Members Training Programme which is to be implemented for the year 2015. Members will note the Schedule includes Mandatory training, recommended training for Cabinet members, Chair and Vice Chairs and Senior Salary holders. In addition combined six monthly refresher training, annual refresher training and six monthly update sessions for recommended committee training dates have been set.

4.5 As the Training Programme has only recently been implemented it is too early to provide members with an update on attendance, although this is being monitored and will be reported to members at a later date. In addition officers are considering alternative ways of delivering training to members for example, the possibility of providing training via a recorded webcast.

4.6 Members of the Standards Committee are asked to note the information contained in this report and the attached Training Programme.

5. EQUALITIES IMPLICATIONS

5.1 There are none. This is for information only.

6. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

6.1 There are none. This is for information only.

7. PERSONNEL IMPLICATIONS

7.1 There are none. This is for information only.

8. CONSULTATIONS

8.1 None. This report has been prepared for information only.

9. RECOMMENDATIONS

9.1 Members are asked to note the content of this report.

10. REASONS FOR THE RECOMMENDATIONS

10.1 To update members on the introduction of the Members Training Programme for 2015.

11. STATUTORY POWER

11.1 The Local Government Act 2000.

Author: Gail Williams
For information: Chris Burns Chief Executive
Nicole Scammell Acting Director Corporate Services
Angharad Price, Deputy Monitoring Officer/Principal Solicitor

Background Papers:

Report to Standards Committee – Members Training and Support 26th February 2014

Report to Council 27th January 2015 – Wales Audit Office Report- Follow up of Special Inspection and Reports in the Public Interest

Appendices:

Appendix 1 Members Training Programme for 2015

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MANDATORY COMMITTEE TRAINING - 2.5 Hr Training Session

DATE	TIME	COURSE/COMMITTEE	FACILITATING OFFICER	MEMBERSHIP	ROOM
5th February 2015	5.00pm	Constitution	G. Williams	All Members	Chamber
9th February 2015	5.00pm	Planning	T. Stephens, J. Rogers, P. Elliott	Committee Only	Sirhowy
13th April 2015	5.00pm	Pensions Compensation	G. Hardacre	Committee Only	Sirhowy
2nd March 2015	5.00pm	Information Governance	J. Jones	All Members	Chamber
16th March 2015	5.00pm	Licensing	M. McSherry, S. Ead & Z. Powells	Full Committee	Sirhowy
23rd April 2015	2.00pm	Cabinet Rights of Ways	A. Powell and P. Griffiths	Cabinet Members	Sirhowy
23rd March 2015	4.00pm	Appeals (4.00pm) and Appointments (5.00pm)	G. Hardacre	Committee Only	Sirhowy
30th March 2015	5.00pm	Audit	N. Scammell & R. Harris	Full Committee	Sirhowy

RECOMMENDED TRAINING CABINET MEMBERS, CHAIR & VICE CHAIRS AND SENIOR SALARY HOLDERS - 2 Hr Training Session

DATE	TIME	COURSE/COMMITTEE	FACILITATING OFFICER	MEMBERSHIP	ROOM
16th December 2014	10.00am	Charing Skills	WLGA - Torfaen Council	CMs, C & VCs & SSH	Torfaen
30th March 2015	2.00pm	Roles and Responsibilities of Cabinet Members	J. Jones	Cabinet Members	Sirhowy
30th November 2015	5.00pm	Performance Reviews	J. Jones & S. Titcombe	CMs, C & VCs & SSH	Sirhowy

***COMBINED 6 MONTHLY/ ANNUAL REFRESHER TRAINING & ANNUAL REFRESHER TRAINING SESSION - FOLLOWING THE AGM - 30 Minute Session Before Committee Meeting**

DATE	TIME	COMMITTEE	FACILITATING OFFICER	MEMBERSHIP	ROOM
*19th May 2015	4.30pm	Regeneration and Environment Scrutiny	J. Jones & C. Forbes-Thompson	Committee & Coopteers	Sirhowy
*27th May 2015	4.30pm	Democratic Services	J. Jones & C. Forbes-Thompson	Committee & Coopteers	Ebbw
*28th May 2015	4.30pm	Sustainable Development Advisory Panel	P. Cooke	Committee Only	Sirhowy
*2nd June 2015	4.30pm	Policy and Resources Scrutiny	J. Jones & C. Forbes-Thompson	Committee & Coopteers	Ebbw
*4th June 2015	4.30pm	Education for Life Scrutiny	J. Jones & C. Forbes-Thompson	Committee & Coopteers	Ebbw
*10th June 2015	9.30am	Audit	N. Scammell & R. Harris	Committee & Coopteers	Sirhowy
10th June 2015	4.00pm	Planning	T. Stephens & J. Rogers	Committee	Chamber
10th June 2015	1.30pm	SACRE	V. Thomas	Committee & Coopteers	
17th June 2015	9.30am	Voluntary Sector Liaison Committee	J. Dix	Committee & Coopteers	Sirhowy
*23rd June 2015	4.30pm	Health Social Care and Wellbeing Scrutiny Committee	J. Jones & C. Forbes-Thompson	Committee & Coopteers	Sirhowy
17th September 2015	4.00pm	Caerphilly Homes Task Group	P. Davy and S. Couzens	Committee & Coopteers	Sirhowy
TBA May/June 2015		Bargoed Town Centre Management Group	A. Highway	Committee & Coopteers	Sirhowy
TBA May/June 2015		Blackwood Town Centre Management Group	A. Highway	Committee & Coopteers	
25th June 2015	4.30pm	Scrutiny Leadership Group	J. Jones & C. Forbes-Thompson	Committee & Coopteers	Ebbw
TBA		Bryn Compost Liaison Group	C. Edwards	Committee & Coopteers	
TBA May/June 2015		Caerphilly Town Centre Management Group	A. Highway	Committee & Coopteers	
29th June 2015	9.30am	Corporate Health and Safety	D. Jones	Committee & Coopteers	Sirhowy
TBA		Licensing Committee	M. McSherry, S. Ead & Z. Powells	Committee & Coopteers	
TBA		Monmouthshire & Brecon Canal	K. Kinsey & R. Davies	Committee & Coopteers	
TBA May/June 2015		Risca Town Centre Management Group	A. Highway	Committee & Coopteers	

TBA May/June 2015		Ystrad Mynach Town Centre Management Group	A. Highway	Committee & Coopteers
TBA		Standards Committee	G. Williams	Committee & Coopteers
TBA		Grants to the Volunatry Sector Sub Committee	S. Harris	Committee & Coopteers
TBA		Community Council Liaison Sub Committee	H. Morgan	Committee & Coopteers
TBA		Investigating and Disciplinary Committee	A. Price	Committee & Coopteers
*10th September 2015	4.30pm	Crime and Disorder Scrutiny Committee	J. Jones & C. Forbes-Thompson	Committee & Coopteers
TBA		Rights of Way Cabinet Sub Committee	J. Piper	Committee & Coopteers
TBA		Appeals Panel	G. Hardacre	Committee & Coopteers
TBA		Appointments Committee	G. Hardacre	Committee & Coopteers
TBA		Pensions Compension	G. Hardacre	Committee & Coopteers
TBA		River Rhymney Task Group	H. Morgan	Committee & Coopteers

RECOMMENDED COMMITTEE TRAINING - 6 MONTHLY UPDATE SESSION - 30 Minute Session Before Committee Meeting

DATE	TIME	COMMITTEE	FACILITATING OFFICER	MEMBERSHIP	ROOM
10th September 2015	4.00pm	Crime and Disorder Scrutiny	J. Jones & C. Forbes Thompson	Committee & Coopteers	Sirhowy
20th October 2015	4.00pm	Health Social Care & Wellbeing Scrutiny	J. Jones & C. Forbes Thompson	Committee & Coopteers	Sirhowy
27th October 2015	4.00pm	Regeneration & Environment Scrutiny	J. Jones & C. Forbes Thompson	Committee & Coopteers	Sirhowy
3rd November 2015	4.00pm	Education For Life Scruitny	J. Jones & C. Forbes Thompson	Committee & Coopteers	Sirhowy
5th November 2015	4.00pm	Sustainable Development Committee	J. Jones & C. Forbes Thompson	Committee Only	Sirhowy
10th November 2015	4.00pm	Policy & Resources Scrutiny	J. Jones & C. Forbes Thompson	Committee & Coopteers	Sirhowy
2nd December 2015	4.00pm	Democratic Services	J. Jones & C. Forbes Thompson	Committee Only	Sirhowy
9th December 2015	9.30am	Audit	N. Scammell & R. Harris	Committee Only	Sirhowy



STANDARDS COMMITTEE – 2ND MARCH 2015

SUBJECT: ANNUAL REPORT OF MEMBERS' DECLARATIONS OF GIFTS & HOSPITALITY JANUARY TO DECEMBER 2014 INFORMATION ITEM

REPORT BY: INTERIM HEAD OF LEGAL SERVICES AND MONITORING OFFICER

1. PURPOSE OF REPORT

- 1.1 To advise Members of the Standards Committee of the gifts and hospitality declared by elected Members for the period January to December 2014.

2. SUMMARY

- 2.1 Attached at Appendix 1 is a list of gifts and hospitality declared by elected Members for the period January to December 2014.

3. LINKS TO STRATEGY

- 3.1 The Authority acting through this Committee has an obligation to maintain high standards and probity and conduct throughout the Council and the Community Councils within the County Borough area.

4. THE REPORT

- 4.1 Following a report to the Standards Committee on 3rd October, 2013, Members will be aware that as part of the drive to strengthen governance arrangements across the Authority, the informal arrangements of reporting gifts and hospitality declared by elected members has been replaced by the presentation of a quarterly report to the Standards Committee.
- 4.2 The Standards Committee last received a report on Members Declarations of Gifts and Hospitality at the meeting held on 26th February 2014 which related to declarations for the period October to December 2013.
- 4.3 The Appendix attached lists the gifts and hospitality as declared by elected Members for the period January to December 2014. Members will note that there was only one declaration and this was received in the last quarter of last year.

5. EQUALITIES IMPLICATIONS

- 5.1 None. This report is for information only.

6. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

6.1 None. This report is for information only.

7. PERSONAL IMPLICATIONS

7.1 None. This report is for information only.

8. CONSULTATIONS

8.1 None this report has been prepared for information only.

9. RECOMMENDATIONS

9.1 None this is an information item only.

10. REASONS FOR THE RECOMMENDATIONS

10.1 None this is an information item only.

11. STATUTORY POWERS

11.1 Local Government Act 2000.

Author: Gail Williams, Interim Head of Legal Services/Monitoring Officer
For information: Chris Burns, Interim Chief Executive
Nicole Scammell, Acting Director of Corporate Services/Section 151 Officer
Angharad Price, Deputy Monitoring Officer and Principal Solicitor
Councillor B. Jones, Deputy Leader & Cabinet Member to Corporate Services
Councillor C. Forehead, Cabinet Member for Human Resources & Governance

Background Papers:
Report to Standards Committee 3rd October 2013

Appendices:
Appendix 1 Members Declarations of Gifts and Hospitality

Councillor

Councillor David Carter

Details of Declaration

Attended Lewis School, Pengam and received a monogrammed cut glass whisky tumbler to the Approximate value of £10.00

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