



STANDARDS COMMITTEE

MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD AT PENALLTA HOUSE, TREDOMEN PARK
ON 31ST MAY 2017 AT 10 A.M.

PRESENT:

Mrs D. Holdroyd - Chair
D. Lewis - Vice-Chair

Mr T. Abbas, Mrs M. Evans and Mr. Stone

Community Councillor Mrs G. Davies

Councillors Mrs D. Price and C.P. Mann

Together with:

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

Also in attendance for agenda item number 5:

G. Jenkins (Assistant Director - Children's Services)

1. APOLOGIES

There were no apologies for absence received.

2. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

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

3. MINUTES - 23RD FEBRUARY 2017

RESOLVED that the minutes of the meeting held on 23rd February 2017 (minute nos. 1 - 7, on page nos. 1 - 5), be approved as a correct record.

MATTER ARISING

4. Code of Conduct Training (minute no. 7)

The Interim Head of Legal Services and Monitoring Officer advised that following the query on the slide titled 'general rules you need to follow under the code', she had sought clarification on the statement 'do not prevent access to information'. She advised that it relates to Councillors withholding information that is readily available under FOI legislation.

EXEMPT MATTER

Members considered the public interest test certificate from the Proper Officer and concluded that on balance the public interest in maintaining the exemption outweighed the public interest in disclosing the information and it was

RESOLVED that in accordance with Section 100A(4) of the Local Government Act 1972 the public be excluded from the remainder of the meeting because of the likely disclosure to them of exempt information as identified in paragraph 13 of Part 4 of Schedule 12A of the Local Government Act 1972.

5. REPORT FROM PUBLIC SERVICES OMBUDSMAN FOR WALES

Consideration was given to the report from the Public Services Ombudsman for Wales relating to a complaint against Caerphilly County Borough Council and an update on the progress made in respect of the recommendation contained in the Ombudsman's report.

The Committee were reminded that they should consider where the matter would benefit from further consideration by the appropriate Scrutiny Committee. If this course of action is seen to be appropriate, a report setting out the reason for referral will be presented to the relevant Scrutiny Committee along with the report from the Ombudsman. The Chair of Standards Committee (or a nominee) will be invited to attend the respective Scrutiny Committee when the report is presented.

It was noted that there are two forms of report - a Section 16 which is the form of report which needs to be formally considered by the Authority and Section 21 where the Ombudsman feels that a public report is not required and the matter has been satisfactorily resolved. The report, dated 21st April 2017, was issued by the Ombudsman under Section 21 of the Public Services Ombudsman (Wales) Act 2005. Due to the sensitivity of the circumstances surrounding this case the Ombudsman has given a direction under Section 17(9) of the 2005 Act that his report is not for publication.

Mr G. Jenkins (Assistant Director - Children's Services) was present to respond to the queries raised by the Committee.

After due deliberation it was moved and seconded that for the reasons given at the meeting, and in view of due compliance with the recommendation, the Ombudsman's Report be noted and that the matter not be referred to the appropriate Scrutiny Committee. By show of hands (and in noting that there was one abstention) this was agreed by the majority present.

RESOLVED that:-

- (i) the contents of the Ombudsman's Report and the compliance with the recommendations contained therein be noted;
- (ii) in view of the compliance with the recommendation contained within the Ombudsman's report, the matter not be referred to the appropriate Scrutiny Committee.

The meeting closed at 10.40am