



## **STANDARDS COMMITTEE**

### **MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD VIA MICROSOFT TEAMS ON 20<sup>TH</sup> JANUARY 2022 AT 2.00PM.**

#### **PRESENT:**

P. Brunt, J. Card, L.M. Davies and C. Finn

Community Councillor Mrs G. Davies

County Councillors C. Mann and D. Price

#### **Together with:**

R. Tranter (Head of Legal Services and Monitoring Officer), L. Lane (Head of Democratic Services and Deputy Monitoring Officer), S. Hughes (Committee Services Officer), R. Barrett (Committee Services Officer), and E. Sullivan (Senior Committee Services Officer)

#### **1. TO APPOINT A CHAIR OF THE STANDARDS COMMITTEE**

It was moved and seconded that Mr. P. Brunt be appointed as the Chair of the Standards Committee and by show of hands this was unanimously agreed.

RESOLVED that Mr P. Brunt be appointed as the Chair of the Standards Committee.

#### **2. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**

There were no apologies for absence received.

#### **3. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

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

#### **4. MINUTES – 28<sup>TH</sup> OCTOBER 2021**

RESOLVED that the minutes of the meeting held on the 28<sup>th</sup> October 2021, be approved as a correct record and signed by the Chair.

#### **REPORTS OF OFFICERS**

## **5. ADOPTION OF PROCEDURES FOR STANDARDS COMMITTEE HEARINGS**

Consideration was given to the report which sought Standards Committee approval for the adoption of a procedure to deal with investigation reports referred to it by the Public Services Ombudsman for Wales (PSOW).

The Monitoring Officer explained that from time to time the Standards Committee received reports from the PSOW into complaints made against Councillors of Caerphilly County Borough Council or Councillors of Town and Community Councils within the boundary of the county borough alleging that the Councillor had breached the code of conduct for Members. Where this happens, there must be a procedure in place for dealing with the referral.

The Standards Committee were referred to Appendix 1 of the report which detailed the procedure, and the Monitoring Officer outlined the steps open to the Standards Committee as detailed within sections 5.3 and 5.4 of the report.

The Chair thanked Mr Tranter for presenting the report and questions from the Standards Committee were welcomed.

Clarification was sought in relation to the Integrated Impact Assessment referenced in section 7 of the report. The Officer confirmed that this was part of standard Council report format and related to Wellbeing of Future Generations and Equalities Act legislation, which although not so relevant in terms of this report did form an important part of other reports and policy documents like the Local Development Plan.

Reference was made to Section 3 of the Procedure, 'referral to another Standards Committee' and clarification sought as to whether this was dependent on the nature of the complaint or other work. The Monitoring Officer confirmed that this would depend on the nature of the report, for example it could be a matter where Caerphilly Council considers that it may have a conflict of interest and in these circumstances another Standards Committee from a neighbouring Council could assist. The Standards Committee were advised that this was a very rare occurrence.

Having fully considered the Officer's report it was moved and seconded that the recommendation contained in the Officer's report be approved and by show of hands this way unanimously agreed.

RESOLVED that the procedure found at Appendix 1 of the report be adopted to deal with referrals from the Public Services Ombudsman for Wales.

## **6. PUBLIC INTEREST TEST**

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 12 and 18C of Part 4 of Schedule 12A of the Local Government Act 1972.

## **7. REFERRAL OF AN INVESTIGATION REPORT BY THE PUBLIC SERVICES OMBUDSMAN FOR WALES OF A COMPLAINT**

Following consideration and discussion it was moved and seconded that there was no evidence of a failure to comply with the code of conduct and therefore no further action was required. Furthermore, the Chair requested that the Head of Legal Services and Monitoring Officer write to all parties concerned informing them of the decision of the Standards Committee and by show of hands and in noting there was 1 abstention this was agreed by the majority present.

RESOLVED that: -

1. There is no evidence of a failure to comply with the Code of Conduct and therefore no further action is required.
2. The Head of Legal Services and Monitoring Officer be instructed to write to all parties concerned on behalf of the Chair advising them of the decision of the Standards Committee.

The meeting closed at 15.10pm.

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

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CHAIR