

STANDARDS COMMITTEE - WEDNESDAY, 26 FEBRUARY 2025

MINUTES OF A MEETING OF THE STANDARDS COMMITTEE HELD REMOTELY - VIA MICROSOFT TEAMS ON WEDNESDAY, 26 FEBRUARY 2025 AT 09:30

Present

S Maughan – Chairperson

Present Virtually

MJ Williams
R Lynch

G Thomas

G Walter

P Baker

Officers:

Laura Griffiths
Kelly Watson
Michael Pitman

Principal Solicitor
Chief Officer - Legal & Regulatory Services, HR & Corporate Policy
Technical Support Officer – Democratic Services

Declarations of Interest

Cllr Martin Williams declared a personal interest in Agenda Item 9 as the complainant was known to him.

Cllr Graham Walter declared a person interest in Agenda Item 9 as two of the witnesses listed in the report were known to him.

170. Approval of Minutes

Decision Made	<p><u>RESOLVED:</u> That the minutes of the 240409, 240507, 240509, 240621 and 240711 were approved as a true and accurate record, subject to the amendment of the title for the Chairperson Sue Maughan to remove Cllr next to her name, which was incorrectly input on a number of minutes.</p> <p>The Chairperson also asked that the date decision made was correctly reflecting the date of the meeting as this was incorrect on a number of minutes.</p>
Date Decision Made	26 February 2025

171. Dispensations

Decision Made	<p>Chief Officer - Legal & Regulatory Services, HR & Corporate Policy presented a report which updated the committee on the process for granting dispensations.</p> <p>She advised that dispensations are available for Members for a number of reasons and these were set out at section 2 of the report.</p> <p>A Member seeking a dispensation is required to complete an application on the application form. This was attached as Appendix 1.</p> <p>Chief Officer - Legal & Regulatory Services, HR & Corporate Policy explained that if the Committee noted the report, she would reinforce the option to Members to ensure that they were aware of the process.</p> <p>A Member asked how many dispensations had been requested. Chief Officer - Legal & Regulatory Services, HR & Corporate Policy explained that since she had been in post as Monitoring Officer, as of 2019 there had been no requests. She was aware of one previous request approximately 10 years ago</p> <p>A Member asked if a dispensation is requested but the agenda had only been made available up to 7 days before the meeting, it may not be suitable to delay that item due to time sensitivity. What are the processes in place to ensure a dispensation can be carried out.</p> <p>Chief Officer - Legal & Regulatory Services, HR & Corporate Policy explained that dispensations would usually be required on higher profile cases or reports and therefore Members whether they were BCBC or</p>
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	<p>Town/Community Council Members should keep an eye on their forward work programme to ensure they have sufficient time to enquire about a dispensation. Should there be particular urgency, she would be confident that the Standards Committee could convene a meeting within that time and make a decision should there be the need.</p> <p><u>RESOLVED:</u> That the Committee noted the report.</p>
Date Decision Made	26 February 2025

172. Independent Review of Investigations by the Public Services Ombudsman for Wales – Code of Conduct Complaints

Decision Made	<p>Chief Officer - Legal & Regulatory Services, HR & Corporate Policy presented a report which updated the Committee with the Public Services Ombudsman for Wales Investigation Report into Code of Conduct Complaints published on 27 September 2024.</p> <p>She advised that the published report was attached at Appendix 1 for Members information. The key recommendations from the report were as follows:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Documenting Political Affiliations• Notification of the accused Member• Quality Assurance for Investigating Officer Decisions• Accused Member’s right to comment• Oversight of the Code Team Member’s Delegated Authority• Clarification Amendments• Public Interest Considerations <p>A Member stated his disappointment that the report did not look at Bridgend and specific circumstances and complaints.</p> <p>The Chairperson asked if unconscious bias training was something that was carried out within BCBC committees. Chief Officer - Legal & Regulatory Services, HR & Corporate Policy explained that this was not something that was included as standalone training but rather included within other training. She added</p>
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	<p>that this could be fed through to the Democratic Services Committee as a recommendation for the Member Development Programme.</p> <p>A Member asked if there was a training plan for Standards Committee Members.</p> <p>Chief Officer - Legal & Regulatory Services, HR & Corporate Policy there was not a specific training plan for Standards Committee Members. She advised that all Members must undertake the Code of Conduct training which is regularly checked upon.</p> <p>Chief Officer - Legal & Regulatory Services, HR & Corporate Policy added that she would update the Committee after the next Democratic Services Committee meeting discuss the Member Development Programme.</p> <p><u>RESOLVED:</u> That the Committee noted the report.</p>
Date Decision Made	26 February 2025

173. Urgent Items

Decision Made	There were no urgent items
Date Decision Made	26 February 2025

174. Exclusion of the Public

Decision Made	<p><u>RESOLVED:</u> That under Section 100A (4) of the Local Government Act 1972 as amended by the Local Government (Access to Information) (Variation) (Wales) Order 2007, the public was excluded from the meeting during consideration of the following items of business as they contained exempt information as defined in Paragraph 12 of Part 4 and/or Paragraph 21 of Part 5 of Schedule 12A of the Act.</p> <p>Following the application of the public interest test it was resolved that pursuant to the Act referred to above, to consider the following items in private, with the public excluded from the meeting, as it was considered that in all the circumstances relating to the item, the public interest in maintaining the</p>
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	exemption outweighed the public interest in disclosing the information, because the information would be prejudicial to the applicant so mentioned.
Date Decision Made	26 February 2025

175. Approval of Exempt Minutes

Decision Made	This item was exempt
Date Decision Made	26 February 2025

176. Referral by the Ombudsman of Investigation Under S69 of the Local Government Act 2000

Decision Made	This item was exempt
Date Decision Made	26 February 2025

The meeting closed at 10:05