

**MINUTES OF A MEETING OF THE STANDARDS COMMITTEE
HELD IN MEETING ROOM 2, GUILDHALL, WREXHAM ON
THURSDAY, 6 SEPTEMBER 2018**

MEMBERS

Councillor Mr Michael Pugh, Chair
*Councillor Mr Neil Benson, Vice-Chair

*Ms Julie Adams	Councillor	* Andrew Atkinson
*Mrs Claire Blanchard	“	I David Bithell, MBE
Mrs Sandra Hunt	“	Kevin Hughes
Mr Geoff Edwards – Community Councillor		

*Absent

11 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were submitted on behalf of Ms Julie Adams, Mr Neil Benson, Mrs Claire Blanchard and Councillor I David Bithell, MBE.

12 DECLARATIONS OF PERSONAL INTERESTS, IF ANY

There were no declarations of interest.

13 CONFIRMATION OF MINUTES

The Minutes of the Meeting held on 7 June 2018 were submitted.

Correction to Minutes

Minute 9 – Dates and Times of Meetings

It was noted that the dates of the Standards Committee Meetings in 2018/2019 were incorrect. The correct dates are as follows:

Thursday 6 December 2018 at 2.00pm

Thursday 7 March 2019 at 3.30pm

Thursday 6 June 2019 at 3.30pm

RESOLVED – That the Minutes of the Meeting held on 7 June 2018 be signed as a correct record, subject to the aforementioned amendments.

14 PUBLIC SERVICE OMBUDSMAN FOR WALES ANNUAL REPORT

The Monitoring Officer submitted a report (HCCS/48/18) to inform Members of the publication of the Annual Report and Accounts of the Public Services Ombudsman for Wales 2017/18 entitled “Innovation, Improvement, Influence”.

The Deputy Monitoring Officer drew Members’ attention to paragraph 4.1 of the

report which contained details of the Code of Conduct complaints received in respect of members of different types of public bodies. It was noted that complaints regarding Community Councils had risen compared to previous years, but figures for other bodies had remained static. The majority of complaints were in relation to equality and respect. It was suggested that Town and Community Councils be advised of the increase in complaints.

Members were referred to paragraph 4.6 which reported that there had been four complaints in respect of Llay Community Council. However, three of these were closed after initial consideration and the fourth was investigated further but required no further action.

In response to a question, Members were advised that Community Councils were encouraged to seek a resolution where issues arose.

RESOLVED – That the report be noted.

Reason for decision

To inform Members of the work undertaken by the Public Services Ombudsman for Wales.

15 PUBLIC SERVICES OMBUDSMAN FOR WALES - THE CODE OF CONDUCT CASEBOOK

The Monitoring Officer submitted a report (HCCS/49/18) asking Members to consider the recent decisions of the Public Services Ombudsman for Wales (PSOW) published in the Code of Conduct Casebook.

The Deputy Monitoring Officer referred to the case regarding Llay Community Council. It was noted that the Ombudsman carried out an investigation and there had been some confusion as to whether a declaration of interest should have been made. As a result it was suggested that some additional training be provided. The Monitoring Officer and Deputy Monitoring Officer had since provided training which had been very well attended.

RESOLVED – That the decisions reported in the Code of Conduct Casebook be noted.

Reason for decision

To inform Members of the work undertaken by the Public Services Ombudsman for Wales.

16 URGENT ITEM OF BUSINESS - ADJUDICATION PANEL FOR WALES

The Deputy Monitoring Officer referred to new sanctions guidance recently issued by the Adjudication Panel for Wales setting out the approach to be taken in order to reach fair, proportionate and consistent decisions on the actions that should be applied in relation to an individual's breach of the local Code of Conduct. It was

noted that whilst the guidance set examples of things to consider, it was also made clear that there could be mitigating factors in each case which would also need to be considered.

RESOLVED – That the Adjudication Panel for Wales – Sanctions Guidance be noted.

Reason for decision

To inform Members of the new Sanctions Guidance.

Councillor Mr Michael Pugh
Chair