

STANDARDS COMMITTEE

Friday, 16 March 2018

PRESENT: M.A. Morgan (Chair)

Independent Members:

M. Dodd, D. Evans, J. James and A. Williams;

Community Committee Member:

Town Councillor P. Rogers

Councillors:

B.A.L. Roberts and S.J.G. Gilasbey

The following Officers were in attendance:

R. Edgecombe, Legal Services Manager

L. Evans, Policy & Partnership Officer

M.S. Davies, Democratic Services Officer

Chamber, County Hall, Carmarthen, - 10.00 am - 11.30 am

1. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

There were no apologies for absence.

2. DECLARATIONS OF PERSONAL INTEREST

There were no declarations of personal interest.

3. MINUTES - 6TH DECEMBER 2017

UNANIMOUSLY RESOLVED that the minutes of the meeting held on the 6th December 2017 be signed as a correct record.

4. DECISION OF THE ADJUDICATION PANEL FOR WALES.

The Committee had been circulated with a report which had recently been published by the Adjudication Panel for Wales detailing its findings in the case of a former Conwy County Borough Council member Dr Stuart Anderson. The matter had been referred to the Panel by the Public Services Ombudsman for Wales in July 2017 as a result of complaints received. The Panel had found that Dr Anderson had breached the Members Code of Conduct on 9 separate grounds and had disqualified him from office for 18 months. The Legal Services Manager considered that the decision provided useful guidance on the interpretation of key parts of the Code. He added that he would look into ways of publicising the findings within the county.

UNANIMOUSLY RESOLVED to note the report.

5. CODE OF CONDUCT CASEBOOK.

The Committee considered the Public Service Ombudsman for Wales' latest issue of the 'Code of Conduct' Casebook detailing summaries of 5 code investigations undertaken relating to members of County and Community Councils brought to a conclusion during the period October to December, 2017. None of the cases related to councillors from Carmarthenshire.

UNANIMOUSLY RESOLVED that the report be received.

6. FORWARD WORK PROGRAMME

The Committee considered the draft forward work programme for the 2018/19 municipal year. The draft programme had been developed to achieve an even distribution of work throughout the year. It was noted that in addition to the scheduled reports set out in the Programme the Committee would continue to receive ad hoc reports relating to such matters as dispensation applications and decisions by the Adjudication Panel for Wales as and when they arose.

UNANIMOUSLY RESOLVED that the Standards Committee Forward Work Programme 2018/19 be approved.

7. CODE OF CONDUCT TRAINING FOR TOWN AND COMMUNITY COUNCILLORS.

The Committee was reminded that for several years it had arranged training sessions on the Members' Code of Conduct for Town and Community Councillors. In accordance with that practice, it gave consideration to the proposed presentation for the 2018 sessions, incorporating feedback from the 2017 events. It was noted that one of the main elements of the feedback had been the desire for greater use of the Welsh language and the Policy & Partnership Officer advised as to how best this could be achieved. The Legal Services Manager agreed to discuss the issue further with colleagues who would be attending the sessions with a view to ensuring that the flow of the sessions was unimpeded.

UNANIMOUSLY RESOLVED that:

7.1 the presentation suggested for the 2018 Members Code of Conduct Training Sessions for Town and Community Councillors be approved;

7.2 training sessions be held on the 14th and 26th June 2018 in County Hall, Carmarthen, at 6.00 p.m. with no limit on the number of delegates that could attend from each Authority.

8. ANY OTHER ITEMS OF BUSINESS THAT BY REASON OF SPECIAL CIRCUMSTANCES THE CHAIR DECIDES SHOULD BE CONSIDERED AS A MATTER OF URGENCY PURSUANT TO SECTION 100B(4)(B) OF THE LOCAL GOVERNMENT ACT 1972.

In response to a comment the Legal Services Manager agreed to liaise with the Head of Democratic Services as to how best the work and profile of the Standards Committee could be raised.

CHAIR

DATE