

STANDARDS COMMITTEE

Wednesday, 6 December 2017

PRESENT: M.A. Morgan (Chair)

Independent Members:

M. Dodd and A. Williams

Councillors:

S.M. Allen and G.B. Thomas

The following Officers were in attendance:

R. Edgecombe, Legal Services Manager

K. Thomas, Democratic Services Officer

Chamber, County Hall, Carmarthen - 2.00 - 2.55 pm

1. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE.

An apology for absence was received from Councillor B.A.L. Roberts.

2. DECLARATIONS OF PERSONAL INTEREST.

There were no declarations of personal interests.

3. TO SIGN AS A CORRECT RECORD THE MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE COMMITTEE HELD ON THE 28TH SEPTEMBER, 2017.

UNANIMOUSLY RESOLVED that the minutes of the meeting of the Committee held on the 28th September, 2017 be signed as a correct record.

4. STANDARDS COMMITTEE ANNUAL REPORT 2016/2017

The Committee considered its 2016/17 Annual Report detailing the work undertaken during that period and noted that, if adopted, it would be presented to the Council meeting in January 2018 for approval.

UNANIMOUSLY RESOLVED TO RECOMMEND TO COUNCIL THAT the Standards Committee Annual Report 2016/17 be adopted.

5. APPLICATION FOR DISPENSATION BY COUNCILLOR ARWEL DAVIES

The Committee considered an application submitted by County Councillor Arwel Davies for the grant of a dispensation under the provisions of the Standards Committees (Grant of Dispensations) (Wales) Regulations to speak and make written representations at meetings of Carmarthenshire County Council in respect of matters relating to or likely to affect farming and agriculture.

It was reported that a dispensation was sought as Councillor Davies could potentially have a personal interest in such business by virtue of paragraphs 10(2)(a)(i) and 10(2)(a)(iv), of the Code of Conduct in that he was a working farmer who owned land in the County

The member's interest was also prejudicial as a member of the public with full knowledge of the facts would reasonably regard that interest as being so significant as to prejudice their judgement of the public interest.

Councillor Davies had accordingly requested that he be granted a dispensation under regulations 2 (d) and (f) of the Standards Committees (Grant of Dispensations) (Wales) Regulations.

The Legal Services Manager reminded the Committee that in considering the application, it had, at its meeting held on the 28th September, 2017 (minute 12 refers) granted similar dispensations to a number of County Councillors until the 30th September 2018 to speak but not vote, and to make written representations at meetings of Carmarthenshire County Council.

The Legal Services Manager referred to the Committee's previous decision and stated that should it decide to similarly grant Councillor Davies' application, the Monitoring Officer had enquired whether it would consider granting her delegated authority to grant any additional identical dispensation applications which may be received from other County Councillors who were also engaged in farming, owned farm land which was actively farmed by others or had close personal associates who were actively engaged in farming

UNANIMOUSLY RESOLVED

- 5.1 that dispensation be granted under Regulations 2(d) and (f) of the Standards Committees (Grant of Dispensations) (Wales) Regulations to County Councillor Arwel Davies to SPEAK, BUT NOT VOTE, AND TO MAKE WRITTEN REPRESENTATIONS at meetings of Carmarthenshire County Council in relation to any matters relating to or likely to affect farming and agriculture until the 30th September 2018.**
- 5.2 that delegated authority be granted to the Council's Monitoring Officer, up to the Committee's Meeting in September 2018, to grant identical dispensation applications which may be received from other County Councillors on identical terms to those granted by the Standards Committee in September 2017 i.e. to SPEAK, BUT NOT VOTE, AND TO MAKE WRITTEN REPRESENTATIONS at meetings of Carmarthenshire County Council in relation to any matters relating to or likely to affect farming and agriculture until the 30th September 2018.**

6. CODE OF CONDUCT COMPLIANCE BY TOWN AND COMMUNITY COUNCILLORS

The Committee, received for consideration, as part of its monitoring role in Code Compliance by Community and Town Councils, a report detailing the levels of Code Training received, declarations of interest made, dispensation requests granted and Code complaints for those authorities during the period 2014/15 – 2016/17.

Reference was made to the fact a number of Town and Community Councils had not received Code of Conduct Training. The Legal Services Manager advised that whilst those authorities had not attended any training provided by the County

Council, it may be the case they had received training via One Voice Wales. He advised that the onus was on Town and Community Clerks to ensure the provision of Code of Conduct training for their respective authorities.

UNANIMOUSLY RESOLVED that the report be received.

7. CODE OF CONDUCT CASEBOOK

The Committee considered the Public Service Ombudsman for Wales' latest issue of the 'Code of Conduct' Casebook detailing summaries of four code investigations undertaken relating to members of County and Community Councils brought to a conclusion during the period July to September, 2017.

UNANIMOUSLY RESOLVED that the report be received.

CHAIR

DATE