

STANDARDS COMMITTEE

28 JULY 2022

PRESENT: Ms M. Dodd (Chair)

Independent Members (In person):

Ms D. Evans, Mrs J. James

Independent Member (Virtually):

Mr F. Phillips.

Community Member (Virtually):-

Town Councillor P. Rogers;

Councillor (In Person)

B.W. Jones.

Councillors (Virtually):

R. James, G.B. Thomas.

The following Officers were in attendance (In Person):

L.R. Jones, Head of Administration and Law;

R. Edgecombe, Legal Services Manager;

E. Evans, Principal Democratic Services Officer;

A. Eynon, Principal Translator;

J. Owen, Democratic Services Officer [Minute Taker].

The following Officers were in attendance (Virtually):

M. Evans Thomas, Principal Democratic Services Officer.

Chamber, County Hall, Carmarthen. SA31 1JP and remotely: 2:00pm - 2:40pm

1. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE.

An apology for absence was received from Independent Member – Ms Caryl Davies.

2. DECLARATIONS OF PERSONAL INTEREST.

There were no declarations of interest.

3. TO SIGN AS A CORRECT RECORD THE MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE COMMITTEE HELD ON THE 13TH JUNE, 2022.

Reference was made to Minute 9 which stated that the decision was 'Unanimously Resolved'. It was highlighted that some members of the Committee voted differently in respect of resolution 9.1 and whilst the wording of the resolution applied, to reflect the majority vote, it was raised that the minute should be amended to read 'Resolved'. The Head of Legal and Administration advised that the webcast of the meeting be revisited in order to verify what was being said and the minutes amended accordingly, if required.

Furthermore, in respect of Minute 9, concern was raised regarding the number of Councillors affected by 'farming related matters' due to the wide range of differing factors that this term encompassed within the farming industry. The Head of Legal and Administration agreed and felt it would be prudent to provide Members with clarity by way of a specific guidance note. The Committee welcomed this and asked that this be an item on the agenda at the next meeting.

[NOTE: Following the subsequent review of the webcast of the last meeting]

RESOLVED that the minutes of the meeting of the Standards Committee held on 13th June, 2022 be signed as a correct record, subject to the following amendments:-

3.1 minute 9 of the meeting of the Standards Committee held on 13th June, 2022 be amended as follows:-

9.1 UNANIMOUSLY RESOLVED that dispensation be granted under Regulations 2(d) and (f) of the Standards Committees (Grant of Dispensations) (Wales) Regulations to County Councillors Jean Lewis, Ann Davies, Gareth Beynon Thomas, Ken Howell, Hefin Jones, Arwel Davies, Mansel Charles, Tyssul Evans, Kim Broom and Elwyn Williams TO SPEAK AND TO MAKE WRITTEN REPRESENTATIONS at meetings of Carmarthenshire County Council in respect of any Council business relating to farming and farming related matters generally, until the end of the current electoral term;

9.2 RESOLVED that dispensation be NOT granted under Regulations 2(d) and (f) of the Standards Committees (Grant of Dispensations) (Wales) Regulations to County Councillors Jean Lewis, Ann Davies, Gareth Beynon Thomas, Ken Howell, Hefin Jones, Arwel Davies, Mansel Charles, Tyssul Evans, Kim Broom and Elwyn Williams TO VOTE at meetings of Carmarthenshire County Council in respect of any Council business relating to farming and farming related matters generally, until the end of the current electoral term;

9.3 UNANIMOUSLY RESOLVED that the above-mentioned Councillors be advised that they should seek further legal advice and, if necessary, apply for another dispensation in the event that they wish to participate in council business which specifically relates to, or is likely to affect, them or close personal associates' farming activities or farm land.

3.2 a guidance note on farming related matters be developed and be included on the agenda for consideration at the next Standards Committee meeting.

4. ANY OTHER ITEMS OF BUSINESS

The Chair advised that there were no items of urgent business.

5. EXCLUSION OF THE PUBLIC

UNANIMOUSLY RESOLVED, pursuant to the Local Government Act 1972, as amended by the Local Government (Access to Information) (Variation) (Wales) Order 2007, that the public be excluded from the meeting during consideration of the following items as the reports contained exempt information as defined in paragraph 14 of Part 4 of Schedule 12A to the Act.

6. INITIAL CONSIDERATION OF REPORT ISSUED BY THE PUBLIC SERVICES OMBUDSMAN FOR WALES IN RESPECT OF COUNCILLOR TERRY DAVIES

Following the application of the public interest test it was **RESOLVED** pursuant to the Act referred to in minute no. 5 above not to publicise the content of the report as it contained exempt information relating to the financial or business affairs of any particular person (including the Authority holding that information) (Paragraph 14 of Part 4 of Schedule 12A to the Act). The public interest test in respect of this report outweighed the public interest in disclosing the information contained therein disclosure at this initial stage of a two-stage process would be a disproportionate and unwarranted intrusion into the private and family life of the Councillor in question.

Prior to the consideration of this item, some members revealed that they were unable to gain access to this restricted agenda item due to technical difficulties and therefore had not yet had sight of the report and supporting documents. In light of this, after seeking legal advice, it was therefore proposed to adjourn the meeting in order to resolve the technical issue and provide sufficient time for Members to familiarise themselves with the content of the report and supporting documents. This was duly seconded.

UNANIMOUSLY RESOLVED to adjourn this meeting and arrange a reconvened meeting of the Standards Committee as soon as practicably possible in order to consider this agenda item.

CHAIR

DATE