

STANDARDS COMMITTEE

(Civic Centre, Port Talbot)

Members Present:

4th December, 2009

Chairman: Mr.T.Pullen

Vice Chairman: Mrs.L.J.Rees

Independent Member: Mrs.J.E.Howells

Officers in Attendance: D.Michael and A.Borthwick

Apologies: Councillors Mrs.L.H.James and E.Loaring

1. **MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING**

RESOLVED: that the Minutes of the meeting of 14th August 2009, be accepted as a true record.

Report of the Head of Legal and Democratic Services and Monitoring Officer

2. **APPLICATION FOR GRANT OF DISPENSATION UNDER SECTION 81(4) LOCAL GOVERNMENT ACT 2000 – NEATH PORT TALBOT COUNTY BOROUGH COUNCIL MEMBER IN RESPECT OF A MEMBER OF THEIR FAMILY EMPLOYED BY THE COUNCIL**

The Committee considered the application from Councillor H.M.Bebell in respect of a dispensation relating to his niece, who is employed in Environment Services as a Project Co-ordinator.

It was confirmed that her role did not involve work of the Planning Section and accordingly she had no input to the Planning and Development Control Committee.

RESOLVED: that a dispensation be granted to the undermentioned Councillor under the Standards Committees (Grant of Dispensation) (Wales) Regulations 2001, in the standard form to speak and vote:-

Councillor H.M.Bebell – Niece – employed by
Environment Services;

this dispensation to be renewed at the same time as other dispensations.

3. **STANDARDS COMMITTEE CONFERENCE WALES – 15TH OCTOBER 2009**

The circulated report of the Head of Legal and Democratic Services and Monitoring Officer contained details of the recent Standards Committee conference that had been held in Cardiff.

The main speakers at the conference were firstly, Dr. Brian Woods-Scawen, on behalf of the Committee on Standards in Public Life, with particular reference to Parliamentary business currently being considered by that Committee. The second was Mr. Peter Tyndall, the Public Service Ombudsman for Wales.

It was noted that the conference and associated workshops was useful in informing the Authority of development that had occurred throughout Wales, as attendees were from throughout the Principality. It was agreed that a single copy of the DVD of the main presentations be purchased for the Committee's information.

RESOLVED: that the above report and verbal update given at the meeting be noted.

4. **PUBLIC SERVICES OMBUDSMAN FOR WALES ANNUAL REPORT 2008/09**

The circulated report of the Head of Legal and Democratic Services and Monitoring Officer contained extracts from the Ombudsman's Annual Report and that of the Adjudication Panel for Wales for the year 2008/09 (shown as Appendix 1 and 2 respectively to the circulated report).

RESOLVED: that the above report be noted.

5. **URGENT ITEM**

Because of the need to deal now with the matter contained in Minute No. 6 below, the Chairman agreed that this could be raised at today's meeting as an urgent item pursuant to Section 100B (4) (b) of the Local Government Act 1972.

Reason:

Due to the return date for a response to the Consultation.

Urgent Report of the Head of Legal and Democratic Services and Monitoring Officer

6. **MEMBERS' CODE OF CONDUCT - DRAFT GUIDANCE FROM THE PUBLIC SERVICES OMBUDSMAN FOR WALES**

The tabled urgent report of the Head of Legal and Democratic Services and Monitoring Officer contained details of the consultation regarding the draft guidance on the Members' Code of Conduct recently issued by the Ombudsman. Accordingly, a copy of the draft Code of Conduct was appended to the tabled report for Members' consideration.

It was noted that a formal response to the Consultation was required by the 12th February 2010.

It was agreed that, to enable Members to have an opportunity to consider the matter, a special meeting be convened in due course, to enable a formal response to be prepared.

RESOLVED: that the Monitoring Officer liaise with the Chairman regarding a suitable response, to be submitted for approval at a special meeting to be convened in the New Year.

CHAIRMAN