

STANDARDS COMMITTEE

(Civic Centre, Port Talbot)

Members Present:

13th April, 2012

Chairman: Mr.G.T.Pullen

Vice Chairman: Mrs.L.J.Rees

Independent Member: Mrs J.E.Howells

NPTCBC Member: Councillors A.J.Taylor and W.D.Walters

Officers in Attendance: D.Michael and Miss A.M.Farrell

Apology: Councillor M.Evans

1. RETIREMENT OF THE VICE CHAIRMAN

The Committee noted that the Vice Chairman, Mrs L.J.Rees, would be standing down as an Independent Member after this meeting. The Chairman took the opportunity, on behalf of the Committee, to thank Mrs Rees for her valuable contribution to the work of the Standards Committee during her term of office. Members and Officers of the Committee also expressed their appreciation to Mrs Rees and wished her well in the future. Mrs Rees responded with her thanks to the Chairman and the Committee for their support and good wishes.

2. MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING

RESOLVED: that the Minutes of the meeting of the 25th November, 2011, be accepted as a true record.

Matter Arising

Re: Provisions of the Bribery Act 2010:

The Head of Legal Services/Monitoring Officer advised the Committee that the Employee Code of Conduct was in the process of being updated and would be submitted to Council for approval in the new Civic Year.

Report of the Head of Legal Services/Monitoring Officer

3. **COMPOSITION OF STANDARDS COMMITTEE** **RECRUITMENT OF ADDITIONAL INDEPENDENT MEMBERS**

The Committee considered the above circulated Report.

The Head of Legal Services/Monitoring Officer, Mr David Michael, advised Members that he had recommended to Council on 29th March, 2012 that further appointments be made to the Standards Committee to counter the difficulties experienced when all Independent Members retire at one time. Council authorised Mr Michael to proceed with the advertisement and recruitment of two additional Independent Members, together with one Lay Member for the Audit Committee. Members noted the details provided by Mr Michael in respect of the recruitment process, which would include press advertisements and contacting voluntary organisations. It was agreed that the Chairman be present at the interviews for the Independent Members.

RESOLVED: that the above report be noted.

4. **PLANNING PROTOCOL**

The Committee considered the Planning Protocol as given in an Annex to the circulated report. It was noted that this was a new standard form of recommended code governing the conduct of Members of Planning Committees and that it applied to local government in both England and Wales.

Members discussed various aspect of the recommended Protocol, including its link with the current Members' Code of Conduct. The Head of Legal Services/Monitoring Officer advised the Committee that various elements of the Council's current Planning Code would be included in the final version of the Protocol to be submitted to the new Council after the

Election. These elements would include, in particular, reference to relevant parts of the Council's Constitution. Mr Michael also agreed with the Chairman's suggestion for the inclusion of an Executive Summary on the key parts of the Protocol.

RESOLVED: that the above report be noted.

5. **FUTURE MEETINGS OF THE COMMITTEE/INDUCTION PROGRAMME**

The following Cycle of Meetings for 2012/13 was noted:

Fridays at 9.30am in Port Talbot - 1st June, 2012, 12 October, 2012 and 23rd February, 2013

N.B. The 1st June meeting would include training for all Members and Substitute Members of the Committee.

The Committee was also invited to attend the Member Seminar on Code of Conduct/Interests/Standards Issues, to be held as part of the All Member Induction Programme, on Thursday 24th May, 2012 at 10am in Port Talbot.

RESOLVED: that the above Cycle /Induction arrangements be noted.

6. **ACCESS TO MEETINGS**

RESOLVED: that pursuant to Section 100A(4) and (5) of the Local Government Act 1972, the public be excluded for the following item of business which involved the likely disclosure of exempt information as defined in Paragraph 16 of Part 4 of Schedule 12A to the above Act.

Private Report of the Head of Legal Services/Deputy Monitoring Officer

7. **MEMBERS' CODE OF CONDUCT - MEMBERS INDEMNITY LEVELS**

The above Private Report advised the Committee of discussions between the Public Services Ombudsman for Wales and the Welsh Local Government Association on the above matter.

RESOLVED: that the above report be noted.

CHAIRMAN