

STANDARDS COMMITTEE

(Multi-Location Meeting - Council Chamber, Port Talbot & Microsoft Teams)

Members Present:

14 October 2024

Chairperson: L.Fleet

Vice Chairperson: T.Ward

Independent Members: A.Davies and D.Lewis

NPTCBC Members: **Councillors** W.Carpenter and S.Thomas

Community Committee Members: **Councillor** C.Edwards

Officers In Attendance: C.Griffiths and T.Davies

Invitees: **Councillors** S.K.Hunt, A.Llewelyn and R.G.Jones

1. **WELCOME AND CHAIR'S ANNOUNCEMENTS**

The Chair welcomed all to the meeting.

2. **DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

No declarations on interest were received.

3. **MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING**

Members noted an error in the minutes from the previous meeting. Councillor Wayne Carpenter was present at the meeting, but was not included in the attendance.

RESOLVED: That the minutes of the previous meeting, held 9 September 2024, be agreed as an accurate record, subject to Councillor Wayne Carpenter being noted as present.

4. **MEETING WITH GROUP LEADERS**

Members met with political group leaders (Councillors S.K.Hunt, A.Llewelyn and R.G.Jones. Councillor H.C.Clarke was unable to attend) to discuss their relationship with the Standards Committee, and noted what steps were in place to assist them in discharging their duties.

Discussion took place around the use of social media and hybrid meetings, whereby it could be easy to misinterpret the style of language used, or facial expressions. Members suggested that specific training on non verbal communication (NVC) could be useful.

Members spoke to group leaders about how they recognised incivility and disrespect within their groups.

The importance of continuing to foster a good working relationship between the Standards Committee, Officers and elected Members was emphasised. It was suggested that all Members be sent out the roles and responsibilities of the Standards Committee, to further explain its remit.

RESOLVED: That the report and discussion be noted.

5. **REVIEW OF MEMBER OFFICER PROTOCOL**

The Committee discussed the draft Member Officer Protocol, as detailed at Appendix 1 to the circulated report, and gave suggestions to the Monitoring Officer on wording changes.

RESOLVED: That the updated Member Officer Protocol be commended to Full Council for approval.

6. **LOCAL RESOLUTION PROCEDURE UPDATE**

Members discussed slight changes to wording within the Local Resolution Procedure, as detailed at Appendix 1 to the circulated report, and felt it would be beneficial to include a flow chart.

RESOLVED: That the amendments to the Local Resolution Procedure, which are shown underlined within Appendix 1 to the circulated report, and discussed within the meeting, be agreed.

7. **STANDARDS COMMITTEES FORUM - WALES**

RESOLVED: That the information about the fourth meeting of the national Standards Committees Forum – Wales, as detailed within Appendix 1 to the circulated report, be noted.

8. **PUBLIC SERVICE OMBUDSMAN FOR WALES ANNUAL REPORT 2023/2024**

RESOLVED: That the content of the Public Service Ombudsman Annual Report for Neath Port Talbot County Borough Council for 2023/2024, detailed at Appendix 1 to the circulated report, be noted, as well as the steps that officers will continue to embark on as part of general improvement work.

9. **ATTENDANCE AT NPT COUNCIL AND TOWN/COMMUNITY COUNCIL MEETINGS**

RESOLVED: That the draft feedback form, in respect of the observation of Neath Port Talbot Council meetings and Town and Community Council meetings, by Members of the Standards Cttee, be approved for use (as detailed at Appendix 1 to the circulated report), and the timetable of meetings that take place, be noted.

10. **FORWARD WORK PROGRAMME**

RESOLVED: That the Forward Work Programme be noted.

11. **URGENT ITEMS**

No urgent items were received.

CHAIRPERSON