

STANDARDS COMMITTEE

(Remotely Via Teams)

Members Present:

11 January 2022

Chairperson: C.L.Jones

Vice Chairperson: B.Richards

Independent Members: L.Fleet and T.Ward

NPTCBC Members: **Councillors** S.E.Freeguard and D.Keogh

Officers In Attendance: T.Davies and C.Griffiths

Apologies: **Councillors** G.Reynolds

1. **WELCOME AND ROLL CALL**

The Chair welcomed everyone to the meeting, and a roll call was taken.

2. **CHAIR'S ANNOUNCEMENTS**

There were none.

3. **DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

No declarations of interest were received.

4. **MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING**

RESOLVED: That the minutes of the previous meeting held on the 7 September, 2021 be confirmed as a true and accurate record of the proceedings.

5. **PUBLIC SERVICE OMBUDSMAN FOR WALES ANNUAL REPORT 2020/2021**

Members discussed attendance at training and noted that attendance in recent sessions had been higher due to online training.

RESOLVED: That the Public Service Ombudsman Annual Report for Neath Port Talbot County Borough Council for 2021/2022, detailed at Appendix 1 to the circulated report, be noted.

6. **GRANT OF DISPENSATION UNDER S81(4) OF THE LOCAL GOVERNMENT ACT 2000**

RESOLVED: That Community Councillors Sonia Reynolds and Sarah Thomas be granted a on the term set out below, and that the application for dispensation runs to the Standards Committee which follows the Annual meeting 2022.

“To speak and vote on issues relating to the business of Canolfan Maerdy at Gwaun Cae Gurwen Community Council provided that:

- (a) they do not directly financially advantage or disadvantage or give other direct benefit or disbenefit to a Member or the Member’s family
- (b) it does not relate to a grant application or consideration of a contract between Canolfan Maerdy and the Community Council
- (c) and that this dispensation will not apply in circumstances where a member of the public might reasonably conclude that the role of trustee would significantly affect the Councillor’s ability to act purely on the merits of the case and in the public interest.”

7. **INDEPENDENT REVIEW OF THE ETHICAL STANDARDS FRAMEWORK IN WALES**

It was noted that this was currently the first phase of the project, there were no firm timescales as to when the legislation would be implemented, and amendments made, but work by Welsh Government would be ongoing in 2022.

Clarity around anonymity of witnesses was sought, and Members noted that no individuals would be named within the decision notices.

Guidance to Elected Members concerning social media was discussed, and it was noted that currently there were 2 strands of training given to new Members – ‘Operational’ (general social media training) and ‘Code of Conduct’ matters.

RESOLVED: That the first phase of the Independent Review of the Ethical Standards Framework in Wales, be noted.

8. **URGENT ITEMS**

None were received.

CHAIRPERSON