

# STANDARDS COMMITTEE

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

**Members Present:**

**13 July 2022**

**Chairperson:** C.L.Jones

**Independent Members:** L.Fleet and T.Ward

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

**Officers In Attendance:** C.Griffiths and T.Davies

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## 1. **CHAIRPERSONS ANNOUNCEMENT/S**

The Chair welcomed everyone to the meeting, and Members introduced themselves.

## 2. **DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

The following Members made Declarations of Interest – these interests were considered prejudicial, so the Members left the meeting at these items, and took no part in the meeting or discussion thereon:

Councillor Sarah Thomas	Agenda Items 9 and 12, Grant of Dispensation under S81(4) of the Local Government Act 2000 (Community Council and County Borough Council), as she was named in both reports as seeking dispensations for her involvement with Canolfan Maerdy and Adult Learning Wales.
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Councillor Wayne Carpenter	Agenda Item 12, Grant of Dispensation under S81(4) of the
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Local Government Act 2000 (County Borough Council), as he was named as seeking dispensations within the report.

3. **FORWARD WORK PROGRAMME 2022-2023**

Members noted the Forward Work Programme for the Standards Committee, which would be a standing item at each meeting going forward.

4. **REMIT OF STANDARDS COMMITTEE**

**RESOLVED:** That the report be noted.

5. **CODE OF CONDUCT TRAINING TO ELECTED MEMBERS FOLLOWING LOCAL GOVERNMENT ELECTIONS**

**RESOLVED:** That the report be noted.

6. **INVITATION TO GROUP LEADERS OF NEATH PORT TALBOT COUNTY BOROUGH COUNCIL TO ATTEND STANDARDS COMMITTEE**

Members noted a new addition to the remit of the Standards Committee – specifically the inclusion of the new legislative requirement to invite Group Leaders to attend the Standards Committee.

Members discussed the proposed questions to put to Group Leaders, which were contained within the circulated report.

How the various political groups utilised the Code of Conduct, within their own standing orders, was discussed, as well as any training that the Group Leaders had received re the new duty, and how it had been received.

The proposed set of questions to put to Group Leaders (contained within the circulated report) was discussed, and Members felt it was more appropriate to ask (at question B) 'How appropriate do you think the Code of Conduct is?' as opposed to 'Do you consider that it is still

appropriate to have a Code of Conduct in Wales, which applies to all councillors and co-opted members?’

Members suggested adding a sentence on how to rate the effectiveness of any training given, to question H - ‘What are your views on the Authority’s Code of Conduct training? How could it be improved so as to raise the ethical standards of Councillors /Co-opted Members?’

The Monitoring Officer would include all the points above, prior to sending the questions to the Group Leaders.

**RESOLVED:** That Members extend an invite to Group Leaders of Neath Port Talbot County Borough Council, to attend a meeting of the Standards Committee, to discuss code of conduct related matters to fulfil the legal obligations under the Local Government and Elections (Wales) Act 2021.

7. **SOUTH WEST WALES CORPORATE JOINT COMMITTEE**

**RESOLVED:** That the delegation of the Standards Committee function of the South West Wales Corporate Joint Committee to Neath Port Talbot Council Standards Committee be noted, and that reports be brought on a future basis for Members consideration.

8. **TOWN AND COMMUNITY COUNCIL CODE OF CONDUCT MATTERS**

Members discussed the current training arrangements for the Town/Community Councils, including the take up of any training sessions, and the format of the training.

It was noted that ‘your role as Group Leader’ in Question 7 of the questionnaire, should be altered to ‘your role as Clerk’.

The Monitoring Officer extended a welcome to all Standards Members to attend various meetings of Town/Community Councils – dates would be circulated in due course.

**RESOLVED:** That the Code of Conduct questionnaire (attached at Appendix 1 of the circulated report) be issued to Town/Community Clerks, and a report be brought back to Members at a future meeting of the Standards Committee.

9. **GRANT OF DISPENSATION UNDER S81(4) OF THE LOCAL GOVERNMENT ACT 2000 (COMMUNITY COUNCIL)**

(At this point in the meeting, Councillor S.Thomas reaffirms her interest, and leaves the meeting for the discussion and voting thereon.)

**RESOLVED:** That Community Councillors Sonia Reynolds and Sarah Thomas be granted a dispensation to speak and vote, on the terms set out in paragraph 9 of the circulated report, and that the dispensation runs to the Standards Committee which follows the Annual Meeting of Council, 2027.

10. **URGENT ITEMS**

No urgent items were received.

11. **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 items of business which involved the likely disclosure of exempt information as defined in Paragraphs 12 and 13 of Part 4 of Schedule 12A to the above Act.

12. **GRANT OF DISPENSATIONS AND RENEWAL OF GRANTS UNDER SECTION 81(4) LOCAL GOVERNMENT ACT 2000 (COUNTY BOROUGH COUNCIL) (EXEMPT UNDER PARAGRAPHS 12 & 13)**

(At this point in the meeting, Councillor W.Carpenter reaffirms his interest, and leaves the meeting for the discussion and voting thereon.)

Members noted that the reference to 'Neath RFC' should read 'Neath RFC Supporters Club'. Officers explained that this was a typing error, and thanked Members for pointing it out.

**RESOLVED:**

1. That the applications for dispensation regarding Employment, as set out in paragraph 13 to the private, circulated report, be approved for those members listed in paragraph 16 to speak and vote, and that the dispensations run to the Standards Committee which follows the Annual Meeting of Council 2027.

2. That a general dispensation to speak and vote on all education matters as a result of appointment as a School Governor, be further granted until the Standards Committee which follows the Annual Meeting of Council 2027.

3. That a general dispensation to speak and vote on all School Transport matters be granted until the Standards Committee which follows the Annual Meeting of Council 2027, provided it does not directly financially advantage or disadvantage, or give other direct benefit or disbenefit, to a Member or the Member's family who is employed by the County Borough Council.

4. That the applications for dispensations concerning School Reorganisation Matters, as set out in paragraph 29 of the Private, circulated report, be approved to those members listed in paragraph 31, to speak but not vote, and that the dispensations run to the Standards Committee which follows the Annual Meeting of Council 2027.

5. That a general dispensation be granted to speak and vote on all School Admission Policies until the Standards Committee which follows the Annual Meeting of Council 2027.

6. That a general dispensation be granted to speak and vote on all Parking Policies and Permit Costs until the Standards Committee which follows the Annual Meeting of Council 2027.

7. That a dispensation be granted to all Members to “speak and vote on issues relating to the provision of leisure services within Neath Port Talbot irrespective of membership or usage of current Celtic Leisure services and facilities”, until the Standards Committee which follows the Annual Meeting of Council 2027.

8. That the applications for dispensations concerning Miscellaneous Issues, set out in paragraph 43 to the Private, circulated report, be approved in the circumstances to speak or to speak and vote as set out in the Schedule above and that the dispensations run to the Standards Committee which follows the Annual Meeting 2027.

9. That a general dispensation concerning Voluntary Sector Funding, be further granted to speak only, and that the dispensations cover all matters related to the funding for the voluntary/third sector such dispensations to run to the Standards Committee which follows the Annual Meeting of Council 2027.

## **CHAIRPERSON**