

STANDARDS COMMITTEE

(Teams/ hybrid at Council Chamber - Port Talbot Civic Centre)

Members Present:

31 January 2023

Chairperson: L.Fleet

Vice Chairperson: T.Ward

Independent Members: D.Lewis

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

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

Officers In Attendance: C.Griffiths, A.O'Donnell, M.Shaw and T.Davies

Invitees: **Councillors** A.Llewelyn and R.G.Jones

1. **APPOINTMENT OF CHAIR**

Prior to the election of the Chairperson, The Head of Legal Services and Monitoring Officer opened the meeting.

RESOLVED: That Louise Fleet be appointed Chairperson of the Standards Committee.

2. **CHAIR'S ANNOUNCEMENTS**

The new Chair welcomed everyone to the meeting, and introductions were made.

3. **DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

None were received.

4. **APPOINTMENT OF VICE CHAIR**

RESOLVED: That Tom Ward be appointed Vice Chairperson of the Standards Committee.

5. **MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING**

The minutes of the meeting of 25 October 2022, were agreed as an accurate record.

6. **GROUP LEADER INVITATION**

The Committee welcomed Councillor A.Llewelyn (Leader of the Plaid Group) and Councillor R.G.Jones (Leader of the Labour Group) to answer the circulated form of questions to Group Leaders, and to discuss Code of Conduct related matters.

Issues raised included:

- The Code of Conduct needs updating to reflect the hybrid element, and recording of meetings.
- Would it be possible to include a bullet point guide to the Code of Conduct, within election packs, so that potential Councillors are aware of the key points prior to being elected?
- The perception of the Standards Committee could be improved, by way of giving short presentations on the role of the Committee, either in person, or as a recording, to the Town/Community Councils, or even on the Council website.
- It would be helpful for Members to receive midterm refresher sessions on the Code of Conduct, and the local resolution process.
- There was no specific mention of discrimination within the Code, despite reference to the Equality Act. This could be added to the next iteration of the Code.

RESOLVED: That the attendance of the Group Leaders of the Plaid and the Labour Groups be noted, to

ensure that the legal obligations under the Local Government and Elections (Wales) Act 2021, were fulfilled.

7. **EMPLOYEE CODE OF CONDUCT**

RESOLVED: That the report be noted.

8. **WHISTLEBLOWING ARRANGEMENTS**

RESOLVED: That the report be noted.

9. **ADJUDICATION PANEL DECISIONS**

RESOLVED: That the report be noted.

10. **STANDARDS COMMITTEE FORWARD WORK PROGRAMME**

The Forward Work Programme 2022-23 was noted.

11. **URGENT ITEMS**

None were received.

CHAIRPERSON