

STANDARDS COMMITTEE

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

Members Present:

13 June 2023

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: **Councillors** C.Edwards

Officers In Attendance: C.Griffiths and T.Davies

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

The Chair welcomed all to the meeting.

2. **DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

The following Member made a declaration of interest at the start of the meeting:

Councillor Sarah Thomas

Minute No 9 - Grant of Dispensation under S81(4) of the Local Government Act 2000 - as she is a colleague of the applicant at Canolfan Maerdy.

Cllr Thomas did not consider the interest as prejudicial, so was able to take part in the discussion and voting thereon.

3. **FORWARD WORK PROGRAMME 2023-24**

The circulated Forward Work Programme was noted, and Members were reminded of the Standards Committee Forward Work Programme workshop, which would take place immediately following this meeting.

4. **MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING**

The minutes of the meeting of 11 April 2023, were agreed as an accurate record.

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

Members discussed the role of Neath Port Talbot's Standards Committee, in its position as the designated Standards Committee for the South West Wales Corporate Joint Committee.

Members suggested tightening up the wording in the sections referring to Gifts and Hospitality, so that there was no room for confusion.

It was noted that the date of the report should read 2023, instead of 2022.

RESOLVED: That the report be noted.

6. **ATTENDANCE AT NPT COUNCIL AND TOWN COMMUNITY COUNCIL MEETINGS**

Members welcomed the report, and felt the feedback form could be adapted over time, as necessary, including adding a scale of response (from 1 to 10, for example), which might be easier than trying to analyse the written responses.

A question around political impartiality would also be included.

Discussion took place around attendance at the Town/Community Council meeting, and how to facilitate Standards Committee Members attendance, without all turning up at once.

RESOLVED: That the protocol for Members of the Standards Committee, in respect of the observation of Neath Port Talbot Council meetings, and Town and Community Council meetings contained in the circulated report, and the draft feedback form for usage contained at Appendix 1 to the circulated report, be approved.

7. **SOCIAL MEDIA TRAINING FOR ELECTED MEMBERS**

Members discussed setting up a Task and Finish Group in respect of social media, which would be open to all Standards Committee Members.

RESOLVED: That the current training that Members receive in respect of social media be noted, and a Task and Finish Group be established, to specifically look at the issues of social media, with the aim that a report be brought to the Standards Committee with recommendations for elected members to consider.

8. **GIFTS AND HOSPITALITY**

Members discussed the circulated report, and felt it would be more appropriate to have a value of £0 on the reporting of gifts and hospitality, rather than the amount of £25 suggested within the circulated report.

RESOLVED:

1. That the setting of a value of £0 for gifts and hospitality, that should be notified to the Monitoring Officer, be agreed.
2. That the Gifts/Hospitality protocol be amended accordingly, and brought back before a future meeting of the Standards Committee, for commendation to Council.

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

RESOLVED: That Community Councillor Len Preece be granted a dispensation to speak and vote on issues relating to the business of Canolfan Maerdy at Gwaun Cae Gurwen Community Council, on the terms set out in paragraph 9 to the circulated report, and that the application for dispensation runs to the Standards Committee which follows the Annual Meeting 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 item 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 DISPENSATION UNDER S81(4) OF THE LOCAL GOVERNMENT ACT 2000 (EXEMPT UNDER PARAGRAPH 12 AND 13)**

It was noted that the date of the report should read 2023, instead of 2022.

RESOLVED: That Councillor Alun Llewelyn be granted a dispensation to speak and vote on issues relating Urdd Gobaith Cymru on the terms set out in paragraph 12 of the circulated report, and that the application for dispensation runs to the Standards Committee which follows the Annual meeting 2027.

CHAIRPERSON