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**MONMOUTHSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL**

**Minutes of the meeting of Standards Committee held  
on Monday, 19th March, 2018 at 10.00 am**

**PRESENT:** County Councillors: D. Evans, J.Pratt

R. McGonigle (Independent Representative)  
T. Auld (Independent Representative – Chair)  
R. Stow (Independent Representative)

**OFFICERS IN ATTENDANCE:**

Robert Tranter	Head of Legal Services & Monitoring Officer
Nicola Perry	Senior Democracy Officer

**APOLOGIES:**

Councillors S. Woodhouse, G. Preece (Independent Representative),  
M. Sutton (Independent Representative) and I. Cameron (Community Representative)

**1. Declarations of interest**

None.

**2. To approve the minutes of the meeting held on 27th November 2017**

The minutes of the meeting of Standards Committee held on 27<sup>th</sup> November 2017 were approved and signed by the Chair.

In doing so, the Monitoring Officer informed Members that the updated constitution had been approved by Council.

**3. DRAFT GUIDANCE FROM THE WLGA ON PERSONAL SAFETY FOR MEMBERS AND HANDLING ONLINE ABUSE**

The Monitoring Officer presented a report for Standards Committee to note two pieces of draft guidance from the Welsh Local Government Association (WLGA) on personal safety and handling online abuse and to provide comment.

Councillor Pratt commended the report and suggested that an all Members seminar on safety would be useful.

Members discussed the use of social media and recognised the importance of using own judgement to judge situations. It was added that the Council must send the message that any kind of abuse will not be tolerated.

It was again agreed that a Members seminar providing guidance around online abuse would be useful.

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The Committee resolved to note the WLGA draft guidance documents on personal safety and handling online abuse.

#### **4. GUIDANCE TO MEMBERS SERVING ON OUTSIDE BODIES**

Members received a report providing guidance to members serving on outside bodies.

It was confirmed that the guidance would be available to Town and Community Councils. In response to a question regarding responsibility Members were advised to consider what parent body they acting on behalf of. If ever there was any doubt in these matters Members should contact the Monitoring Officer.

In terms of appointments to Outside Bodies, this was a decision made by Council at the AGM. However, some Outside Bodies may require that the Leader or Cabinet Members be appointed.

Clarification was sought around the SRS Business Solutions and SRS Public.

In response to a question surrounding political issues, we heard that it is a decision for Council and the leading party can make the appointments. For example the Gwent Police and Crime Panel has both a Conservative and Labour Member, as it covers the whole of Gwent, which needed to be factored in. The benefits of cross party working were recognised.

The Committee resolved to note the guidance to members serving on outside bodies.

#### **5. ANNUAL REPORT OF THE ADJUDICATION PANEL FOR WALES 2016/17**

The Committee were asked to consider the annual report of the Adjudication Panel for Wales (APW) for 2016 -2017.

With regards to the case summaries, it was suggested that we write back to APW, and ask that in the interest of transparency they disclose names of the Councillors involved.

The Committee resolved to note the contents of the annual report of the APW.

#### **6. To note the date of next meeting as Monday 18th June 2018 at 10.00am (TBC)**

We noted the date of the next meeting.

We agreed that a Complaints report will be added to the next agenda.

For information, there will be a Standards Conference held at Aberystwyth University on 14<sup>th</sup> September 2018.

Members requested sight of agenda items a month in advance of agenda despatch.

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**The meeting ended at 11.05 am**

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