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MONMOUTHSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL

Minutes of the meeting of Standards Committee held
at Council Chamber, County Hall, The Rhadyr, Usk, NP15 1GA on Monday, 14th
September, 2015 at 9.30 am

PRESENT: Mrs P. Reeves (Chairman)
County Councillors: D. Evans, D. Edwards and P. Jordan

INDEPENDENT REPRESENTATIVES:

Mr. T. Auld, M. Sutton and Mr G. Preece

OFFICERS IN ATTENDANCE:

Nicola Perry	Democratic Services Officer
Robert Tranter	Head of Legal Services & Temporary Monitoring Officer

1. Apologies for absence

We received apologies from Community Councillor Mrs I. Cameron.

2. Declarations of interest

There were no declarations of interest made.

3. To confirm and sign the minutes of the meeting held on 8th June 2015

We resolved that the minutes of the meeting held on 8th June 2015 be confirmed as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

4. The Ombudsman Annual Letter

We received a report in order to inform Standards Committee of the Ombudsman's Annual Letter. The letter provided a breakdown of complaints against Monmouthshire County Council and alleged breaches of the Code of Conduct for County Councillors.

Members noted that the Ombudsman's Annual Letter described how 19 complaints had been dealt with against Monmouthshire County Council in 2014/2015, compared with 16 in 2013/14, both figures were below the local authority average for Wales.

We heard that, historically, the number of complaints had increased during the period approaching an election. Members suggested that it would be helpful to distribute a reminder of the Code of Conduct to all Members at such a time.

We resolved to note the report.

5. Standards Conference Wales 2015

Members were informed of the forthcoming Standards Conference Wales 2015, due to take place at Cardiff City Hall on Tuesday 20th October 2015.

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Members were advised there would be various speakers on the day, including Nick Bennett, the Public Services Ombudsman for Wales, and Peter Davies, the President of the Adjudication Panel for Wales. A number of workshop sessions would include whistleblowing, leadership and members use of social media.

The Conference would provide an opportunity to meet Standards Committee members from across Wales.

Each council could send up to 5 members to the conference.

Members were required to advise the Temporary Monitoring Officer if they would be attending the conference.

The Chairman expressed that an update from members attending the conference would be welcome at the next meeting.

6. Ombudsman Factsheet

We received a report to advise Members of the Public Services Ombudsman For Wales Factsheets for Councillors, providing information on what happens when a Member faces an allegation that the Code of Conduct has been breached, and the subsequent interview process.

The factsheets were considered a useful addition for Members and it was confirmed they would be distributed to the Town and Community Councils Clerks as well as County Councillors.

The Temporary Monitoring Officer advised that training would be provided as requested.

7. To note the date and time of future meetings:

We noted the dates of the next meetings as:

- Monday 7th December 2015
- Monday 14th March 2016.

We resolved that the meetings would commence at 9.30am and that all future Standards Committee meetings would commence at 9.30am.

The meeting ended at 9.55 am