

MONMOUTHSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL

Minutes of the meeting of Standards Committee held at Council Chamber - Council Chamber on Monday, 16th September, 2024 at 10.00 am

PRESENT: County Councillors: F Bromfield

R. Price, A. Blackmore, John, R Williams-Flew, P. Easy (Chair),
M. Gibson

OFFICERS IN ATTENDANCE:

Nicola Perry Senior Democracy Officer
Geraint Edwards Deputy Monitoring Officer

APOLOGIES:

Councillors Frances Taylor and Catherine Fookes

1. Declarations of interest

None.

2. Minutes of previous meeting

The minutes of the meeting held on 10th June 2024 were confirmed as an accurate record. In doing so it was noted that the following was omitted and should be added to the minutes:

The Committee acknowledged the work of the previous Chair of the Standards Committee, Richard Stow, and his long service on the Committee.

3. Annual Letter from PSOW 2023/24

The Committee received the Annual Letter from the Public Service Ombudsman Wales 2023/24.

We noted that the number of complaints or approaches to the Ombudsman were only a slight increase on last year. Only two of the complaints were code of conduct complaints, one of those were decided not to be investigated and was the subject of the recent Standards Committee Panel Hearing.

A concern was raised that in relation to recommendation complied with on time, MCC is one of the lowest ranked of all authorities, even though there were only 4 to be dealt with. This had been referred to in the letter as well as attention drawn to the fact that the authorities are consulted on timescales before these are published.

The Deputy Monitoring Officer agreed to take this as an action to make enquiries and report back to the Committee.

4. Chair's update: National Forum for Chairs of Standards Committee

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The Chair presented the report to update Standards Committee members following his attendance at the National Forum for Chairs of Standards Committees on 24th June 2024.

The notes and presentation slides had been received by the Chair and would be circulated to the Committee.

It was highlighted that there was an explanation around appeals being a paper only process. It was hoped their website would be updated to make this clear.

The Monitoring Officer agreed to make enquiries around Town and Community Council Code of Conduct training, and their memberships to One Voice Wales. Also, determine what steps are being taken in promoting standards training in Town and Community Councils.

The Committee resolved to accept the recommendation to note the contents of the report.

5. Standards Committee Annual Report 2023/24

The Committee received the Standards Committee Annual Report 2023/24 for approval prior to reporting to a meeting of Council.

There were no comments, and the Standards Committee resolved to accept the recommendation to approve the draft annual report.

6. Date of next meeting - 16th December 2024

The Committee noted the date of the next meeting.

The Monitoring Officer advised that County Councillor Catherine Fookes had advised of her resignation that morning, and it was expected the Leader of the Council would appoint a new Labour councillor to the Standards Committee ahead of the next meeting.

The meeting ended at 10.50 am