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MONMOUTHSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL

Minutes of the meeting of Standards Committee held on Monday, 15th September, 2025 at 10.00 am

PRESENT: County Councillors: Frances Taylor and Peter Strong

Independent Members:

Ruth Price, Andrew Blackmore, Rhian Williams-Flew, Peter Easy
(Chair) and Marion Gibson

OFFICERS IN ATTENDANCE:

Nicola Perry
Geraint Edwards

Senior Democracy Officer
Head of Litigation and Deputy Monitoring Officer

APOLOGIES:

Councillor Fay Bromfield and Michael John

1. Declarations of Interest

County Councillor Frances Taylor declared a non-prejudicial interest in relation to Item 5 on the agenda as a member of Magor with Undy Town Council.

County Councillor Peter Strong declared a non-prejudicial interest in relation to Item 5 on the agenda as a member of Caldicot Town Council.

2. Minutes of the meeting held on 16th December 2024

The minutes of the meeting held on 16th December 2024 were confirmed as an accurate record.

We noted that there had been discussion around code of conduct training for Community and Town Councils. This Deputy Monitoring Officer agreed to raise this with the Monitoring Officer following the meeting.

We also noted that the Committee had agreed to continue holding the meetings at 10am but looked to change the date of the December meeting.

3. Annual Report of the Standards Committee

The Deputy Monitoring Officer presented the Standards Committee Annual Report 2024/25 for approval prior to reporting to a meeting of Council.

County Councillor Taylor suggested that consideration be given to holding refresher sessions for code of conduct training during the term of Council, rather than only during the induction period.

The Committee requested that this discussion be added to the agenda of the next meeting.

The Committee resolved to accept the recommendation the Standards Committee approves the draft annual report at Appendix 1.

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4. Local Resolution Protocol - verbal update

Guidance states that local authorities should have in place a process for dealing with low level, member on member complaints and a route to allow these complaints to be resolved internally, informally and quickly.

MCC does have a local resolution protocol within the current constitution, but through discussions with the All-Wales Monitoring Officers Group it was noted that there were variations between councils, both in terms of the processes associated with local resolution protocols, and with the sanctions that could be imposed under these more informal arrangements. Therefore, Welsh Government are looking to organise workshops for officers to improve the protocols with the aim of setting a standardised approach.

It was hoped that the new Local Resolution Protocol would be brought to the December meeting.

5. Notes from the National Forum of the Chairs of Standards Committees (January 2025 and June 2025) - Chair's update

The Chair presented notes from the National Forum of Chairs of Standards Committees and welcomed comments from the Committee.

The Ombudsman had attended the June 2025 meeting, and an issue had arisen around whether a member should be notified at the point the complaint is made, rather than later. The process in place at that time was that a member wasn't informed at the point of the complaint being made but was only informed if the complaint proceeded further. They are now committed to informing members at the point where the complaint has been made rather than later in the process.

6. Decision Notices - Public Services Ombudsman for Wales (exempt)

The Deputy Monitoring Officer presented the report to provide the Standards Committee with the decision notices issued by the Public Services Ombudsman for Wales following complaints against elected members in respect of breaches of the Member Code of Conduct.

The Committee resolved to accept the recommendation that the Standards Committee notes the contents of this report and the decision notices attached at Appendices 1-6.

7. Next Meeting - 15th December 2025

The Committee resolved to move the date of the next meeting to Monday 24th November 2025 at 10:00am.

The meeting ended at 11.15 am