

STANDARDS COMMITTEE

3 DECEMBER 2012

Minutes of the meeting of the Standards Committee of Flintshire County Council held at Clwyd Committee Room, County Hall, Mold CH7 6NA on Monday, 3 December 2012

PRESENT: Mr Kevin Sibbons (Chairman)

Chris Bretherton-Watt, Jonathan Duggan-Keen and Patricia Jones

Councillors: Hilary McGuill and Arnold Woolley

APOLOGIES: Councillor David Cox, Kenneth Martin and Merfyn Roberts.

ALSO PRESENT: Councillor Patrick Heesom

IN ATTENDANCE: Head of Legal and Democratic Services, Democracy and Governance Manager, Committee Officer

31. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST (INCLUDING WHIPPING DECLARATIONS)

There were no declarations of interest.

32. MINUTES

Accuracy

The Head of Legal and Democratic Services pointed out that some of the statistical information on page 3, paragraph 26, which, although had been accurately recorded in the minutes as the words of the speaker, was mathematically incorrect. The paragraph quoted that 37 Councillors from a possible 441 seats equated to 16 % attendance. The sentence should be changed to "In total 37 Councillors, from a possible 441 seats attended which equated to an 8% attendance."

Also, in paragraph 26, "Three training sessions were held in May for County Councillors and 6 attended. This represented 4% of the total number of Councillors and 60% of those Councillors elected in May 2012 who had not previously been a County Councillor". The sentence should be replaced with the following: "Three training sessions were held in May for County Councillors and 6 attended. This represented 8.6% of the total number of Councillors and 60% of those Councillors elected in May 2012 who had not previously been a County Councillor".

RESOLVED:-

The minutes of the meeting held on 5 November 2012 were confirmed as a correct record subject to the matters of accuracy quoted above.

33. DISPENSATIONS

The Head of Legal and Democratic Services introduced Item 4 on the agenda which related to an application for dispensation by Councillor Glyn Banks. He explained that Councillor Banks was one of the members of the committee formed to organise the erection of a monument comprising the former point of Ayr pit head in Ffynnongroew.

A planning application for the monument had been submitted and whilst Councillor Banks did not wish to speak or vote at Planning Committee, he had submitted an application for Dispensation to be able to communicate with officers verbally and in writing about the application.

The Head of Legal and Democratic Services advised the committee that this request could be granted under paragraphs D and H of Section 81(4) of the Local Government Act 2000 as the request was unlikely to damage public confidence and related to committee membership of a voluntary organisation in which Councillor Glyn Banks had no other interest. He reminded the committee that as in previous discussions about dispensations, in the interests of transparency and openness, that permission should only be allowed for written communications and not verbal communication. This would also serve as a permanent record of any communications between the councillor and officers.

The Head of Legal and Democratic Services informed the committee that the Democracy and Governance Manager had already advised Councillor Glyn Banks, that similar requests had been granted for written communications only, for the reasons cited above.

There were no questions and it was agreed that Councillor Glyn Banks be permitted to communicate in writing only with officers concerning the proposed monument at Ffynnongroew.

RESOLVED:-

That Councillor Glyn Banks be granted dispensation by the Standards Committee to write to Council officers about the planning application for the erection of a monument at the former Point of Ayr Pit Head, Ffynnongroew.

34. TRAINING FOR COUNCILLORS

The Chair moved this item to item 6 on the agenda as this related to training which would be undertaken at the end of the meeting.

35. FORWARD WORK PROGRAMME

The Head of Legal and Democratic Services advised the committee that the January 2013 meeting would include feedback from the North Wales Standards Committee Forum meeting, to be held the same day.

The Head of Legal and Democratic Services said that the protocol for the use of resources was to be referred back to the Group Leaders.

The Democracy and Governance Manager advised the Committee that progress had been made with the proposed database of previous dispensations, but nothing as yet confirmed as to when it would be operational.

The Head of Legal and Democratic Services said that the recruitment of a new Chair Person and a new Independent Member would also be discussed at the January 2013 meeting. Councillor H.J. McGuill asked if notices had been circulated to the press about the recruitment of an independent member. The Head of Legal and Democratic Services said that this would be circulated in the imminent future. Councillor McGuill said that she was unable to attend the January 2013 committee meeting and asked if copies of all related paper work could be forwarded to her. The Chair proposed that the agenda item about the Recruitment of an Independent Member be deferred to the February 2013 meeting and this was agreed by the committee.

Councillor H.J. McGuill proposed a vote of thanks to Mr K.P. Sibbons and praised him for his work as chair of the committee.

RESOLVED:

- (a) That the agenda item concerning Recruitment of a new Independent Member be put back to February 2013.

36. TRAINING FOR COUNCILLORS

The Head of Legal and Democratic Services led a briefing on sanctions imposed by the Standards Committee and Adjudication Panel.

37. CHAIR OF THE COMMITTEE

A vote of thanks was recorded for Mr K.P. Sibbons for his work as chair of the committee.

38. MEMBERS OF THE PRESS AND PUBLIC IN ATTENDANCE

There were no members of the press or the public in attendance.

(The meeting started at 6.00pm and ended at 6.10pm)

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Chairman