

STANDARDS COMMITTEE
5 JUNE 2017

Minutes of the meeting of the Standards Committee of Flintshire County Council held at County Hall, Mold on Monday, 5 June 2017

PRESENT: Edward Hughes (Chairman)

Councillor:

Patrick Heesom

Co-opted members:

Jonathan Duggan-Keen and Ken Molyneux

APOLOGIES: Robert Dewey and Phillipa Earlam

ALSO PRESENT: Councillors Paul Johnson and Arnold Woolley

IN ATTENDANCE: Monitoring Officer and Committee Officer

1. QUORUM

The Monitoring Officer explained the constitutional requirement for meetings of the Committee to be quorate when at least half of those present were independent members. Having explained the options available to the Committee, it was agreed that Councillors Paul Johnson and Arnold Woolley would remain as observers at the meeting and be allowed to participate with the permission of the Chairman.

RESOLVED:

That Councillors Paul Johnson and Arnold Woolley be recorded as observers to the meeting to enable the Committee to be quorate.

2. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST (INCLUDING WHIPPING DECLARATIONS)

None were received.

3. MINUTES

The minutes of the meeting of the Committee held on 3 April 2017 were submitted.

Minute number 36: White Paper 'Reforming Local Government: Resilient and Renewed' - typographical errors were identified in the last sentence of section (ii) and the first bullet point of section (v).

On the same item, the Committee was advised that the Welsh Government had not yet responded to the consultation responses and that a statement was expected later in the month.

RESOLVED:

That subject to the two corrections, the minutes be signed by the Chairman as a correct record.

4. VERBAL UPDATE ON MEMBERSHIP OF THE COMMITTEE FOLLOWING THE ELECTIONS

It was reported that at the recent Annual General Meeting, Members had agreed that Jonathan Duggan-Keen should continue to serve on the Committee as the Town and Community Council representative until he could be reappointed or a new appointment made. The consultation exercise with Town and Community Councils was due to conclude at the end of the month.

5. DISPENSATIONS

None were received.

6. MEMBER INDUCTION

The Monitoring Officer presented information on the programme of Member induction training which had been well attended by both new and returning Members. An additional training session would be provided for one of the new Members who was away on leave during that time.

A report on the training sessions for Town and Community Councils, which were currently underway, would be brought to the next meeting. Councillor Johnson commented that these sessions could have been extended over a longer period to enable newly co-opted members of Town and Community Councils to participate. This suggestion would be discussed as part of the report to the next meeting.

Positive feedback was given on the training sessions by various members of the Committee who had been in attendance.

Following a request by Ken Molyneux, the Monitoring Officer agreed to circulate the local election results for each political party in Flintshire to independent members of the Committee.

RESOLVED:

- (a) That the Committee notes the training already delivered to county councillors and the plans to induct the councillor who was on leave; and
- (b) That the Committee considers that no additional training is required as part of the induction programme.

7. LOCAL RESOLUTION PROCEDURE FOR TOWN AND COMMUNITY COUNCILS

The Monitoring Officer presented a report on the adoption of a Local Resolution Procedure for Town and Community Councils to help reduce the number of low-level complaints submitted to the Public Services Ombudsman for Wales (PSOW).

Views were sought on whether Town and Community Councils should be encouraged to adopt a simplified model protocol which had been made available by One Voice Wales. It was explained that the protocol allowed for some flexibility for councils to adapt to their own use at a stage when there were no live or ongoing complaints.

Whilst Councillors Heesom and Woolley had no issues with the content of the protocol, both had reservations about the willingness of Town and Community Councils to adopt a procedure from One Voice Wales. Councillor Woolley also commented on the need for a uniform approach across Wales.

Following further debate, the Monitoring Officer explained that the resolution arrangements previously adopted by the Council were not appropriate for Town/Community Councils and that the protocol presented now was the only suitable precedent for them to adopt.

In view of the concerns raised, a number of suggestions were made on how best to promote the protocol and encourage its adoption.

Following a suggestion by the Chairman, it was agreed that the Committee would note the principles outlined within the One Voice Wales Local Resolution Procedure and encourage its adoption by Town and Community Councils.

RESOLVED:

That the Committee notes the principles outlined within the One Voice Wales Local Resolution Procedure and encourages its adoption by Town and Community Councils.

8. FORWARD WORK PROGRAMME

The Committee received the current Forward Work Programme for consideration.

On the meeting with Town and Community Councils in October, concerns were raised about low attendance at previous joint meetings. It was therefore agreed that the Monitoring Officer would promote the meeting at an earlier stage and seek agenda items from Town and Community Councils, so that arrangements were in place before the August recess. The Chairman asked members of the Committee to forward any suggestions for a venue to the Monitoring Officer.

Future training sessions were suggested on:

- Roles and Responsibilities - as delivered before the start of the meeting, to enable all the Committee members to take part.
- Dispensations.

RESOLVED:

That the Forward Work Programme be noted.

9. MEMBERS OF THE PRESS AND PUBLIC IN ATTENDANCE

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

(The meeting started at 6.30pm and ended at 7.20pm)

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Chairman