
SPECIAL MEETING OF STANDARDS COMMITTEE, 16.06.11

Present:-

Elected Members:- Councillors Keith Greenly-Jones and Margaret Griffith.

Independent Members:- Mr John Pollard (Chairman), Mr Gwilym Ellis Evans, Mr Malcolm Jones and Mr Sam Soysa.

Community Committee Member:- Mr David Clay.

Also Present: Siôn Huws (Propriety Officer), Iwan Evans (Deputy Monitoring Officer) and Eirian Roberts (Committee Officer).

Apologies: - Councillor Eryl Jones-Williams (elected member); Mr Gwyn Williams (independent member).

1. DECLARATION OF PERSONAL INTEREST

The Propriety Officer explained that Mr Gwyn Williams had sent his apologies for this meeting because he had a personal interest in the issues in question because of his family connection with the councillor who was the subject of the Ombudsman's investigation.

Then, the Propriety Officer confirmed in response to a question that the elected members serving on the Standards Committee did not have a personal interest in these issues as knowing the councillor in question, by being a fellow member on the Council, was not a sufficient connection to create a personal interest. Also, the statutory constitution of the standards committee meant that elected members would consider complaints against members of the same authority.

In response to an enquiry, the Propriety Officer noted that he would inform members beforehand regarding who would be the councillor's representative at the hearing, just in case a situation of unexpected interest would arise.

(The order of the two following items on the agenda was changed in order to establish the nature and level of legal representation for the member in question before moving on to consider any practical points in terms of the order of the hearing itself.)

2. INDEMNITY IN RELATION TO LEGAL REPRESENTATION AT STANDARDS COMMITTEE HEARINGS

Submitted – the report of the Propriety Officer requesting the committee to decide upon the nature and level of professional representation that would be appropriate to repay to the member who was the subject of a complaint to the Ombudsman under the Council's Form of Indemnity to Members and Officers.

In reaching a decision on the issue, consideration was given to the nature of the case in question and the current rate for this type of service.

RESOLVED that any reasonable costs relating to the case should be repaid. It was resolved that solicitor costs up to partner level would be acceptable and that 'partner level' would be defined as costs up to £180 per hour. The committee also anticipated that three days' work would be required (namely a day of taking instructions, a day of preparation work and a day of hearing).

3. PROCEDURE FOR STANDARDS COMMITTEE HEARINGS

Submitted – the report of the Propriety Officer presenting the hearing procedure in the format agreed by this committee at its previous meeting. He explained that although this document was submitted for information, that it was an opportunity for members to raise any practical points or questions before the hearing.

It was emphasised that the subject of the complaint completed the questionnaire in full beforehand.

The question of submitting late evidence was discussed. A member expressed the opinion that late evidence should not be allowed; however, others emphasised that the door should not be closed completely on that. Under the circumstances, it was agreed that the Propriety Officer would inform both sides beforehand that they were expected to present all evidence in good time.

RESOLVED to note the procedure for information.

At the end of the meeting, it was agreed to cancel the usual meeting of the Standards Committee that was to be held on 4 July because no issues needed to be decided upon at present.

The meeting commenced at 1.30pm and concluded at 2.30pm