

GWYNEDD COUNCIL STANDARDS COMMITTEE DECISION NOTICE

(Section 100C of the Local Government Act 1972 (as amended by the Local Authorities (Coronavirus) (Meetings) (Wales) Regulations 2020)

22 February 2021

Virtual Meeting

Attendance:

Elected Members: Councillors Anne Lloyd Jones, Beth Lawton and Dewi Roberts

Independent Members: Mr Aled Jones, Mr Hywel Eifion Jones, Miss Margaret E. Jones, Mr David Wareing and Dr Einir Young (Chair)

Also in attendance: Iwan Evans (Monitoring Officer), Sion Huws (Senior Solicitor – Corporate) and Eirian Roberts (Democratic Services Officer)

Apology: Mr Richard Parry Hughes (Community Council Member)

**GWYNEDD COUNCIL STANDARDS COMMITTEE
DECISION NOTICE**

(Section 100C of the Local Government Act 1972 (as amended by the Local Authorities (Coronavirus) Regulations (Meetings) (Wales) 2020)

Date of Standards Committee Meeting	22 February, 2021
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SUBJECT

Item 5: SELF ASSESSMENT AND WORK PROGRAMME

DECISION

(a) To adopt the following as the committee's self-assessment of its performance in 2019/20, noting that circumstances beyond the control of the Standards Committee had meant that several actions could not be implemented this time:-

FUNCTION	ASSESSMENT (1/2/3/4)	Evidence	Further action
Promote and maintain high standards of conduct by members	1	The Chair and Vice-chair have attended the North Wales Standards Forum to share experiences with other standards committees. Submit an annual report to the Full Council The Committee have received a report on the Ethical Framework arrangements in the context of collaboration	Continue to attend and support
Assist the members to adhere to the Code of Conduct	2	The Monitoring Officer and his team provide advice and guidance at meetings, and on a one-to-one basis for	Resume training stages when resources permit

		members.	
Advise the Council with regard to adopting or amending the Code of Conduct	No action required	No occasion has arisen to amend the Code.	
Monitor the implementation of the Code of Conduct	2	<p>Receive regular reports of allegations against members</p> <p>Receive the annual reports of the Ombudsman and the Adjudication Panel for Wales.</p>	<p>Continue to monitor, consider and promote alternative methods of receiving information</p> <p>Receive regular reports from the Ombudsman's Code of Conduct Casebook.</p> <p>Receive annual reports on the register of interests and hospitality.</p>
Advise, train or arrange for members to receive training on matters relating to the Code of Conduct	3		Need to look at providing new training.
Granting dispensations to members	1	Applications have been considered under the new procedure.	
Deal with reports of case tribunals and any reports from the Monitoring Officer on matters referred by the Ombudsman	No action required	No hearings were required during the year	

Authorise the Monitoring Officer to pay allowances to persons assisting with an investigation	No action required	There were no occasions where such an allowance was due	
Exercise the above functions in relation to community councils	3	<p>The Monitoring Officer and his team provide advice and guidance to councillors, clerks and members.</p> <p>Adopt a training pilot on the Code of Conduct. A session has been included to pilot the content of the course.</p>	A pilot course was held with Tywyn Town Council, with positive feedback. Need to consider resuming the programme virtually when resources allow.

(b) To approve the following work programme for 2021/22:-

June, 2021

Annual Report

Allegations against Members

The Ombudsman's Casebook

Local Government and Elections (Wales) Act 2021

Training in general

November, 2021

Register of Gifts and Hospitality

Declaration of Interests Register

The Ombudsman's Annual Report

Allegations against Members

Conflicts of Interests and partners outside Local Government

Preparation for the May 2022 Election in respect of the Code of Conduct

February, 2022

Adjudication Panel's Annual Report

Allegations against Members

THE RESULT OF THE VOTE

In favour	8
Against	0
Abstentions	0

DECLARATIONS OF PERSONAL INTEREST AND PROTOCOL MATTERS

No declarations of personal interest or relevant dispensations were received.

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DECISION NOTICE**

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Date of Standards Committee Meeting
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22 February, 2021

SUBJECT

Item 6: PUBLIC SERVICE OMBUDSMAN WALES CONSULTATION - NEW DRAFT GUIDANCE ON THE CODE OF CONDUCT FOR MEMBERS OF COUNTY AND COMMUNITY / TOWN COUNCILS

DECISION

To submit the following observations in response to the consultation, and delegate the right to the Monitoring Officer to collate and convey the response on behalf of the Council:-

- That the committee welcomes the document overall, and is of the view that it is readable and very useful in terms of explaining the code. We also believe that the use of case studies and speech bubbles are a good way of highlighting parts of the document and making it relevant to people.
- It would be useful if the examples of Code of Conduct breaches listed in the document also noted what the outcome had been, in order to give a clearer picture.
- It would be useful if the document included examples of how the public interest test has worked in practice i.e. what types of complaints have passed the threshold, and what types of complaints have failed.
- The document should be gender-neutral.

THE RESULT OF THE VOTE

In favour	8
Against	0
Abstentions	0

DECLARATIONS OF PERSONAL INTEREST AND PROTOCOL MATTERS

Mr Hywel Eifion Jones declared a personal interest as he was a member of the Adjudication Panel for Wales, a panel that was referenced in the report.

The member was not of the opinion that it was a prejudicial interest, and he did not withdraw from the meeting during the discussion on the item.
