

STANDARDS COMMITTEE

2 March 2022

Present: Mr John Daniels (Chair)
Mr P Davies, Councillor R Owens, Councillor P Morgan, Dr R Plummer and Mrs V Tomlinson.

[Ms W Taylor arrived during consideration of item 2 Disclosures of Interest]

(Virtual Meeting: 2.05pm – 2.35pm)

1. Apologies for absence

There were no apologies for absence.

2. Disclosures of interest

Dr R Plummer reiterated her general personal but non-prejudicial disclosure of interest in the work of the Authority, although this did not relate specifically to the items under discussion that day.

3. Minutes

The minutes of the meeting held on 24 February 2021 were presented for confirmation and authentication.

It was **RESOLVED** that the minutes of the meeting held on 24 February 2021 be confirmed and authenticated.

4. Annual Report of the Monitoring Officer 2021/22

The report began by setting out the terms of reference of the Committee, and it was noted at the meeting that there was a typographical error in paragraph (d) which should have referred to Section 71 (2) (b).

The report went on to outline the training that had been provided over the course of the year, and explained that joint governance training with Pembrokeshire County Council would be arranged for new Members appointed following the local government elections in May. It was anticipated that this would take place on 17 May and that Independent Members of the Standards Committee would also be invited. In response to a question, the Monitoring Officer did not foresee a problem in making the presentation available to those unable to attend. With regard to the training to be provided by the Complaints Standards Authority, this was still not available, and the review of the complaints procedure would be deferred until the recommendations of the Independent Review of the Ethical Standards Framework (undertaken by Richard Penn) had been implemented due to possible implications.



It was noted that no applications for dispensations had been made by Members of the Authority. However the Committee was reminded that the current general dispensation given to those Members who were also County Councillors at Pembrokeshire County Council would run until the local government elections on the 5th May 2022. It would need to be renewed from the date Members were appointed to the NPA. Accordingly, the Committee was invited to agree to renew the dispensation. A question was asked whether County Council Members needed to be named, rather than a dispensation granted to them *en bloc*, and it was initially suggested that names could be provided at the next meeting, however it was then proposed that the Committee delegate the granting of the dispensation to the Monitoring Officer and this was seconded. Officers advised that new Members would be told about the existence of the dispensation, and provided with training to the effect that the dispensation did not override any personal or prejudicial interest the Member might have in the matter under consideration.

The report briefly summarised the recommendations of the Independent Review of the Ethical Standards Framework undertaken in 2021 by Richard Penn which would be considered by the Minister of Finance and Local Government. This had been the subject of the recent Virtual All Wales Standards Conference held on 9 February and attended by the Chair and the Monitoring Officer. One of the recommendations of the Review was for the creation of a National Forum for Independent Members of Standards Committees, and Members expressed the view that such a Forum would be helpful.

The Chair thanked the Monitoring Officer for his report and Members for their attendance.

It was **resolved** that:

- a) the report be noted.
- b) the Monitoring Officer be authorised to grant a general dispensation to Local Authority Members from the date of their appointment to the NPA until the next local authority elections in 2027.
- c) Members authorise the NPA to support the creation of a forum for Independent Members of the Standards Committee.

