

AWDURDOD TÂN CANOLBARTH A GORLLEWIN CYMRU



MID AND WEST WALES FIRE AUTHORITY

**COFNODION
CYFARFOD Y PWYLLGOR SAFONAU**

Pencadlys Y Gwasanaeth Tân, Heol Llwyn Pisgwydd
Caerfyrddin
9 Tachwedd 2007

**MINUTES
OF THE STANDARDS COMMITTEE MEETING**

held at Fire Service Headquarters, Lime Grove Avenue,
Carmarthen
9 November 2007

10.30am – 11.45am

PRESENOLDEB/ATTENDANCE

Presennol yn y Cyfarfod/Present at Meeting:

CADEIRYDD/CHAIR: G Morgan

AELODAU/MEMBERS: M Howells, R Martin
Cyng/Cllrs: G Seabourne,

YMDDIHEURIADAU/APOLOGIES S Fox, P James

YN BRESENNOL /IN ATTENDANCE: A Howells, J Maunder

1 DECLARATION BY MEMBERS OF ANY PERSONAL INTERESTS

None were declared

2 CHAIR'S ANNOUNCEMENTS/PERSONAL MATTERS

The Chair welcomed Jacqui Maunder, Corporate Communications & Member Support Manager, to her first meeting of the Standards Committee.

3 TO RECEIVE AND CONSIDER THE MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON 30th APRIL 2007

The minutes of the meeting held on 30TH April 2007 were received and approved as a true record

4 TO RECEIVE A REPORT ON THE LOCAL AUTHORITIES (MODEL CODE OF CONDUCT)(WALES) ORDER 2007

Members were aware that the Welsh Assembly Government (WAG) had been reviewing the present Member's Code of Conduct for some time and that the Committee, together with other local authorities, had already been consulted on an amended draft model code in June 2005. Unfortunately, the WAG were unable to implement the changes at that time and in the intervening period the introduction of a new code of conduct for England had taken place.

It was noted that the working group responsible for drafting the Welsh Code had recently been reconvened and the feedback from the earlier consultation had been taken into account in redrafting the Order, a copy of which was attached for Members' information. It was noted that the draft Order was likely to go before the relevant WAG Minister for approval in the near future.

Members were particularly interested to note that the document bore a close resemblance to the text from the existing code in some places, but departed quite radically at other points, most noticeably in relation to personal interests and the concept of prejudicial interests.

RESOLUTION

It was RESOLVED that the report be received and noted

5 TO RECEIVE A REPORT ON THE PUBLIC SERVICES' OMBUDSMAN ANNUAL REPORT 2007

Members were aware that the Ombudsman now had jurisdiction over not only local authorities but also the National Health Service, Housing Associations and the Welsh Assembly Government, together with its sponsored bodies. His primary role is to investigate complaints of maladministration or service failure on the part of these bodies but he also deals with complaints against Councillors

in respect of alleged breaches of the Member's Code of Conduct.

In this year's Annual report, Adam Peat said that he was "pleased" to see a further increase from the previous year (from 1,634 to 1,698) in the number of complaints alleging maladministration, because he believes that "...this is due to an increased awareness amongst members of the public of the service that I provide, rather than indicating a deteriorating performance by bodies in my jurisdiction."

County and County Borough Councils together accounted for 920 complaints, as against 16 for Community Councils. In respect of the Member's Code of Conduct, there was a total of 136 (125 in 2005/6) complaints against County and County Borough Councils, as compared to 81 (155 in 2005/6) against Community Councils in Wales.

Relevant extracts from the report were attached for Members' information and it was noted that copies of the full report could be obtained directly from the Public Services Ombudsman or through their website.

RESOLUTION

It was RESOLVED that the report be received and noted

6 TO REVIEW COMPLAINTS RECEIVED BY THE FIRE AND RESCUE AUTHORITY FOR THE PERIOD APRIL 2007 TO SEPTEMBER 2007

The number of complaints received for the period April to September 2007 were 17 of which 1 was upheld. The standard of complaint acknowledgement and investigation performance remained generally good.

11 satisfaction questionnaires were issued and of the 7 that were returned, 6 agreed that their complaint had been dealt with satisfactorily with 1 neither agreeing nor disagreeing. It was noted that 54 letters of appreciation had been received.

Members were informed that the computerised system for recording and monitoring the complaints, Respond, required upgrading and that this would take place shortly with a resulting improvement in the complaints proforma.

A review would also be taking place shortly of the complaint procedure feedback forms and web forms with the possible introduction of a customer care leaflet which could be printed from the Authority's website.

RESOLUTION

It was RESOLVED that

The report be received and noted and the future development of a web form be endorsed.

