

NOTICE OF MEETING



Snowdonia National Park Authority

Emyr Williams

Chief Executive

Snowdonia National Park Authority

Penrhyndeudraeth

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- Meeting:** Standards Committee
- Date:** Friday 1 September 2023
- Time:** 2.00 p.m.
- Location:** Snowdonia National Park Authority Office,
Penrhyndeudraeth and via Zoom

Joining instructions will be sent to Members separately

Members are asked to join the meeting 15 minutes before the designated start time

Councillors :

Dilwyn Roberts, Elfed Roberts;

Mrs Sarah Hattle.

Independent Members

Mr. Martin James Hughes, Mr. Mark Jones,

Mrs. Sharon Warnes.

A G E N D A

1. **Apologies for absence and Chairman's Announcements**
2. **Declarations of Interest**
To receive any disclosure of interest by members or officers in respect of any item of business.
3. **Minutes**
The Chairman shall propose that the minutes of the Standards Committee held on the 28th April 2023 be signed as a true record (copy herewith) and receive matters arising, for information.
4. **Nomination of Members for the Single Status Grading Appeals Panel**
To submit a report by the Director of Corporate Services. (Copy herewith)
5. **Public Services Ombudsman for Wales**
To submit a report by the Director of Corporate Services. (Copy herewith)
6. **Complaints Monitoring Report**
To submit a report by the Head of Administration and Customer Care, for information. (Copy herewith)
7. **Grant of Dispensations**
To submit a report by the Director of Corporate Services. (Copy herewith)
8. **Committee Evaluation**
To receive an oral report from the Chair, for information.
9. **National Standards Committee's Forum – 30th June 2023**
To receive the Agenda and an oral report from the Chair, for information.

**STANDARDS COMMITTEE
FRIDAY 28th APRIL 2023**

PRESENT:

Member appointed by Gwynedd Council

Councillor Elfed Roberts;

Member appointed by Conwy County Borough Council

Councillor Dilwyn Roberts;

Independent Members

Mr. Martin J. Hughes, Mr. Mark Jones, Mrs. Sharon Warnes;

In Attendance (ex. officio)

Councillors Annwen Hughes, Edgar Wyn Owen;

Officers

Mr. G. Iwan Jones, Mrs Anwen Gaffey.

Apologies for Absence

Mrs. Sarah Hattle.

The Director of Corporate Services advised that the meeting was being recorded to assist in verifying the minutes.

1. **Appointment of Chairman**
RESOLVED to appoint Mrs Sharon Warnes as Chair of the Standards Committee for the remainder of her period of appointment as an Independent Member.
The Chair thanked Members for their support.
1. (a) **Appointment of Vice Chairman**
RESOLVED to appoint Mr. Martin James Hughes as Vice Chair of the Standards Committee for the remainder of his period of appointment as an Independent Member.
The Vice Chair thanked Members for their support.
2. **Chair's Announcements**
The Chair welcomed Mr. Mark Jones to his first meeting of the Standards Committee. Members and Officers introduced themselves to the meeting and Mr. Mark Jones provided a brief biography of his career and background.
3. **Declaration of Interest**
No declarations of Personal Interests were made in respect of any item.
4. **Minutes**
The minutes of the Standards Committee meeting held on 2nd September 2022 were accepted and the Chairman signed them as a true record.
5. **Annual Report to the Authority's Annual General Meeting**
Submitted – A report by the Director of Corporate Services for Members to agree the contents of the Annual Report.

Reported – The Director of Corporate Services presented the report and background and advised upon the additional statutory duty to prepare an annual report on how the committee’s functions have been discharged and provide an overview of conduct matters within their Authority.

Members considered the report and made the following observations:-

- para 4.2 - to confirm that the Authority has appointed Mr. Mark Jones as an Independent Member of the Standards Committee for a term of 5 years.
- para 4.3 - to record that the Chair had now attended a meeting of the Performance and Resources Committee and the Planning and Access Committee as an observer, and that a formal report on her findings will be presented to the next meeting of the Standards Committee in September.
- Para 4.9 – Members noted that the questionnaire analysis was not ready for inclusion in the report and would be available shortly.
- also, to include that the Standards Committee receives the Authority’s Annual Complaints Monitoring Report and assesses whether any further action should be taken.

RESOLVED subject to noting the additions/amendments as outlined above, to agree the contents of the Annual Report to be presented to the Authority’s Annual General Meeting, as set out in Section 4 of the report.

6. Declaration of Members’ Interests

Submitted – A report by the Director of Corporate Services for the Standards Committee to monitor the operation of the code of conduct.

Reported – The Director of Corporate Services presented the report and background and advised that the pro-forma had now been amended to include tick-boxes to record clearly whether the personal interest constitutes a prejudicial interest.

The Chair advised that observations on how Members declare an interest will be included in her report to the next meeting of the Standards Committee in September. Arising thereon, Members discussed whether it would be beneficial to provide Standards Committee Members with further training on the Code of Conduct as they have a role in overseeing the process.

Members and Officers further discussed the process for declaring interests and agreed that as it was the Member’s responsibility to declare any interests, to request more detailed information would go beyond what was legitimately necessary.

RESOLVED to note the report, for information.

7. Consultation on the Recommendations of the Independent Review of the Ethical Standards Framework (Richard Penn Report)

Submitted – A report by the Director of Corporate Services for Members to agree on a response to the Consultation Questions.

Reported – The Director of Corporate Services presented the report and background and advised that following the conclusion of the Independent Review, the Welsh Government had now released a consultation paper which included a number of questions on options they require further views on.

Members considered the questions in detail and agreed the following response:-

Question 1

To **agree** that the relevant regulations relating to the Ethical Standards Framework should be amended to align with the definitions relating to protected characteristics in the Equality Act 2010, and to amend the definition of equality and respect in section 7 of The Conduct of Members (Principles) (Wales) Order 2001.

Question 2

No experience in terms of the Authority's work, but to **agree** that the Adjudication Panel Wales (APW) be able to issue Restricted Reporting Orders.

Question 3

To **agree** that it was acceptable that there be express legal provision to enable the APW to protect the anonymity of witnesses, but only as an exception.

Question 4

With regard to the proposed changes to the permission to appeal procedure outlined in this recommendation, Members felt there was discretion in terms of the timeline and **recommended** that the whole process should take no more than a set period of time.

Question 5

Members felt as this was not a criminal court there should **not** be an express power for the APW to summon witnesses to appeal tribunals.

Question 6

Members did **not** agree to any changes in the procedure for referring appeals decisions back to standards committees as the current procedure works well.

Question 7

Members **agreed** there should be an option to enable part or all of tribunal hearings to be held in private if the need arises.

Question 8

Members did **not** agree with retaining the requirement to provide not less than seven days' notice of the postponement of a hearing, as occasionally there could be a need to postpone at short notice.

Question 9

Members did **not** agree there should be a wider range of sanctions available to the APW and that the current sanctions were appropriate as they are.

Question 10a

Members **agreed** to support the proposed amendments to the process for interim case tribunals outlined in the recommendation.

Question 10b

No comments to make.

Question 11

Members did **not** have any further views on the recommendations made in relation to the operation of the APW?

Question 12

Members felt the work to raise awareness of the Ethical Standards Framework, in particular for people with protected characteristics as described in the Equality Act 2010, should be carried out by specific representative groups.

Question 13

Advertising for independent members of standards committees: Members did **not** agree that the requirement to advertise vacancies for independent members on standards committees in newspapers should be removed. It should remain an open process of recruitment with 'local flexibility' to include community newspapers etc.

Question 14a

Former council employees sitting as independent members on standards committees: Members **agreed** that the lifelong ban on former council employees being independent members of their previous employer's standards committee should be removed.

Question 14b

Members recommended that **3 years** would be a suitable period of grace between employment and appointment to a standards committee and should be the same for all council employees.

Question 15

Former councillors sitting as independent members on standards committees: Members **agreed** that the lifelong ban on serving as an independent member on the standards committee of the council to which a councillor was elected should be removed and that the period of grace should be at least **5 years**.

Question 16

Standards committees' summoning witnesses and sanctions: Members were agreed that Standards committees should **not** have the power to summon witnesses as it was not part of their role.

Question 17

Members did **not** agree that the sanctions a standards committee can impose should be changed or added to.

Question 18

No effect from the Authority's perspective.

Question 19

Question not relevant.

Question 20

Members were of the opinion that the proposed amendments could be formulated or changed so as to have positive effects or increased positive effects on opportunities for people to use the Welsh language and on treating the Welsh language no less favourably than the English language, with no adverse effects on opportunities for people to use the Welsh language and on treating the Welsh language no less favourably than the English language by dealing with the issues locally for less serious matters.

Question 21

Members made the following additional comments on the matters raised in the consultation as follows:-

- the quality of the consultation was below standard with no cross-referencing between the questions and the relevant recommendation.
- Members welcomed Richard Penn's review and noted concerns that the Welsh Government Consultation could lose the spirit of the report.
- it was noted that the Welsh system was superior to the English process.
- Members agreed that the document will allow the Authority to resolve issues locally without becoming too formal. National Park Authorities were not political bodies and were small in comparison with the county councils.

Members agreed to forward any further observations to the Director of Corporate Services before the closing date.

RESOLVED

- 1. to note the report and Consultation.**
- 2. to authority the Director of Corporate Services to forward the response to the Consultation Questions, as outlined.**

8. National Standards Forum Committee – Friday 27th January 2023

Submitted - The minutes of the National Standards Forum Committee meeting, for information.

Reported – Members were provided with an oral report from the Chair who had represented the Snowdonia National Park Authority Standards Committee at the meeting. The main discussions focussed on the National Standards Forum Committee's Role and Terms of Reference, the circulation of which were still awaited. Members noted that the Ombudsman was reconsidering circulating the Annual Report which was now only available electronically on their website.

RESOLVED

- 1. to thank the Chair for representing the Snowdonia National Park Authority Standards Committee at the National Standards Forum Committee and to note the oral report, for information.**
- 2. to ask the Members Services Officer to contact the National Standards Forum Secretariat to request a copy of the Terms of Reference, and to circulate them to Members when available.**

The meeting ended at 15.45

ITEM NO. 4

MEETING	Standards Committee
DATE	01 September 2023
TITLE	NOMINATION OF MEMBERS FOR THE SINGLE STATUS GRADING APPEALS PANEL
REPORT BY	Director of Corporate Services
PURPOSE	To appoint three members and two substitute members to the Single Status Grading Appeals Panel

BACKGROUND

On 15th June 2011 the Authority adopted a revised Scheme of delegation that included changes to the terms of reference of the Single Status Grading Appeals Panel. The revised arrangements provide that membership should comprise of three members plus two substitute members, all to be drawn from and chosen by the members of the Standards Committee. The terms of reference also provide that in appointing members to the Panel the Standards Committee shall have regard to the need for appropriate gender representation.

The role of the Single Status Grading Appeals Panel is to consider appeals from the decision of the job evaluation panel which is usually conducted internally at officer level. The calling of a meeting of the Single Status Grading Appeals Panel is a very infrequent occurrence. Historically, whilst the Authority was undertaking the job evaluation process, it is true to say that this Panel was at that time active. However there is still a need for such a panel as an appeal could be lodged at any time by a member of staff who disagrees with the decision of the job evaluation panel.

When the Standards Committee last considered this matter on 2nd September 2022 it resolved to appoint Mrs Sarah Hattle, Mrs. Sharon Warnes and Mr. Martin J. Hughes as Members of the Single Status Grading Appeals Panel with Councillor Dilwyn Roberts and Councillor Elfed Roberts appointed as substitute members. The Standards Committee needs to consider the membership of the Single Status Grading Appeals Panel annually following the AGM of the Authority.

RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS

None

RECOMMENDATION

To appoint three members and two substitute members from the membership of the Standards Committee to sit as members of the Single Status Grading Appeals Panel.

BACKGROUND PAPERS

ITEM NO. 5

MEETING	Standards Committee
DATE	01 September 2023
TITLE	PUBLIC SERVICES OMBUDSMAN FOR WALES
REPORT BY	Director of Corporate Services
PURPOSE	To advise the Committee on developments applicable to this Authority

BACKGROUND

The Public Services Ombudsman for Wales publishes an Annual Report and Accounts.

The full report can be found on the Ombudsman's website (www.ombudsman.wales) under Publications and then Annual Report and Accounts.

Normally, only a very small minority of the total complaints received by the Ombudsman relates to the National Parks and I am pleased to report that the situation remains unchanged for 2022/23.

During this time, the number of complaints referred to the Ombudsman in relation to National Parks was down from a total of 5 in the preceding year to 3 for 2022-23 despite the number of complaints having increased overall. Only one was applicable to Snowdonia National Park Authority with the Ombudsman declining to investigate the matter further as confirmed in the Complaints Monitoring Report, also to be considered today by the Standards Committee.

RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS

None

RECOMMENDATION

1. To note the contents of the report.

BACKGROUND PAPERS

MEETING	Standards Committee
DATE	1 September 2023
TITLE	COMPLAINTS MONITORING REPORT
REPORT BY	Head of Administration and Customer Care
PURPOSE	To report on the written complaints received by the Authority

1.0. BACKGROUND

- 1.1. All formal complaints are registered and monitored centrally, as part of our ongoing commitment to ensuring excellent customer care in our service provision. The Authority received 7 formal complaints directly relating to the Authority during the 2022/23 financial year.
- 1.2. Of the 7 complaints received, 4 related to the planning service, 2 complaints were received about staff, and 1 complaint regarding the policy of only allowing guide dogs on Yr Ysgwrn site.
- 1.3. All complaints were thoroughly investigated, and all received a response within the target of 15 working days.
- 1.4. Of the complaints investigated, 3 were upheld or partially upheld. One complaint not upheld was later referred to the Public Service Ombudsman who declined to investigate further.
- 1.5. Where the Authority's standard of service has fallen short, we have duly apologised and taken steps to address the problems immediately.

2.0. RECOMMENDATION

- 2.1. **That the Committee note the content of the report**

Summary of Complaints Upheld or Partially Upheld

AUTHORITY STAFF

A complaint was received regarding a member of staff speeding through the 30 mph zone in Nant Peris. (August 2022)

A Nant Peris resident submitted a complaint about a member of staff who was witnessed driving dangerously by speeding through the 30 mph zone in Nant Peris.

A disciplinary investigation was instigated on the incident.

A letter of apology was given to the complainant.

PLANNING

A complaint was received regarding poor communication, inconsistent advice and unacceptable delays in the planning service (January 2023)

A complaint was received by the owner of a listed building in Dolgellau. The complainant stated that he had contacted the Authority in October 2021 for advice and was informed that repairs could be made to the roof using Welsh slate and the internal repairs could be done on a 'like for like' basis.

In January 2022, a concern was received by a member of the public regarding the work being undertaken at the property. It was found that the owner had replaced the roof of the property and had carried out extensive renovation work internally with traditional features removed in their entirety and replaced with modern equivalents. The owner stated that over the following 10 months he experienced poor communication, inconsistent advice and unacceptable delays during the compliance investigation.

The role of Historic Environment Planning Officer had been vacant from September 2021 to October 2022 which had caused additional workload for other officers. The Compliance Officer dealing with this case had to seek advice from an external conservation consultant as the type and extent of the work that had been undertaken to the property meant that it was a complex and serious case which required careful consideration.

The Authority investigation did not uphold the complainant's assertion that he had received inconsistent advice. However, the investigation found that there had been a significant delay in the compliance investigation between April and October 2022, and that the complainant had been unable to contact Officers over the telephone and had not received a response to messages left over a 5 week period in April and May 2022. This fell well below the expected standard for the service, for which an apology was given.

PLANNING

Complaint of a lack of response to correspondence and a lack action taken by Officers in locating the property owner of Plas Rhiwaedog, Y Bala (March 2023)

The complainant had been in periodic correspondence with the Authority for a number of years raising concern over the deteriorating state of Plas Rhiwaedog. However, after the retirement of the Head of Cultural Heritage in 2019 and up until March 2022, the complainant did not receive a response to any of his correspondence. Regardless of whether there was any progress to report, there is no excuse for not answering correspondence within a reasonable timescale, and accordingly an apology was given to the complainant.

Outside of this, the primary focus of the complaint was the lack of action taken by officers in locating the property owner; and by not doing this, continuing pressure was not able to be placed on the owner to undertake repairs and maintenance of the property.

The investigation found that the Director of Planning and Land Management had corresponded with the complainant several times and had explained at length the limited options available to the Authority to attempt to resolve matters, the practical difficulties and the resources required for each of those options, and why they have not been pursued.

Notwithstanding the above, the historical importance of Plas Rhiwaedog in Eryri, and its status as a Grade II Listed Building which is on the 'At Risk' Register was acknowledged. At the time of responding to the complaint Plas Rhiwaedog had been sold at auction, giving fresh hope that officers will be able to commence positive dialogue with the owner and ascertain their plans for the building. A commitment was therefore given to the complainant that officers will now monitor the situation and as soon as The Land Registry ownership details are updated, contact will be made with the new owner.

ITEM NO. 7

MEETING	Standards Committee
DATE	01 September 2023
TITLE	GRANT OF DISPENSATIONS
REPORT BY	Director of Corporate Services
PURPOSE	To grant dispensations to the Members of Gwynedd Council and Conwy County Borough Council

BACKGROUND

The Standards Committee has previously granted dispensations on a number of occasions. On 2nd September 2022, the Standards Committee resolved to grant a dispensation for Members appointed by Gwynedd Council to enable them to take a full part in the determination of issues relating to Gwynedd Council for a period up to 31st December 2023 unless further extended by resolution of this Committee prior to 31st December 2023. The Standards Committee also resolved to grant a dispensation for Members appointed by Conwy County Borough Council to enable them to take a full part in the determination of issues relating to Conwy County Borough Council for a period up to 31st December 2023 unless further extended by resolution of this Committee prior to 31st December 2023. As this period is due to expire before the Standards Committee is next scheduled to meet it is time to consider the matter further.

Prior to the grant of the dispensations referred to above and preceding grants of dispensation the adoption of the new Code of Conduct caused difficulties both in relation to quorum on the Authority and Planning and Access Committee and also from a loss of local knowledge as members had to withdraw from the meeting. Under the previous Code of Conduct members had been allowed to take part in the discussion and had often been a valuable source of information on various aspects of such applications.

When the Standards committee last considered this matter it had regard to the Standards Committees (Grant of Dispensations) (Wales) Regulations 2001 as amended by the Local Government (Standards Committees, Investigations, Dispensations and Referral) (Wales) (Amendment) Regulations 2016 which allowed the Standards Committee of this Authority to grant a dispensation where:

“2 (a) no fewer than half of the members of the relevant authority or of a committee of the authority (as the case may be) by which the business is to be considered has an interest which relates to that business;

- (b) no fewer than half of the members of a leader and cabinet executive of the relevant authority by which the business is to be considered has an interest which relates to that business and either paragraph (d) or (e) also applies;*
- (c) in the case of a county or county borough council, the inability of the member to participate would upset the political balance of the relevant authority or of the committee of the authority by which the business is to be considered to such an extent that the outcome would be likely to be affected;*
- (d) the nature of the member's interest is such that the member's participation in the business to which the interest relates would not damage public confidence in the conduct of the relevant authority's business;*
- (e) the interest is common to the member and a significant proportion of the general public;*
- (f) the participation of the member in the business to which the interest relates is justified by the member's particular role or expertise;*
- (g) the business to which the interest relates is to be considered by an overview and scrutiny committee of the relevant authority and the member's interest is not a pecuniary interest;*
- (h) the business which is to be considered relates to the finances or property of a voluntary organisation of whose management committee or board the member is a member otherwise than as a representative of the relevant authority and the member has no other interest in that business provided that any dispensation shall not extend to participation in any vote with respect to that business; or*
- (i) it appears to the committee to be in the interests of the inhabitants of the area of the relevant authority that the disability should be removed provided that written notification of the grant of the dispensation is given to the National Assembly for Wales within seven days in such manner as it may specify.*
- (j) it appears to the committee to be otherwise appropriate to grant a dispensation.*

3 (1) A dispensation granted by the standards committee of a relevant authority under section 81(4) of the Act on the grounds set out in regulation 2(j) and which remains in effect, must be reviewed by the standards committee once in every 12 month period from the date on which the dispensation is first granted.

(2) When conducting a review under paragraph (1) the standards committee must determine whether the dispensation should continue to have effect."

It was satisfied that that both paragraph (a) and (d) above provide sufficient justification for the granting of a dispensation to members appointed by Gwynedd Council to take a full part in the determination of issues relating to Gwynedd Council.

In relation to those members appointed by Conwy County Borough Council, it found that they are in a slightly different position as there are generally no issues relating to quorum. It found however that paragraph (d) above was equally applicable to both members appointed by Gwynedd Council and Conwy County Borough Council appointed members and on that basis granted a dispensation to members appointed by Conwy County Borough Council to take a full part in the determination of issues relating to Conwy County Borough Council.

It can be confirmed that the dispensations previously granted by the Standards Committee have worked well in practise with the Authority and Planning and Access Committee in particular benefitting from the same both in relation to ensuring a quorum and no loss of local knowledge in the determining of applications. During the operation of a previous dispensation between 2010 and 2012 there have been planning applications that were particularly contentious. One example involved an application for sheltered housing in the Llan Ffestiniog area on land in the ownership of Gwynedd Council. Members of Gwynedd

Council took a full part in proceedings. Officer recommendation was for approval. There were strong local objections to the proposed scheme and I received correspondence from members of the public voicing concern that members of Gwynedd Council were allowed to take part in the matter. However, on that occasion, following a site visit, the Planning and Access committee's decision was to refuse the application. This decision was the subject of an appeal which did not succeed and so members' views were exonerated.

Another contentious planning application involved an application by Gwynedd Council for a new area school. Once again officer recommendation was for approval and once again there was strong local opposition to the scheme. Part of that opposition centred on the fact that members of Gwynedd Council would be allowed to take part in the decision making process. Concerns were raised that some of those members had voted on the issue as part of Gwynedd Council's approval of its strategy. I took the view that no decision had been taken by Gwynedd Council on the actual planning application as this Authority is the Planning Authority for the area. The application was to decide on the planning merits of the application and the discussion at committee broadly followed the planning merits or otherwise of the application with the exception of a public speaker on behalf of the Applicant who referred to non-planning matters. On this occasion members decided to follow officer recommendation and planning permission was granted. The majority of members of Gwynedd Council voted in favour of the application but there were also abstentions and some also voted against the application. Even if all members of Gwynedd Council had declared and withdrawn from the meeting, on the assumption that the voting members remaining would not have voted differently, the application would still have been successful albeit on a reduced majority down from a majority of 9 in favour with 4 against to 5 in favour with 2 against.

Whilst there was undoubted concern in connection with this application I saw no evidence of irregularity by members of Gwynedd Council. Such applications are by their very nature generally contentious applications with a wide range of views but the final decision was one of approval in accordance with officer recommendation.

In September 2018 the Planning and Access Committee dealt with another contentious issue namely the application for planning permission for the Llanbedr relief road. In this matter members of Gwynedd Council declared an interest but relied on the dispensation granted by the Standards Committee and took a full part in deciding the application.

A complaint was subsequently received alleging a breach of the Members Code of Conduct by members appointed by Gwynedd Council in their consideration of the planning application.

The complainant raised concerns that members appointed by Gwynedd Council who were present at the meeting, despite having signed declarations of interest, were allowed to fully participate in the decision making process which culminated in the application being granted planning permission.

The complaint was not upheld as the Standards Committee, in their meeting of the 7th of July 2017 had granted a general dispensation to Members appointed by Gwynedd Council and Conwy County Borough Council in such circumstances, to enable the Authority to continue to conduct its business effectively. A full explanation was given to the complainant.

The complainant referred the matter to the Public Service Ombudsman for Wales, and also referred to the fact that only 10 members out of the possible 18 were present in the Planning and Access Committee on the day.

The Ombudsman explained to the complainant how the law regarding the granting of dispensations worked, as well as the quorate numbers required by law for a planning committee to proceed. Both had complied with legal requirements in this instance. The ombudsman therefore declined to investigate the matter further on the grounds that it was a properly made decision that a public body is entitled to make.

The Planning and Access Committee once more considered the Llanbedr Relief Road but on this occasion there were no complaints regarding the use of the grant of dispensation by members of Gwynedd Council.

There was one further planning application during 2021 when the dispensation was used. The application was a contentious one for the demolition of a former school building and for the erection of five supported living units at Dolgellau. On this occasion the committee resolved contrary to officer recommendation to refuse permission on the grounds that the development would result in the loss of a traditional building and negatively impact on the wider historic environment of Dolgellau. A second reason was also given namely that insufficient information had been submitted in relation for the need for the proposal in order for the local planning authority to make an informed decision on the impact of the development.

If the Standards committee is minded to grant a further dispensation it must be stressed that, as before, the granting of dispensations in such terms would not preclude the operation of any other part of the Code of Conduct so, for example, if a member appointed by Gwynedd Council was also the owner of land adjacent to the application land owned by Gwynedd Council then notwithstanding the fact that he/she had the benefit of a dispensation on his/her membership with Gwynedd he/she would of course still have to declare a prejudicial interest. The reason for this is that the decision would affect land in the Authority's area in which he/she has a beneficial interest and a member of the public with knowledge of the relevant facts would reasonably regard the personal interest as so significant that it is likely to prejudice his/her judgement of the public interest.

Having considered the issues, I consider that it would be in the interests of the Authority to grant dispensations to both members appointed by Gwynedd Council (Grounds 2 (a) and (d)) and Conwy County Borough Council (Ground 2 (d)) for a set period so that the Standards Committee can then revisit the matter and assess the situation once more.

RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS

None

RECOMMENDATION

- 1. To grant a dispensation for Members appointed by Gwynedd Council to enable them to take a full part in the determination of issues relating to Gwynedd Council for a period up to 31st December 2024 unless further extended by resolution of this Committee prior to 31st December 2024.**
- 2. To grant a dispensation for Members appointed by Conwy County Borough Council to enable them to take a full part in the determination of issues relating to Conwy County Borough Council for a period up to 31st December 2024 unless further extended by resolution of this Committee prior to 31st December 2024.**

BACKGROUND PAPERS

The Standards Committees (Grant of Dispensations) (Wales) Regulations 2001
The Local Government (Standards Committees, Investigations, Dispensations and Referral)
(Wales) (Amendment) Regulations 2016

National Standards Committees Forum - Wales**Friday, 30th June 2023 @ 2pm, via Teams****Agenda**

1. Apologies for absence.
2. Minutes of the previous meeting 27 January 2023.
3. Chair of the Committee on Standards in Public Life (CSPL) Research Advisory Board, Professor Mark Philp, the regime in England and implementation of recommendations from the Local Government Ethical Standards Report (2019).
4. Michelle Morris - Public Services Ombudsman for Wales - Update
5. Reflections on compliance with the duty on Group Leaders to take reasonable steps to promote and maintain high standards of conduct by members of the group and, the duty on the Standards Committee to comment on Group Leaders' compliance with that duty as part of its annual report. - All
6. a) Consider the Standards Committee remit to assist and support town and community councils with standards of behaviour at meetings. What can realistically be done to defuse high levels of political tension and challenges to officers. – All.

- b) Exploration of good practice in engaging with town and community councils - All
- 7. Resourcing of Standards Committees. Are committees sufficiently funded to undertake the required activity. – All
- 8. Penn Review update – Monitoring responses to the consultation by Welsh Government. (Consultation closes 23 June 2023).
- 9. Minimum value for gifts and hospitality - All
- 10. Consideration of agenda items for future meetings - All
 - a. Local resolution protocols.
 - b. Corporate Joint Committees (CJCs) and Joint Standards Committees
- 11. Date of next meeting. To be confirmed, January 2024