

## **ATISN 26370: Councillors Standards**

### **Doc 1 – Correspondence and briefing**

#### **Contents**

1. Email between Welsh Government officials and Minister for Housing and Local Government – 31 December 2020 to 4 January 2021
2. Letter issued to Merthyr Tydfil County Borough Council 4 January 2021
3. Email from Welsh Government official to Private Secretary regarding social media post – 4 March 2021

#### ***1. Email between Welsh Government officials and Minister for Housing and Local Government – 31 December 2020 to 4 January 2021***

**From:** PS Minister Housing & Local Government

**Sent:** 04 January 2021 12:57

**To:** WG officials

**Cc:** WG officials; PS Minister Housing & Local Government >

**Subject:** RE: CONFIDENTIAL - Leader of MTCBC

Thanks for this. The Minister is up to speed on this and has asked that following writing as you suggest below, could a short WMS be prepared please simply stating that WG are aware of the situation and are in touch with the council to seek assurances on the running of the council in the interim and continued progress of the improvement plan. It would be helpful if something could be prepared this week as we can release during recess to keep members informed should this be necessary.

*Senior Private Secretary to Julie James MS, Minister for Housing and Local Government*

*Prif Ysgrifennydd Preifat Cynorthwyol i Julie James AS, Y Gweinidog Tai a Llywodraeth Leol*

*Cabinet Division / Is-adran y Cabinet*

*Welsh Government / Llywodraeth Cymru*

*Tel / Ffôn:*

**From:** WG official  
**Sent:** 04 January 2021 12:38  
**To:** WG official  
**Cc:** WG official; PS Minister Housing & Local Government  
**Subject:** RE: CONFIDENTIAL - Leader of MTCBC

As requested, please find below draft wording for you to consider sending to the Council's interim Chief Executive. Unfortunately, I'm having IT issues at the moment so unable to save to a letter template but will do so as soon as they are resolved.

*Dear ,*

*I write in light of Councillor Kevin O'Neill's recent tribunal hearing with Adjudication Panel for Wales resulting in his seven month suspension.*

*While I appreciate this is a matter for the Council, it is important that appropriate interim leadership arrangements are being put in place in order to maintain the stability of the Council over this period. I would be grateful to receive assurance on what these arrangements are as a matter of urgency.*

*I hope the statutory support package will continue to help the council address the challenges it faces, and progress on your improvement journey can be maintained.*

Many thanks,

**From:** WG official  
**Sent:** 04 January 2021 10:15  
**To:** WG officials; PS Minister Housing & Local Government ;  
**Cc:** WG officials  
**Subject:** RE: CONFIDENTIAL - Leader of MTCBC

Good morning,

The outcome of the Adjudication Panel hearing has been published - the Leader has been suspended for 7 months for a number of breaches of the Council's code of conduct. The Decision notice attached provides details of the breaches.

<https://adjudicationpanel.gov.wales/apw0012020-021ct-councillor-kevin-oneill>

I'll prepare a draft letter for issuing to the Council

Many thanks

**From:** WG official

**Sent:** 02 January 2021 10:36

**To:** PS Minister Housing & Local Government ; WG officials

**Cc:** WG official

**Subject:** RE: CONFIDENTIAL - Leader of MTCBC

Thanks. I agree that our public line is that this is an issue for the council, but as soon as the decision is public the MHLG/me ought to be writing to the council/chief executive asking what the interim leadership arrangements will be. We need some confidence that the council will continue to be led.

**Reg Kilpatrick**

**Director General, Covid Crisis Coordination**

**Cyfarwyddwr Cyffredinol, Cydlynw Argyfwng Covid**

*Welsh Government/Llywodraeth Cymru*

*Cathays Park/Parc Cathays*

*Cardiff/Caerdydd*

*CF10 3NQ*

*Tel/Ffôn*

**From:** WG official

**Sent:** 31 December 2020 14:45

**To:** WG officials; PS Minister Housing & Local Government <

**Cc:** WG officials

**Subject:** RE: CONFIDENTIAL - Leader of MTCBC

Hi,

Me again – just to iterate that nothing has been confirmed and we're not aware of the outcome of the Adjudication Panel hearing yet as soon as we hear anything we'll let you know asap.

Many thanks,

**From:** WG official  
**Sent:** 31 December 2020 14:11  
**To:** WG official; PS Minister Housing & Local Government  
**Cc:** WG officials  
**Subject:** CONFIDENTIAL - Leader of MTCBC

Good afternoon,

The Minister will wish to be aware, independent Chair of Merthyr Tydfil CBC's Improvement and Assurance Board, called earlier to let us know that he received a call from a BBC Wales correspondent yesterday regarding Councillor Kevin O'Neill alleging he has been suspended as Leader for a period of seven months.

Wasn't aware and he has since spoken to interim Chief Executive of the Council, who also had not heard anything on the matter.

You'll see from the Adjudication for Panel for Wales' website that Councillor O'Neill's tribunal hearing was scheduled for 18 December, and I understand from the Tribunal Unit that the outcome is likely to be made public today or Monday.

<https://adjudicationpanel.gov.wales/upcoming-tribunals>

At the moment we're not aware anything has been published or formally said on the matter

if you get any queries, we would suggest a response along the lines of:

- Before the outcome is published: *The Adjudication panel has not yet published its decision and can't comment ahead of that.*
- After the outcome has published: *This is a matter for the council, but that the statutory support package put in place will continue to help the council address the challenges it faces.*

Many thanks,

Local Government: Transformation and Partnerships / Llywodraeth Leol: Trawsfurfio a Phartneriaethau

## **2. Letter issued to Merthyr Tydfil County Borough Council 4 January 2021**

Ellis Cooper

Interim Chief Executive

Merthyr Tydfil County Borough Council

4 January 2021

By e-mail: Ellis.cooper@merthyr.gov.uk

Dear Ellis

I write in light of Councillor Kevin O'Neill's recent tribunal hearing with Adjudication Panel for Wales resulting in his seven - month suspension.

While I appreciate this is a matter for the Council, it is important that appropriate interim leadership arrangements are being put in place in order to maintain the stability of the Council over this period. I would be grateful to receive assurance on what these arrangements are as a matter of urgency.

I hope the statutory support package will continue to help the council address the challenges it faces, and progress on your improvement journey can be maintained.

Yours sincerely

Reg Kilpatrick

Director General, Covid Crisis Coordination / Cyfarwyddwr Cyffredinol, Cydlynw  
Argyfwng Covid

***3. Email from Welsh Government official to Private Secretary regarding social media post – 4 March 2021***

**From:** PS Minister Housing & Local Government <>  
**Sent:** 04 March 2021 10:36  
**To:** PS Minister Housing & Local Government >; WG Official  
**Cc:** WG Official  
**Subject:** RE: Kevin O'Neill

Thanks all – I have now discussed with the Minister, and we will pass to the SpAd to make sure he is aware. No further action is needed.

**From:** PS Minister Housing & Local Government  
**Sent:** 04 March 2021 10:30  
**To:** WG official, PS Minister Housing & Local Government  
**Cc:** WG official  
**Subject:** RE: Kevin O'Neill

Thank you, the Minister has noted and asked if there is anything we can do about this please?

Thanks,

Private Secretary to Julie James MS, Minister for Housing and Local Government

Ysgrifennydd Preifat i Julie James AS, Y Gweinidog Tai a Llywodraeth Leol

Cabinet Division / Is-adran y Cabinet

Welsh Government / Llywodraeth Cymru