

STANDARDS AND ETHICS COMMITTEE

MINUTES OF MEETING HELD ON FRIDAY, 17 SEPTEMBER 2021

Present: Councillor Joan Hully, Deputy Chair in the Chair; Jackie Bowman, Hugh Branney, Ged McGrath and Russell Studholme.

Independent Person: Mr Henry Holmes

Officers: Clinton Boyce (Solicitor), Stephanie Shaw (Electoral and Democratic Services Manager) and Clive Willoughby (Democratic Services Officer).

SEC 21/27 Apologies for Absence

Apologies for absence were received from Councillor Dave Banks, Councillor Graham Calvin and Sarah Pemberton (Director of Corporate Services and Commercial Strategy (Monitoring Officer)).

SEC 21/28 Declarations of Interest

Councillor Hugh Branney declared an interest in Agenda Item 4c (Complaint 3) due to being a close neighbour of the subject member and took no part in the discussion or decision.

SEC 21/29 Exclusion of Press and Public

RESOLVED – that the press and public be excluded for the remaining items of business in view of the likely disclosure of exempt information as defined in paragraphs 1, 2 and 3 of schedule 12A of the Local Government Act 1972.

SEC 21/30 Code of Conduct Complaints

The Code of Conduct complaints were considered in the following order. However, due to the similar nature of Complaints 1 and 2, the evidence was considered together, then Members deliberated each complaint separately.

SEC 21/31 Complaint 1

Prior to the commencement of the consideration of the complaint, Members were introduced to the Complainant's. The Subject Member was not in attendance.

Consideration was given to an allegation that the subject Member had breached the Council's Code of Conduct.

The Council's Solicitor commenced the hearing by setting out the details of the complaint to the Committee.

The Complainants then each had fifteen minutes to present their case to the Committee.

The Committee members were provided with the opportunity to ask questions of the Complainants.

At this point the committee deliberated and considered their decision.

At the conclusion of the deliberations it was

RESOLVED – that the Committee unanimously agreed that the Subject Members actions amounted to a breach of the Code of Conduct and the complaint be upheld with the following sanction applied:

- a) The Subject Member be issued with a Conditional Warning valid for two years.

SEC 21/32 Complaint 2

Prior to the commencement of the consideration of the complaint, Members were introduced to the Complainant's. The Subject Member was not in attendance, but had submitted a written statement.

Consideration was given to an allegation that the subject Member had breached the Council's Code of Conduct.

The Council's Solicitor commenced the hearing by setting out the details of the complaint to the Committee.

The Complainants then each had fifteen minutes to present their case to the Committee.

The Solicitor read out the statement from the Subject Member.

The Committee members were provided with the opportunity to ask questions of the Complainants.

At this point it was suggested that the committee deliberate and consider their decision. The Complainants were advised that the decision would be sent to them in writing after the meeting and both then left the meeting.

At the conclusion of the deliberations it was:

RESOLVED – that the Committee unanimously agreed that there had been no breach of the code of conduct.

Note: Councillor Hugh Branney left the meeting at this point.

SEC 21/33 Complaint 3

Prior to the commencement of the consideration of the complaint, Members were introduced to the Subject Member and supporter. The Complainant was not in attendance.

Consideration was given to an allegation that the Subject Member had breached the Council's Code of Conduct.

The Council's Solicitor commenced the hearing by setting out the details of the complaint to the Committee.

The Subject Member then had fifteen minutes to present their case to the Committee.

The Committee members were provided with the opportunity to ask questions of the Subject Member.

At this point it was suggested that the committee deliberate and consider their decision. The Subject Member and supporter were advised that the decision would be sent in writing after the meeting and both then left the meeting.

At the conclusion of the deliberations it was

RESOLVED – that the Committee unanimously agreed that there had been no breach of the code of conduct.

The meeting closed at 4.17 pm