

MINUTES OF **STANDARDS COMMITTEE INITIAL ASSESSMENT**
HEARING PANEL
MEETING DATE **Thursday, 29 August 2019**

MEMBERS PRESENT: Councillors Carol Wooldridge (Chair), Karen Walton (Vice-Chair), Renee Blow, David Haley (Independent Person) and Barry Parsonage (Independent Person)

OFFICERS: Dave Whelan (Legal Services Manager/Interim Monitoring Officer) and Coral Astbury (Democratic and Member Services Officer)

OTHER MEMBERS:

PUBLIC: 0

19 Apologies for Absence

None.

20 Declarations of Interest

None.

21 Exclusion of Press and Public

RESOLVED: (Unanimously)

That the press and public be excluded for the following items of business on the grounds that it involves the likely disclosure of exempt information as defined in Paragraph 1 of part 1 of Schedule 12A to the Local Government Act 1972.

By virtue of Paragraph 1: information relating to any individual.

22 Initial Assessment Hearing

The panel considered an update from the Interim Monitoring Officer regarding an ongoing complaint against Councillor A from the 27 September 2018. The Panel previously met on 18 June 2019 to consider submission of audio evidence, and had come to the conclusion that Councillor A should apologise for her actions and agree to undertake training.

The Interim Monitoring Officer explained that following the meeting on the 18 June he wrote to Councillor A on the 21 June, 16 July and the 30 July but no response had been received from Councillor A.

The Panel were given the opportunity to listen to the views of David Haley, the Independent Person.

Members of the panel were of the view that due to the nature of the complaint and the lack of response from Councillor A that the complaint should go before a full Standards Committee hearing panel if no further response from Councillor A was received.

The Interim Monitoring Officer explained that usually in order for a complaint to go before a full Standards Hearing Panel a formal investigation is required. However, given the exceptional circumstances and evidence available to the Panel a formal investigation would not be required.

RESOLVED: (Unanimously)

The Interim Monitoring Officer will write to Councillor A again, to request that she apologise for her actions – the wording of the apology should be agreed by the Monitoring Officer. The letter will also detail what further action will be taken if no further response is received.

Councillor A should agree to undertake training.

If no positive response is received from Councillor A within 7 days receipt of the letter, the complaint will be referred to a full public hearing of the Standards Committee.

23 Initial Assessment Hearing

The Panel considered a report from the Interim Monitoring Officer which provided them an update following a further response from Councillor B.

The Interim Monitoring Officer advised the panel that the response given by Councillor B included additional information which was not previously disclosed.

The Panel were of the view that Councillor B should have sought advice from the Interim Monitoring Officer prior to the Cabinet meeting on 20 March 2019. Further, the Panel expressed disappointment that Councillor B did not provide a full account of events at the first instance.

The Panel were given the opportunity to listen to the views of Barry Parsonage, the Independent Person.

RESOLVED: (Unanimously)

The Interim Monitoring Officer will write to Councillor B, inviting him to attend a meeting with the Monitoring Officer and Independent Person to discuss the matter and work towards informal resolution.

The Interim Monitoring Officer will keep the Chair of Standards Committee informed of any progress made, and the Panel members will be informed of the final outcome.

Chair

Date