

MINUTES OF	STANDARDS COMMITTEE INITIAL ASSESSMENT HEARING PANEL
MEETING DATE	Tuesday, 16 January 2018
MEMBERS PRESENT:	Councillors Linda Woollard (Chair), Carol Chisholm, Bill Evans and B Parsonage (Independent Person)
OFFICERS:	Dave Whelan (Legal Services Manager/Monitoring Officer) and Andy Houlker (Senior Democratic Services Officer)
OTHER MEMBERS:	0
PUBLIC:	0

5 Apologies for Absence

None all were present.

6 Declarations of Interest

None were declared.

7 Exclusion of Press and Public

RESOLVED (unanimously):

That the press and public be excluded for the following item of business on the ground 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.

8 Initial Assessment Hearing

The Panel considered a report and background information on a complaint by a member of the council against Councillors A, B and C.

The complaints centred on alleged comments/actions made by Councillors A, B and Councillor C to the complainant that amounted to bullying and homophobia.

The Panel viewed a complaint of this nature as a serious matter.

Following publication of the agenda the Panel was also provided with additional information regarding Councillors A and C. The Panel was also informed that there had also been two anonymous comments supporting the position of the complainant.

It was noted that the matter had also been reported to the police but had not been progressed due to a lack of evidence.

Councillors A, B and C had all denied the alleged comments/actions.

The purpose of the meeting was not to come to a final conclusion about whether the Code of Conduct had been breached but to decide whether – at this stage – what if any further action should be taken.

In considering the matter the Panel was reminded of the test criteria for complaints against councillors.

However, the panel was very conscious of the lack of evidence/witnesses to the alleged action/comments by Councillors A, B or C. It was agreed that it would be very difficult to ascertain what had actually transpired between the individuals.

RESOLVED (unanimously):

1. That whilst the Panel felt that a complaint of this nature was a serious matter, it had received no evidence or sufficient information to support the complaint to enable the matter to be taken further; and
2. That the Leaders of each of the Council's political groups be requested in their respective group meetings to issue a statement that bullying and/or homophobic behaviour by members of their group will not be tolerated.

Chair

Date