

Standards Assessment Sub-Committee

MINUTES OF THE STANDARDS ASSESSMENT SUB-COMMITTEE MEETING HELD ON 20 JUNE 2023 AT KENNET ROOM - COUNTY HALL, BYTHESEA ROAD, TROWBRIDGE, BA14 8JN.

Present:

Cllr Ruth Hopkinson (Chairman), Cllr Ernie Clark (Vice-Chairman),
Cllr Richard Britton, Cllr Gordon King, Gordon Ball (non-voting) and Joanne Cetti
(non-voting)

113 **Apologies**

There were no apologies.

114 **Minutes of the Previous Meeting**

The minutes of the meeting held on 18 April 2023 were presented for consideration, and it was,

Resolved:

To approve and sign the minutes as a true and correct record.

115 **Declarations of Interest**

There were no declarations.

116 **Meeting Procedure and Assessment Criteria**

The procedure and criteria were noted.

117 **Exclusion of the Public**

It was,

Resolved:

To agree that in accordance with Section 100A(4) of the Local Government Act 1972 to exclude the public from the meeting for the business specified in Minute Numbers 118 onwards, because it is likely that if members of the public were present there would be disclosure to them of exempt information as defined in Paragraph 1 of Part I of Schedule 12A to the Act and the public interest in withholding the information outweighs the public interest in disclosing the information to the public.

Paragraph 1 -information relating to an individual

118 **Assessment of Complaint: COC144650**

In considering the complaint, the Sub-Committee were satisfied that the initial tests of the assessment criteria had been met, including that the Subject

Member was a member for the period of allegations and remains a member of Calne Town Council and Wiltshire Council, that copies of the relevant Code of Conduct were provided for the assessment, and that they were acting in their capacity as a Member during some aspects of the various alleged actions.

The Sub-Committee therefore had to decide whether the alleged behaviour would, if proven, amount to a breach of that Code of Conduct. Further, if it was felt it would be a breach, whether it was still appropriate under the assessment criteria to refer the matter for investigation.

In reaching its decision, the Sub-Committee took into account the original complaint and supporting information, the response of the Subject Member, and the report of the Monitoring Officer.

The Sub-Committee also considered a verbal statement from the Subject Member, who was in attendance, and a written statement from the Complainants, who were not in attendance.

After discussion, it was:

Resolved:

In accordance with the approved arrangements for resolving standards complaints adopted by Council on 9 July 2019, which came into effect on 1 January 2020 and after hearing from the Independent Person, the Assessment Sub-Committee determined to refer the complaint for investigation.

119 **Assessment of Complaint: COC145647**

In considering the complaint, the Sub-Committee were satisfied that the initial tests of the assessment criteria had been met, including that the Subject Member was a member for the period of allegations and remains a member of Southwick Parish Council, that a copy of the relevant Code of Conduct was provided for the assessment, and that they were acting in their capacity as a Member during some aspects of the various alleged actions.

The Sub-Committee therefore had to decide whether the alleged behaviour would, if proven, amount to a breach of that Code of Conduct. Further, if it was felt it would be a breach, whether it was still appropriate under the assessment criteria to refer the matter for investigation.

In reaching its decision, the Sub-Committee took into account the original complaint and supporting information, the response of the Subject Member, and the report of the Monitoring Officer.

The Sub-Committee also considered a verbal statement from the Subject Member, who was in attendance, and a verbal statement from the Complainants, who was also in attendance.

After discussion, it was:

Resolved:

In accordance with the approved arrangements for resolving standards complaints adopted by Council on 9 July 2019, which came into effect on 1 January 2020 and after hearing from the Independent Person, the Assessment Sub-Committee determined to refer the complaint for investigation.

120 **Assessment of Complaint: COC145994**

In considering the complaint, the Sub-Committee were satisfied that the initial tests of the assessment criteria had been met, including that the Subject Member was a member for the period of allegations and remains a member of Southwick Parish Council and that a copy of the relevant Code of Conduct was provided for the assessment, and that they were acting in their capacity as a Member during the alleged actions.

The Sub-Committee therefore had to decide whether the alleged behaviour would, if proven, amount to a breach of that Code of Conduct. Further, if it was felt it would be a breach, whether it was still appropriate under the assessment criteria to refer the matter for investigation.

In reaching its decision, the Sub-Committee took into account the original complaint and supporting information, the response of the Subject Member, and the report of the Monitoring Officer.

The Sub-Committee also considered a verbal statement from the Subject Member, who was in attendance, and a verbal statement from the Complainant, who was also in attendance.

During consideration, the Sub-Committee felt that it was appropriate to request a discussion between the Monitoring Officer and the Subject Member to explore options for an alternative resolution and sought the agreement of the Monitoring Officer.

After discussion, it was:

Resolved:

That the Assessment of the Complaint be deferred until the outcome of a discussion between the Monitoring Officer and the Subject Member, to explore options for an alternative resolution.

(Duration of meeting: 10.00 - 11.50 am)

The Officer who has produced these minutes is Lisa Alexander of Democratic Services, direct line 01722 434560, e-mail lisa.alexander@wiltshire.gov.uk

Press enquiries to Communications, direct line 01225 713114 or email communications@wiltshire.gov.uk