

## **Minutes of Standards Committee Assessment Panel**

**8 September 2021**

### **Present:**

Dylan Price  
Councillor I.J. Beardsmore  
Councillor K.M. Grant  
Councillor S.C. Mooney

### **321/21 Disclosures of Interest**

There were none.

### **322/21 Exclusion of Press and Public**

The Panel considered whether the press and public should be excluded from the meeting during consideration of the following matter on the grounds that it was likely to involve the disclosure of exempt information as defined in Paragraph 2 of Part 1 of Schedule 12A of the Local Government Act.

The Panel in making its decision had regard to all circumstances and was satisfied that the public interest in maintaining the exemption outweighed the public interest in disclosing the information.

**RESOLVED** that in the interest of having a frank and open discussion about the matter, the press and public are excluded from the meeting.

### **323/21 Exempt Complaint Assessment Report against Councillor B**

The Panel considered the report of the Monitoring Officer setting out an allegation by way of a complaint received from a member of the public about Councillor B.

The Monitoring Officer detailed the circumstances which had led to this complaint.

The Panel went on to consider the complaint having regard to the Assessment Criteria. It identified that there was a potential to be a breach of the Code of Conduct.

The Panel then went on to consider the options open to it:

- (a) the Panel is able to ask the Monitoring Officer to direct that the complaint is investigated;

- (b) to direct the Monitoring Officer to take other appropriate action short of a formal investigation, for instance trying to secure an apology;
- (c) alternatively the Panel can decide to take no action in respect of the complaint; this may be where the complaint appears to be trivial, vexatious, malicious, politically motivated or tit-for-tat.

The Panel also had regard to advice from the Independent Person, that Councillor B did not dispute the facts and had requested that a full investigation be undertaken.

In considering option (a), to direct that the complaint is investigated, the Panel decided that the complaint did warrant a full investigation.

The Panel agreed on the following appropriate action:

1. That a full investigation be undertaken
2. Training be arranged for all Members in how to handle negative tweets or comments on social media.

**Resolved** that the Panel directs the Monitoring Officer to undertake a full investigation into the facts surrounding the complaint.

### **324/21 Exempt Complaint Assessment Report against Councillor C**

The Panel considered the report of the Monitoring Officer setting out an allegation by way of a complaint received from a Councillor about Councillor C.

The Monitoring Officer detailed the circumstances which had led to this complaint.

The Panel went on to consider the complaint having regard to the Assessment Criteria and considered whether there had been a breach of the Members Code of Conduct.

The Panel then went on to consider the options open to it:

- (a) the Panel is able to ask the Monitoring Officer to direct that the complaint is investigated;
- (b) to direct the Monitoring Officer to take other appropriate action short of a formal investigation, for instance trying to secure an apology;
- (c) alternatively the Panel can decide to take no action in respect of the complaint; this may be where the complaint appears to be trivial, vexatious, malicious, politically motivated or tit-for-tat.

In considering option (a), to direct that the complaint is investigated, the Panel decided that the complaint did not warrant a full investigation. In considering option (b) the Panel felt that there had not been a potential breach of the Members Code of Conduct and that no further action needed to be taken.

The Panel agreed to take no action. It considered that Councillor C made their comments during a robust political debate and that Members had the right to speak to Developers without fear of reprisals.

**Resolved** that no further action was necessary.

### **325/21 Exempt Complaint Assessment Report against Councillor D**

The Panel considered the report of the Monitoring Officer setting out an allegation by way of a complaint received from a Councillor about Councillor D.

The Monitoring Officer detailed the circumstances which had led to this complaint.

The Panel went on to consider the complaint having regard to the Assessment Criteria and considered whether there had been a breach of the Members Code of Conduct.

The Panel then went on to consider the options open to it:

- (a) the Panel is able to ask the Monitoring Officer to direct that the complaint is investigated;
- (b) to direct the Monitoring Officer to take other appropriate action short of a formal investigation, for instance trying to secure an apology;
- (c) alternatively the Panel can decide to take no action in respect of the complaint; this may be where the complaint appears to be trivial, vexatious, malicious, politically motivated or tit-for-tat.

In considering option (a), to direct that the complaint is investigated, the Panel decided that the complaint did not warrant a full investigation. In considering option (b) the Panel felt that there had not been a potential breach of the Members Code of Conduct and therefore no further action needed to be taken.

The Panel agreed to take no action though did suggest that Councillor D may benefit from re-reading the Members Code of Conduct.

**Resolved** that no further action was necessary.

