

**Minutes of the Standards Sub-Committee  
25 April 2023**

**Present:**

I. Winter (Chair)

Councillors:

J.R. Boughtflower            R.W. Sider BEM  
D. Saliagopoulos            L. E. Nichols

**In Attendance:** Councillors C. Bateson, Peter Bryant and Petra De Man and Farida Hussain (Council's Monitoring Officer and Complainant)

**548/23    Disclosures of Interest**

There were none.

**549/23    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.

**550/23    Exempt Complaint Assessment Report against Councillor A**

The Panel considered the report of Peter Bryant, an Independent Person following an allegation that Councillor A had failed to comply with the Council's Code of Conduct for Members.

The Panel considered whether there had been a breach of the Members' Code of Conduct under Paragraph 4 (4.1) 'Confidentiality and Access to

Information' or Paragraph 5 (5.1) 'I do not bring my role or Local Authority into disrepute' of the Code.

4.1 of the Code states: **I do not disclose information:**

- a) given to me in confidence by anyone,
- b) acquired by me which I believe, or ought reasonably to be aware, is of a confidential nature, unless
  - i. I have received the consent of a person authorised to give it;
  - ii. I am required by law to do so;
  - iii. the disclosure is made to a third party for the purpose of obtaining professional legal advice provided that the third party agrees not to disclose the information to any other person; or
  - iv. the disclosure is:
    - 1. Reasonable and in the public interest, and
    - 2. Made in good faith and in compliance with the reasonable requirements of the Local Authority; and
    - 3. I have consulted with the Monitoring Officer prior to its release.

Paragraph 5.1 of the code states: '**I do not bring my role or Local authority into disrepute**':

As a councillor, you are trusted to make decisions on behalf of your community and your actions and behaviour are subject to greater scrutiny than that of ordinary members of the public. You should be aware that your actions might have an adverse impact on you, other councillors and/or your local authority and may lower the public's confidence in your or your local authority's ability to discharge your/it's functions. For example, behaviour that is considered dishonest and/or deceitful can bring your local authority into disrepute. You are able to hold the local authority and fellow councillors to account and are able to constructively challenge and express concern about decisions and processes undertaken by the council whilst continuing to adhere to other aspects of this Code of Conduct'.

The Panel agreed that Councillor A's actions had not amounted to a breach of 5.1 of the Code but that he had breached 4.1 of the Code in that he acted recklessly but not wilfully.

The Panel agreed that Councillor A did not try to cover up their error but they expressed concerns that they had failed to notify the appropriate officers as soon as they realised that the error had occurred.

The Panel **resolved** that that the following sanctions would be put in place:

- 1) A public apology would be made at the next convenient meeting of full Council;
- 2) At the next convenient meeting of the Council a formal motion would be put before the Chamber to consider censure Councillor A.