

From: Graham, Michael
Sent: 17 March 2015 14:52
To: Watts, Robert (Councillor); Ayers, Frank (Councillor); Beardsmore, Ian (Councillor)
Cc: Murray Litvak; Tambini, Roberto; Statham, Victoria
Subject: Complaints against councillors

Dear Group Leaders

I am seeing a spate of Code of Conduct complaints between councillors. No doubt this may be due to heightened anxiety and tension because of the forthcoming elections.

I have spoken at different times in the past two weeks to Cllr Ayers, Cllr Watts, Cllr Smith-Ainsley and earlier to Cllr Rough to inform them of my general position about such complaints, and I am writing now for the sake of clarity, and to ask if we can have some calm brought to the pre-election period. I am also copying the email to the Chairman of the Members Code of Conduct Committee so that he is up to date with position.

In 2014 we altered the arrangements for dealing with complaints so that complaints from one councillor about another would be referred to group leaders to resolve. This move was supported by all parties on the Members Code of Conduct. It was designed to ensure that the political parties take responsibility for good relations between each other and also to ensure that the Members Code of Conduct Committee was not used as a political battleground in tit for tat complaints.

We are now seeing tit for tat complaints.

The Committee is a fundamental safeguard for the public to know that we (a) promote high standards of conduct and (b) we can take action if a complaint is made.

So far as of this morning we have:

- Cllr Rough complaining about Cllr Watts and Cllr Forbes-Forsyth
- Cllr Smith-Ainsley complaining about Cllr Ayers and all the SIP councillors
- Cllr Ayers complaining about Cllr Smith-Ainsley (and his complaint about Cllr Ayers)
- Cllr Patterson complaining about Cllr Smith-Ainsley (and his complaint about Cllr Ayers)

These matters will be dealt with under our procedures and referred to group leaders for you to resolve amongst yourselves. It matters not that some of the complaints are about group leaders, the expectation is for you to take the lead to speak to your opposite number and try and resolve them.

Cllr Watts has already indicated that he is happy to meet with Cllr Rough regarding her complaint.

I would be grateful if you could note this position and try and use influence in your groups to see that further member complaints are not generated as part of the election campaign.

Thank you.

Michael.

Michael Graham
Head of Corporate Governance

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