
STANDARDS COMMITTEE

Monday, 19th December, 2022

Present: Councillor Carole Haythornthwaite (in the Chair), Councillors June Harrison (Vice Chair), Noordad Aziz, Danny Cassidy, Bernard Dawson MBE, Kath Pratt, Altham Parish Councillors Rennie Pinder, John Halstead and David Murray
Independent Person – Mr. Frank Whitehead

Apologies Councillor Kimberley Whitehead

135 Apologies for absence, Declarations of Interest and Dispensations

An apology for absence was submitted on behalf of Councillor Kimberley Whitehead. There were no dispensations or interests declared at the meeting.

136 Minutes of Last Meeting -29th September 2022

The Minutes of the last meeting of the Standards Committee held on 29th September 2022 were submitted for approval as a correct record.

Resolved - That the Minutes be received and approved as a correct record.

137 Hearing Procedure

The Hearing Procedure to be followed at the meeting in relation to a complaint regarding a Councillor was submitted for agreement by members of the Standards Committee. A copy had been circulated to Committee members and the Councillor in question.

Resolved - That the Procedure be noted.

138 Exclusion of the Public

Resolved - That the Committee determined that members of the public did not need to be excluded from the meeting during the following item and as such the meeting remained open to the attendance of the public.

139 Investigation Report

Members of the public were provided with details of a complaint submitted against Councillor Marlene Haworth by a former officer of Hyndburn Borough Council. Prior to the meeting, the complaint had been investigated by an independent person, John Austin, who was also in attendance at the meeting to present his report.

The complaint referred to an incident that had occurred at a Planning Committee in March 2022. The complainant had made a number of allegations against Councillor Haworth's

behaviour at the meeting and alleged that this had resulted in her failing to treat her with respect and in accordance with the Council's Code of Conduct. Mr. Austin had been appointed to carry out an investigation into the complaint and had interviewed a number of witnesses who were present at the Planning Committee, reviewed a number of documents and, taken into account the seven principles underpinning the Council's Code of Conduct before concluding:

- That Councillor Haworth had failed to treat the complainant with respect and also failed to promote and support high standards of conduct when serving in her public post. He found evidence of breaches of paragraphs 2 (g) and (j) of the Council's Code of Conduct.

The Committee was requested to consider the recommendation submitted by the Investigator. Consideration was given to the Investigator's report and the comments submitted by the non-voting members of the Committee, the Altham Parish Councillors and Mr. Frank Whitehead – Independent Person. Both the complainant and Councillor Marlene Haworth and her representatives were also given the opportunity to comment at the Hearing.

The Committee found that although Councillor Haworth had not specifically named the complainant, her remarks had identified the complainant as the person to whom she was referring in her address to the Planning Committee; that Councillor Haworth had made the remarks to the Planning Committee as set out in the written statement which Councillor Haworth supplied to the Standards Committee; and no planning objections were disregarded and that the earlier planning application relating to the site had been determined by the Council's Chief Planning Officer in accordance with the Council's scheme of delegation at the time in question.

The Committee found, by majority, that Councillor Haworth had acted in breach of the following part of the Council's Member Code of Conduct:

- Paragraph 2(g) in that she had failed to treat the complainant with respect.

The Committee requested that Councillor Haworth received additional training in respect of her obligations under the Member Code of Conduct.

Resolved

- (1) That having taken into account the findings as set out above, the Committee found that Councillor Haworth had breached paragraph 2(g) of the Council's Member Code of Conduct; and**
- (2) That Councillor Haworth should attend additional training in respect of her obligations under the Members' Code of Conduct.**

Signed:.....

Date:

Chair of the meeting
At which the minutes were confirmed