

STANDARDS HEARINGS SUB-COMMITTEE – 13 OCTOBER 2020

Executive Summary

This report advises the Standards and Audit Committee of a decision made by the Standards Hearings Sub-Committee on 13 October 2020.

Recommendations

The Committee is requested to:

RESOLVE That the decision of the Standards Hearings Sub-Committee on 13 October 2020 be noted.

The Committee has the authority to determine the recommendation(s) set out above.

Background Papers: None.

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1.0 Introduction

- 1.1 The Council's "Arrangements for Dealing with Standards Allegations under the Localism Act 2011" ("Arrangements") provide for decisions of the Standards Hearings Sub-Committee to be reported to the Standards and Audit Committee.
- 1.2 This report advises the Committee of a decision of the Sub-Committee, on 13 October 2020, in respect of a complaint against Councillor John Bond.

2.0 The Complaint

- 2.1 On 19 October 2019, Councillor Bond submitted a complaint against another Councillor. The complaint was contained in an email to the Monitoring Officer. Councillor Bond copied his email to "Councillors".
- 2.2 The Monitoring Officer considered that there was an arguable case that Councillor Bond had breached the Members' Code of Conduct in copying his email about the other Councillor to "Councillors". This was on the basis that, in doing so, Councillor Bond had breached the "Protocol for Complaints Submitted by Members under the Members' Code of Conduct", adopted by the Council on 4 April 2019. This stated that Member complaints against another Member should be confidential to:-
 - (i) The two Members concerned (i.e. the Member submitting the complaint and the Member who is the subject of the complaint);
 - (ii) The Monitoring Officer, and
 - (iii) The persons notified of the complaint by the Monitoring Officer in accordance with the Council's "Arrangements for dealing with Standards Allegations under the Localism Act 2011".
- 2.3 The Monitoring Officer considered that the "breach" merited a formal investigation under the Arrangements.
- 2.4 The Monitoring Officer appointed Mr John Austin, an external investigator, to carry out the investigation.
- 2.5 Mr Austin concluded that, in copying his email about the other Councillor to all Councillors, Councillor Bond had breached the Members' Code of Conduct.

3.0 Standards Hearings Sub-Committee

- 3.1 On 13 October 2020, the Council's Standards Hearings Sub-Committee conducted a local hearing to determine whether Councillor Bond had breached the Members' Code of Conduct.
- 3.2 The Sub-Committee concluded that Councillor Bond had failed to comply with the Members' Code of Conduct. The Sub-Committee decided to report its findings, for information, to Council at its meeting on 3 December 2020. The report would include reference to Councillor Bond's acknowledgement that, in copying his email to "Councillors", he had failed to comply with the "Protocol for Complaints Submitted by Members under the Members' Code of Conduct".

REPORT ENDS