

STANDARDS COMMITTEE

15 DECEMBER 2021

Present: Councillors Evans (Chair), Edwards, Pragnell and Roberts. Independent Persons: John Baker and Amanda McIntyre. Officers: Mary Kilner, Monitoring Officer and Kirsty Cameron, Deputy Monitoring Officer.

40. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

None received.

41. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Councillor	Minute	Interest
Roberts	43	Personal – Was present at speech given by Councillor X

42. MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING

RESOLVED – that the minutes of the meeting held on 22 September 2021 be approved by the Chair as a true record.

43. STANDARDS COMPLAINT REF 2021-2

The Monitoring Officer presented a report to decide what action to take in respect of five complaints against Councillor X regarding the following paragraphs of the Code of Conduct:

- Section 3 - (1): You must treat others with respect.
- Section 3 - (2)(a) You must not- do anything which may cause your authority to breach any of its equalities duties (in particular as set out in the Equality Act 2010). (b) bully any person.
- Section 5 - You must not conduct yourself in a manner which could reasonably be regarded as bringing your office or authority into disrepute.
- Section 6 – (a) You must not use your position as a councillor or co-opted member improperly to confer on or secure for yourself or any other person, an advantage or disadvantage.

All five complaints were related to the same incident. The complaints were received between 19th September 2021 and 29th October 2021 and the Monitoring Officer met with Councillor X on 22nd September to discuss the complaints.

The Committee considered the evidence in the report, asked questions of the Monitoring Officer, and sought the views of both Independent Persons.

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The Committee initially considered if the complaints met the initial tests as set out in the report:

- a) It is a complaint against one or more named councillors of the Council;
- b) The named councillor was in office at the time of the alleged conduct and the Code of Conduct was in force at the time; and
- c) The complaint, if proved, would be a breach of the Code under which the councillor was operating at the time of the alleged misconduct.

At the time of the events referenced in the complaints Councillor X was an elected member of Hastings Borough Council and was required to observe the Code of Conduct of Hastings Borough Council.

The Committee concluded that the complaints did meet these tests and therefore the Code of Conduct was engaged.

RESOLVED (unanimously):

The Committee concluded that there was a case to answer. They requested that a further meeting of the Standards Committee was set up to allow Councillor X the opportunity to attend and present their case. The meeting was to be held in private due to concerns regarding safeguarding.

Reasons:

The Committee considered the complaints and evidence submitted and concluded that Councillor X was acting in their capacity as a Councillor and that the conduct complained of, if proven, would constitute a breach of the Code of Conduct. They concluded that the Code of Conduct was engaged.

(The Chair declared the meeting closed at 4.28pm)