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STANDARDS COMMITTEE

19 AUGUST 2019

Present: Councillors Barnett (Chair); Evans; Levane; and Rankin.
Independent Person: John Baker.

23. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies were received for Councillors Bishop, Edwards and O'Callaghan. Councillor Evans was present as a substitute for Councillor O'Callaghan; Councillor Levane was present as a substitute for Councillor Bishop; and Councillor Rankin was present as a substitute for Councillor Edwards.

24. MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING HELD ON 9 JULY 2019

RESOLVED – that the minutes of the meeting held on 9 July 2019 be approved by the Chair as a true record.

25. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

<u>Councillor</u>	<u>Minute</u>	<u>Interest</u>
Barnett	25	Personal – has met Mr McLean on two occasions
Rankin	25	Personal – knows Mr Gulzar and Mr McLean

26. STANDARDS COMPLAINT 2019/4

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

1. (1) This Code applies to you as a Councillor or co-opted member of the authority, when acting in that capacity.

1. (2) This Code is based upon seven principles fundamental to public service, which are set out above. You should have regard to these principles as they will help you to comply with the Code.

2. (1) Subject to sub-paragraphs (2) and (3), you must comply with this Code whenever you— (a) conduct the business of your authority (which, in this Code, includes the business of the office to which you are elected or appointed);

Clause 3(b) – (2) You must not—(b) bully any person.

5. You must not conduct yourself in a manner which could reasonably be regarded as bringing your office or authority into disrepute.

The complaint was received on 11th March 2019. The Monitoring Officer and Deputy Monitoring Officer met Councillor X on 15th March 2019 to discuss the complaint, a

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copy of which was included in the Monitoring Officer's report.

Due to a conflict of interest the hearing of the complaint was delayed so that the Council's constitution could be amended to allow members of the Committee to appoint substitutes.

The Committee considered the report, asked questions of the Monitoring Officer and sought the view of the Independent Person.

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

- a) It is a complaint against a sitting member of Hastings Borough Council;
- b) The proceedings referenced in the complaint took place; and
- c) Whether the conduct, if proved, would constitute a breach of the Code of Conduct.

The Committee felt that the complaint did not meet paragraph (c) of the initial test and therefore the Code of Conduct was not engaged.

RESOLVED (unanimously):-

- 1. Complaint 1 - Code of Conduct not engaged.**
- 2. Complaint 2 - No breach of Code of Conduct.**

Reasons for Decision

1. The Committee considered the complaint and evidence submitted and found that it was not within the remit of the Standards Committee to address how the meeting was chaired. The Committee therefore concluded that they have no locus to investigate the matter as a potential breach of the Code of Conduct but thought it would be helpful for the public to understand how to complain about the chairing of public meetings through the Council's complaint's procedure.
2. The Committee considered the complaint and evidence submitted and concluded that Councillor X did not have a connection with Mr Y and Mr Z sufficient to have required declaration of a personal interest. They did not consider that Councillor X brought the Council into disrepute. The Committee thought it would be helpful if refresher training on declaration of interests and the role of social media be given to all Councillors.

(The Chair declared the meeting closed at 6.20pm)