

# Standards Committee

## Complaint Report 13 August 2018

### Report of The Monitoring Officer

#### PURPOSE OF REPORT

To inform the Standards Committee of the response to the recent complaint against Councillor Clifford.

**Private This matter relates to an individual member and may only be published by permission of the Standards Committee**

#### RECOMMENDATIONS

- (1) The committee note the report.
- (2) Decide if the report should be published.

#### 1. Introduction

- 1.1 The complaint is from an individual and internal referral via the Human Resources Service.
- 1.2 The complaint comprises three elements:
  - a) Failure to disclose a relationship with an officer.
  - b) Misuse of Council equipment and email system.
  - c) Misuse of officer time.
- 1.3 Councillor Clifford has made admissions in respect to his conduct a copy is attached in appendix 1.

#### 2. Proposal Details

- 2.1 Cllr Clifford and the employee commenced a relationship on or about 22 August 2017 and the relationship ended in or around mid-January and was definitely concluded by 8 February 2018.
- 2.2 The employee was a relatively junior member of staff and subject to a separate internal process. Neither the identity or conduct of the employee is subject to this committee.
- 2.3 The officer was not in a position of influence and there is no evidence or suggestion of any governance issues.
- 2.4 During the internal process evidence was taken and information received as to the nature and duration of the relationship.

- 2.5 Councillor Clifford was subject to a preliminary interview with the Monitoring Officer on the 4 June 2018. The schedule of facts at appendix 1 was drafted after that meeting to reflect the admissions made by Councillor Clifford, this document was signed on the 8 June 2018.
- 2.6 In the opinion of the Monitoring officer the admissions broadly reflect the information and evidence received during the internal process.
- 2.7 The Monitoring Officer is not recommending a full investigation as the differential in the accounts is unlikely to add substantively to the admission and may be considered disproportionate.
- 2.8 The Monitoring Officer recommends the admissions should be considered in the context of the email evidence at appendix 2. This evidence is sufficiently clear to allow the committee to reach a conclusion on the three substantive points at paragraph 1.2.
- 2.9 It is further recommended that if the Committee conclude the report or findings should be published appendix 2 should remain confidential as there is a risk of identifying a third party.

### 3. OPTIONS

- 3.1 The Committee have a number of options to consider in their role in maintaining of standards in a public life.
- 3.2
- a) To request a full investigation
  - b) To accept the admissions and decide there is no issue of Standards in Public Life or breach of the Code of Conduct
  - c) To accept the admissions and decide there is a breach of Standards in Public Life or Breach of the Code of Conduct.

If the Committee conclude option c) is appropriate the Committee will need to decide what, if any sanction should be applied.

#### LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

There is a statutory obligation to maintain good standards of probity. The guidance often refers to the 7 principles of Selflessness, Integrity, Objectivity, Accountability, Openness, Honesty and Leadership. Any finding by the committee must find it is in relation to public life and should link to one or more of the principles.

#### FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

None

#### SECTION 151 OFFICER'S COMMENTS

None

#### MONITORING OFFICER'S COMMENTS

The Monitoring Officer has compiled this report.

#### BACKGROUND PAPERS

None

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