

In accordance with procedure, the Chairman adjourned the meeting at 11.05am in order for the Committee to decide whether to adjourn the Hearing. Mr Hart, Independent Counsel, the Deputy Monitoring Officer and the Principal Democratic Support left the meeting at this point. On reconvening at 11.43am the Chairman confirmed that the Committee had unanimously agreed not to adjourn the Hearing.

Mr Hart, presented the report of the Deputy Monitoring Officer and the evidence against each Councillor. This included hearing from Councillors Mace and Hartley.

The meeting adjourned at 12.55pm for refreshments and reconvened at 13.30pm.

On reconvening, the Council's internal investigator was invited to give evidence to the Committee. In accordance with Hearing procedure, Committee Members asked questions of the witnesses. Mr Hart then summarised the alleged breaches of conduct with regard to each subject member, detailed in an exempt minute, and invited the subject member in attendance to make a closing statement.

The meeting adjourned at 3.25pm to determine whether in their opinion the subject members had breached the Members' Code of Conduct. The Hearing reconvened at 4.50pm.

On reconvening, the Chairman confirmed that the Committee had found each member in breach of the Members' Code of Conduct:

Resolved unanimously:

- (1) Councillor Wild had bullied a member of staff in an attempt to obtain sensitive information with the intent to pass that information to other people and had brought the Council and Office of Councillor into disrepute.
- (2) Councillor Gardiner had misled officers, failed to co-operate in the Standards Investigation and attempted to intimidate, control and influence the investigation and had brought the Council and Office of Councillor into disrepute.

Mr Hart suggested that the meeting be adjourned in order for the subject members to be made aware of the Committee's findings and enable them to make mitigating statements prior to any sanctions being imposed. It was agreed that the meeting would reconvene on Monday 11 March at 5.00pm.

The Hearing adjourned at 5.13pm on Thursday 6 March and reconvened at 5.00pm on Monday 11 March 2019.

On reconvening representations had been received from the subject members, none of whom were in attendance. The representations included a further request to adjourn the Hearing and the meeting briefly adjourned at 5.02pm to enable the Committee to read the representations and consider whether the Committee wished to adjourn. At 5.25pm the meeting reconvened and the Chairman advised that the Committee were unanimous in their decision not to grant a further adjournment.

With regard to the issue of sanctions, Mr Hart advised the Committee that it was vital to consider any mitigating factors and the meeting adjourned at 5.43pm in order for the

Committee to determine what sanctions should be imposed. The meeting reconvened at 6.05pm.

At this point the Chairman confirmed the sanctions which the Committee had unanimously agreed:

An exempt report would be tabled at full Council with regard to the subject members, which would include the second part of the recommendation as set out in the Deputy Monitoring Officer's exempt report.

That Councillors Wild and Gardiner should be censured in the public minutes for their conduct, which was not in keeping with the standards of the Local Authority and had brought the Council and Office of Councillor into disrepute.

Resolved unanimously:

- (1) That an exempt report be tabled at full Council regarding the subject members and including the second part of the recommendation as set out in the Deputy Monitoring Officer's exempt report.
- (2) That Councillors Gardiner and Wild be censured in the public minutes for their conduct, which was not in keeping with the standards of the Local Authority and had brought the Council and Office of Councillor into disrepute.
- (3) That further details be set out in a minute exempt from publication by virtue of Paragraph 1, Schedule 12A of the Local Government Act, 1972.

Chairman

(The meeting ended at 6.20pm on Monday 11 March 2019)

**Any queries regarding these Minutes, please contact
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