

Minutes of the meeting of the STANDARDS ASSESSMENT SUB-COMMMITTEE held on TUESDAY 7 JULY 2020 at 4.00 pm

Present: Councillor Raja (Vice-Chair in the Chair)
Councillors Crooks and Miles

Officers: S Bridglalsingh (Director - Law and Governance), K Hulatt (Principal Solicitor - Litigation), D Ngani-Oketch (Principal Solicitor - Contracts, Procurement and Government), E Scott (Trainee Solicitor) and J Crighton (Committee Manager)

Also Present: Councillors Baines (Subject councillor) and Jenkins (supporter) and one member of the public

ASC01 ELECTION OF CHAIR

RESOLVED -

That Councillor Raja (Vice-Chair) be elected Chair for the meeting.

ASC02 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

None disclosed.

ASC03 EXCLUSION OF PUBLIC AND PRESS

The Sub-Committee considered excluding the public and press representatives from the meeting by virtue of Paragraph 2 (Information which is likely to Reveal the Identity of an Individual) of Part I of Schedule 12A of the Local Government Act 1972, in order that the Sub-Committee might consider Annexes A, B, C, D, E and H to Item 5 (Monitoring Officer's report).

The Sub-Committee heard from Councillors Crooks and Miles and one member of the public that they wished the hearing not to be held in private.

RESOLVED -

That the public and press representatives not be excluded from the meeting by virtue of Paragraph 2 (Information which is likely to Reveal the Identity of an Individual) of Part I of Schedule 12A of the Local Government Act 1972.

ASC04

MONITORING OFFICER'S REPORT

The Sub-Committee considered the Monitoring Officer's report.

The Sub-Committee noted that the Council had received two complaints in respect of Councillor Baines regarding an alleged breach of the Council's Code of Conduct for Members. It also noted that Councillor Baines had made a self-referral to the Monitoring Officer.

It was noted the complaints referred to an unacceptable comment made by Councillor Baines on his Facebook account.

The Sub-Committee noted that Councillor Baines was acting as a councillor at the time the comment was made, and it had shown an inappropriate lack of respect and had endangered the reputation of the Council.

The Sub-Committee considered the views of the Independent Person and accepted that Councillor Baines had shown disrespect towards a specific sector of the community and that it was possible that members of the public had been misled into thinking he was expressing the Council's view.

The Sub-Committee noted that Councillor Baines had removed the post on Facebook, had issued a public apology and had agreed to undertake diversity training to further his understanding of the issues raised.

The Sub-Committee, in reaching its decision, took the above into account and determined that, in the context the comment was raised, this had been minor and trivial and that no further action be taken.

RESOLVED -

That the complaints be rejected.

THE CHAIR CLOSED THE MEETING AT 5.03 PM