

STANDARDS COMMITTEE

Wednesday 27 February 2013

COUNCILLORS PRESENT: Councillors Sanders (Chair), Gotch (Vice-Chair), Fry, Pressel, Royce, Wolff and Sinclair.

ADVISORY MEMBERS PRESENT: Chris Ballinger (Independent Person), Jill McCleery (Independent Person), Ben Simpson (Independent Person) and Gordon Roper (Blackbird Leys Parish Council)

OFFICERS PRESENT: Jeremy Thomas (Head of Law and Governance) and Sarah Claridge (Trainee Democratic and Electoral Services Officer)

16. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE AND SUBSTITUTIONS

Apologies were received from Councillor Val Smith (substitute Councillor Dee Sinclair) and Godfrey Cole.

17. MINUTES

The Committee resolved to APPROVE the confidential and non-confidential minutes of the meeting held on 16 January 2013 as a true and accurate record.

18. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no declarations of interest.

19. DATES AND TIMES OF FUTURE MEETINGS

The Committee resolved to NOTE that the next meeting will be held at 10am on Friday 7 June 2013.

20. MATTERS EXEMPT FROM PUBLICATION

The Committee resolved to EXCLUDE the press and the public from the meeting to protect the privacy of the individuals involved, in accordance with Paragraph 1 (Information relating to any individual) and Paragraph 2 (Information which is likely to reveal the identity of an individual) of Part 1 of Schedule 12A of the Local Government Act 1972

The public interest in maintaining the exemption is recommended to be so that discussions and deliberations of the Committee about the investigation are not compromised and so that the confidentiality of personal information collected during the investigation is protected.

21. STANDARDS INVESTIGATION - 703/4/39

The Committee considered a report by the Monitoring Officer (previously circulated, now appended) attached to which was the final report and relevant documents prepared by the Investigating Officer appointed to investigate the alleged conduct of Councillor Alan Armitage.

The investigator presented his report before members of the Committee asked questions of him. The Committee also heard from a number of witnesses who attended the hearing at the request of the investigator. Both the Committee and Councillor Armitage questioned those witnesses. Councillor Armitage made oral submissions, which were also followed by questions from the Committee. The Committee also sought and received advice from the Independent Persons.

Having considered all of the above advice, evidence and submissions the Committee made a finding of fact that it was highly probable that Councillor Armitage did make an inappropriate comment to one of the members of the under 13s sports team.

The Committee resolved that the remark was inappropriate and disrespectful and therefore amounted to a breach of paragraph 3(1) of the Code (treating others with respect).

As the Lord Mayor attended the Awards Evening in his official capacity the Committee also concluded that the inappropriate remark had brought both the office of Lord Mayor and the City Council into disrepute. The Committee therefore decided that there had been a breach of paragraph 5 (you must not conduct yourself in a manner which could reasonably be regarded as bringing your office or authority into disrepute) of the Code.

The Committee resolved that Councillor Armitage should be censured for the breach of the Code and that the Committee's decision be reported to all members of Council. The Committee concurred with the advice of the Independent Persons that there was no reason why Councillor Armitage should not continue to undertake the full range of his mayoral duties and noted that Councillor Armitage had given an indication that he would do so.

The full Decision Notice and redacted Investigation report is attached under decision.

The meeting started at 9.30 am and ended at 2.00 pm


CHAIR

13 DEC 2013