

# West Suffolk Standards Committee

**Minutes** of a meeting of the **West Suffolk Standards Committee** held on **Monday 22 April 2024 at 6.00 pm in Room GFR-14, West Suffolk House, Western Way, Bury St Edmunds IP33 3YU**

Present: **Councillors**

**Chair** Roger Dicker

**Vice Chair** Julia Wakelam

John Augustine

Margaret Marks

Sara Mildmay-White

Victor Lukaniuk

Liz Smith

52. **Apologies for absence**

No apologies for absence were received.

53. **Substitutes**

No substitutions were declared.

54. **Minutes**

The minutes of the meeting held on 22 January 2024 were confirmed as a correct record and signed by the Chair.

55. **Declarations of interest**

There were no declarations of interests made.

56. **Public participation**

There were no members of the public in attendance on this occasion.

57. **Exclusion of press and public**

As the next item on the agenda was exempt, it was proposed, seconded and

**RESOLVED:**

That the press and public be excluded during the consideration of the following items because it is likely, in view of the nature of the business to be transacted or the nature of the proceedings, that if members of the public were present during the items, there would be disclosure to them of exempt categories of information as prescribed in Part 1 of Schedule 12A of the Local Government Act 1972, and indicated against the items and, in all

circumstances of the case, the public interest in maintaining the exemption outweighs the public interest in disclosing the information.

58. **Report on Complaints against a Councillor (Exempt: Paragraphs 1 & 2) (Report No: STC/WS/24/002)**

The Monitoring Officer presented this report which outlined complaints received that an Elected Member had breached the Suffolk Code of Conduct.

In line with process, the matter had been considered by the Independent Person and their response was appended to the report together with final submissions received from the subject member and complainants.

Following discussion and debate, it was

**RESOLVED**

That, in considering all the evidence, the West Suffolk Standards Committee was unanimous in determining that the Councillor had breached the Suffolk Code of Conduct, the relevant Codes being:

As a Councillor:

- 1.2 I treat local authority employees, employees and representatives of partner organisations and those volunteering for the local authority with respect and respect the role they play.
- 2.1 I do not bully any person.
- 2.3 I promote equalities and do not discriminate unlawfully against any person.
- 4.1b. I do not disclose information acquired by me which I believe, or ought reasonably to be aware, is of a confidential nature, unless
  - i. I have received the consent of a person authorised to give it;
  - ii. I am required by law to do so;
  - iii. the disclosure is made to a third party for the purpose of obtaining professional legal advice provided that the third party agrees not to disclose the information to any other person; or
  - iv. the disclosure is:
    1. reasonable and in the public interest; and
    2. made in good faith and in compliance with the reasonable requirements of the local authority; and
    3. I have consulted the Monitoring Officer prior to its release.
- 5.1 I do not bring my role or local authority into disrepute
- 6.1 I do not use, or attempt to use, my position improperly to the advantage or disadvantage of myself or anyone else.

The Committee considered this a serious breach of the Code of Conduct and imposed the following sanctions upon the Councillor:

- That the Councillor write a letter of apology to the complainants and the data subject, such letter to be approved by the Monitoring Officer;
- That the Committee will report its findings in respect of the Councillor's conduct to an identified meeting and for the Councillor to apologise at that meeting for the breach;
- That the Committee will release a statement about the Councillor's conduct to the media; and
- That a copy of the decision notice is submitted to the Councillor's Group Leader with a recommendation that they are removed from the membership of the identified meetings, for the remainder of the current Administration.

The meeting concluded at 7.20pm

**Signed by:**

**Chair**

---