

MINUTES OF A MEETING OF THE
STANDARDS COMMITTEE HELD IN
ROOM 27, WALLFIELDS, HERTFORD ON
TUESDAY 30 MARCH 2010, AT 7.30 PM

PRESENT:

District Council Members:

Councillors R L Parker, J P Warren and
M Wood

Town Councils' Representative:

Mrs E Woods

Parish Councils' Representatives:

Mr J Jones
Mr C Marks

Independent Members:

Mr S Bouette
Mr D Farrell
Mr J Morphew (Chairman)
Mr T Vickers

OFFICERS IN ATTENDANCE:

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| Simon Drinkwater | - Director of Neighbourhood Services |
| Jeff Hughes | - Head of Democratic and Legal Support Services |
| George Robertson | - Legal Services Manager |

658 APOLOGY

An apology for absence was submitted on behalf of Councillor P A Ruffles.

659 EXCLUSION OF THE PRESS AND PUBLIC

The Committee considered whether or not to exclude the press and public from the meeting during the discussion of the item of business detailed at Minute 661 below on the grounds that it involved the likely disclosure of exempt information as defined in paragraph 7C of Part 1 of Schedule 12A of the Local Government Act 1972. The Committee agreed that this item should be considered in public.

The Committee also agreed that both the Monitoring Officer's and Investigating Officer's report on the complaint, as now submitted, should be made public. The written submissions of Town Councillor J Hedley dated 17 and 24 March 2010 (and accompanying medical documents) should, however, remain confidential.

RESOLVED ITEMS660 MINUTES

RESOLVED – that the Minutes of the Standards Committee meeting held on 2 March 2010 be confirmed as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

661 COMPLAINT IN RESPECT OF TOWN COUNCILLOR:
REFERENCES HTC/01/2009A AND HTC/02/2009B

The Chairman confirmed the meeting was quorate. The Committee noted the procedure to be followed in determining the matter detailed below.

The Monitoring Officer submitted a report in respect of two complaints concerning Hertford Town Councillor J Hedley.

The Committee recalled that, at its meeting held on 2 March 2010, it had agreed that the Investigating Officer's findings on the complaints should be considered at a hearing conducted under Regulation 18 of The Standards Committee (England) Regulations 2008.

The Committee noted that it was required to consider the Investigating Officer's report and make one of the following findings:

- (A) that the Member had not failed to comply with the Council's Code of Conduct;
- (B) that the Member had failed to comply with the Council's Code of Conduct but that no action needed to be taken in respect of the matters considered at the hearing;
- (C) that the Member had failed to comply with the Council's Code of Conduct and that a sanction should be imposed.

The subject Member, Town Councillor J Hedley, following a brief discussion on the content of the Investigating Officer's report, admitted that he had failed to comply with Hertford Town Council's Code of Conduct.

Councillor Hedley was asked if he had anything to say before the Committee discussed sanctions.

Councillor Hedley drew the Committee's attention to recent bouts of ill health and the volume of medication that he was taking. He commented that recent lifestyle changes, coupled with a more balanced medication scheme, meant that a repeat of the incidents behind the complaints was now more unlikely.

The Committee noted the representations received from the complainants concerning the commencement of any suspension period should it determine to impose such a sanction.

The Committee retired to consider the sanctions which should be imposed. Following this the Chairman announced publicly the decision now detailed.

RESOLVED – that Hertford Town Councillor J Hedley has breached paragraphs 3 (1) and 5 of the Town Council’s Code of Conduct and as a consequence the following sanctions be imposed:

(A) commencing on 7 April 2010, he shall be suspended for a period of 3 months from the office of Town Councillor;

(B) he shall submit a written apology to the complainants within 7 days and give an oral apology at the first scheduled meeting of the Town Council following the end of his suspension, all apologies to be approved by the Chairman of the Committee; and

(C) he shall undertake training consisting of seeking advice on the effect of his medication, in particular about possible adverse behavioural side-effects arising from his medication and from potential interactions with any consumption of alcohol, and follow that advice - the advice should include how to react when any adverse effects arise.

The meeting closed at 9.20 pm

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| Chairman |
| Date |