

MINUTES OF A MEETING OF THE
STANDARDS SUB-COMMITTEE HELD IN
ROOM 27, WALLFIELDS, HERTFORD ON
MONDAY 30 MARCH 2015, AT 12.00 PM

PRESENT: Councillor G Jones (Chairman)
Councillors L Haysey and P Phillips.

ALSO PRESENT:

Councillors M Alexander, D Andrews,
Mrs R Cheswright, K Crofton and P Moore.

OFFICERS IN ATTENDANCE:

Simon Drinkwater	- Director of Neighbourhood Services
Jeff Hughes	- Head of Democratic and Legal Support Services

ALSO IN ATTENDANCE:

Dennis Cooper	- Investigating Officer
Philip Copland	- Independent Person

13 APPOINTMENT OF CHAIRMAN

RESOLVED – that Councillor G Jones be appointed
Chairman for this meeting of the Sub-Committee.

14 CHAIRMAN'S ANNOUNCEMENTS

The Chairman welcomed all present to the meeting.

He advised that the subject Member, Councillor W Ashley, had submitted an apology for absence. The hearing would proceed regardless.

15 MINUTES

RESOLVED – that the Minutes of the meeting of the Standards Sub-Committee held on 13 March 2015 be confirmed as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

16 COMPLAINT AGAINST A DISTRICT COUNCILLOR

The Monitoring Officer submitted a report on the complaint alleging that Councillor William Ashley had breached the Authority's Code of Conduct.

He reminded the Sub-Committee that, at its meeting held on 19 February 2015, it had agreed that for those matters where the Investigating Officer had concluded that Councillor Ashley had breached the Authority's Code of Conduct, a hearing meeting be held to determine whether or not that Member had failed to comply with the Code and, if so, what action should be taken as a consequence.

The Chairman outlined the hearing procedure.

The Monitoring Officer reminded the Sub-Committee that the Investigating Officer had concluded that Councillor Ashley's conduct had fallen short of reasonable expectation as to how he should treat his colleagues and that he was using his position as a councillor to pursue correspondence.

Accordingly, the Investigating Officer had found Councillor Ashley to be in breach of the Code of Conduct in relation to that correspondence in that he did not value colleagues and staff, did not engage with them in an appropriate manner and failed to treat them with respect.

The hearing procedure was duly followed.

The Sub-Committee agreed:

- to issue a formal letter to Councillor Ashley detailing

- the Sub-Committee's determination that accepted the Investigating Officer's conclusion;
- to invite Council to pass a formal motion of censure against Councillor Ashley;
 - that Councillor Ashley should not be appointed to Development Management Committee in the event of seeking re-election (and being re-elected) to the Authority at the May 2015 elections;
 - as the meeting was public and a press representative was in attendance, no specific press release be issued on this matter, and
 - the Monitoring Officer be requested to draft a letter of apology on behalf of Councillor Ashley for him to sign and send to all Development Management Committee Members affected by his conduct.

RESOLVED – that in relation to the complaint now detailed that Councillor W Ashley had breached the Authority's Code of Conduct:

(A) a formal letter be issued to the Member detailing the Sub-Committee's determination that accepted the Investigating Officer's conclusion;

(B) Council be invited to pass a formal motion of censure against Councillor Ashley;

(C) Councillor Ashley be not appointed to Development Management Committee in the event of seeking re-election (and being re-elected) to the Authority at the May 2015 elections;

(D) as the meeting was public and a press representative was in attendance, no specific press release be issued on this matter, and

(E) the Monitoring Officer be requested to draft a letter of apology on behalf of Councillor Ashley for him to sign and send to all Development management Committee Members affected by his conduct.

The meeting closed at 1.55 pm

Chairman
Date