

EAST HERTS COUNCIL

STANDARDS SUB-COMMITTEE – 24 NOVEMBER 2015

REPORT BY MONITORING OFFICER

COMPLAINT IN RESPECT OF DISTRICT COUNCILLOR K CROFTON

WARD(S) AFFECTED: NONE

Purpose/Summary of Report

- To consider a complaint in respect of District Councillor K Crofton.

1.0 Background

1.1 Standards Sub-Committee, at its meeting held on 30 June 2015, considered a complaint alleging that District Councillor K Crofton had breached the Council's Code of Conduct.

1.2 The Sub-Committee agreed that consideration of the complaint be deferred to allow the Monitoring Officer to invite the complainant to particularise an element of the allegation. The complainant was requested to particularise their “....previous relationship (with Councillor Crofton) and that which he has had with an immediate family member....” in order for the Sub-Committee to form a view on its relevance to the complaint.

1.3 The Sub-Committee, at its meeting held on 10 September 2015, considered further information (see **Essential Reference Paper ‘D’**) provided by the complainant on this aspect.

1.4 Following consideration of this further information, the Sub-Committee agreed to request the Monitoring Officer to obtain Councillor Crofton's comments on the information supplied by Mr Ashley regarding his relationship with Mr Ashley's family. The Monitoring Officer was also requested to investigate Mr Ashley's assertions regarding Councillor Crofton's membership of the Standards Sub-Committee that had considered code of conduct complaints against Mr Ashley that led to a decision being taken that they should be investigated. In so doing it deferred consideration of Mr Ashley's complaint.

1.5 As requested by the complainant, the web cast of the relevant Development Management Committee meeting that forms part of

his complaint will be made available to Sub-Committee members to view. The complainant has requested members confirm that they have viewed the web cast.

- 1.6 Mr Ashley has also requested an opportunity to respond to Councillor Crofton's response. This is a matter for the Sub-Committee to determine. Councillor Crofton has advised that he intends to respond orally (at the meeting).
- 1.7 The Monitoring Officer can confirm that Councillor Crofton chaired the meeting of the Standards Sub-Committee on 4 June 2014 that had agreed to refer a complaint alleging that (then Councillor) William Ashley had breached the Authority's Code of Conduct for investigation. Councillor Crofton was not a member of the Standards Sub-Committee (meetings) that subsequently considered the appointed Independent Investigating Officer's findings.

2.0 Report

- 2.1 Council has agreed a procedure for considering a complaint.
- 2.2 The Sub-Committee will consider the complaint and decide what action to take.
- 2.3 In appropriate cases, the Monitoring Officer may seek to resolve the complaint informally, without the need for a formal investigation. Members are reminded that having consulted the Independent Person, it was not considered that the complaint could be resolved informally.
- 2.4 Complaints are considered in accordance with the Standards Complaints assessment criteria set out in Appendix 2 of the Complaints Procedure (**Essential Reference Paper 'B'**)

3.0 The Complaint

- 3.1 The complaint is set out in the complaints form and accompanying documents that form **Essential Reference Paper 'C'**.

4.0 Procedure

- 4.1 A copy of the Council's complaints procedure is contained in **Essential Reference Paper 'B'** – see **Agenda Item 8**.

3.0 Implications/Consultations

3.1 Information on any corporate issues and consultation associated with this report can be found within **Essential Reference Paper 'A'**.

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