

Ethical Governance and Personnel Committee

DECISION NOTICE: BREACH OF THE CODE OF CONDUCT

Reference 2023-15

Subject Member: Councillor Peter Batty, Groby Parish Council

Complaint

Members considered a number of complaints which alleged Councillor Batty used unacceptable language directed at the chair and the clerk in a meeting. It was accepted that the complainants would remain anonymous due to fear of reprisals.

Members agreed that Councillor Batty had been acting in their capacity as councillor at the time of the alleged comments. It was noted that the comments had not been refuted by Councillor Batty, only counter-allegations made, and that much of the response from Councillor Batty was irrelevant to the case. Whilst emails of support for Councillor Batty had been received, stating that the comment towards the chair had not been made, it was reported that the Monitoring Officer had listened to a recording of the meeting and had heard the comment.

Decision

Members were reminded that their decision must be whether, on the balance of probabilities, the comments were made by Councillor Batty and, if so, whether they constituted a breach of the code of conduct. The committee agreed that an investigation would not provide any further information as witness statements had already been provided on both sides. They also felt that it would draw out the process unnecessarily for those who had been brave enough to come forward and report that matter.

It was moved by Councillor Walker and seconded by Councillor Allen that, on the balance of probabilities, the comments had been made by Councillor Batty and therefore constituted a breach of the code of conduct. It was proposed that Councillor Batty be requested to apologise to the chair in writing and to undertake diversity training and, should they not comply with this, the decision notice be published.

As Councillor Batty has failed to apologise, the complaint and the decision of the Committee is now to be made public.