

STANDARDS HEARING RELATING TO SC0047

Allegation that Cllr Neil Hookway has breached the Members Code of Conduct

1 SUMMARY OF COMPLAINT

- 1.1 The complaint was received on 28 June 2017 from Joanne Macpherson that Cllr Neil Hookway has breached the Members Code of Conduct (General Obligations) under paragraphs 3(1) you must treat others with respect and 3(3)(b) you must not bully any person.
- 1.2 A hearing to consider the complaint will be held on 23 October 2017 in the Council Chamber, Council Offices, Rayleigh.

2 EVIDENCE AND REPRESENTATIONS

- 2.1 The Monitoring Officer carried out an investigation of the complaint, in consultation with the Independent Person, and found there to be a breach of the Code of Conduct.

- 2.2 In addition, regard has to be given to the Council's Social Media Policy in respect of the following paragraphs:

3 (a) Councillors are required to act in accordance with the Member Code of Conduct whilst conducting the business of the Council or acting, claiming to act or giving the impression they are acting as a representative of the Council.

3 (c) (i) Have particular regard to Section 3 of the Member Code of Conduct that, even when online, they treat others with respect and conduct themselves in a manner that will not bring the Council into disrepute.

3 (c) (iii) Be aware of their blurred personality online. Even if posting online in a personal capacity it is likely that they will be seen as acting as a representative of the Council.

- 2.3 The main issues under consideration were:

1. Was the member acting in their official capacity?
2. Did Cllr Hookway's comments fail to treat the Complainant with respect and did his action amount to bullying?
3. A further breach was considered by the Independent Person under paragraph 3(3)(e) you must not conduct yourself in a manner which could be reasonably regarded as bringing your Authority into disrepute.

- 2.4 The decision and documentary evidence is attached to this report for consideration by the Sub-Committee.
- 2.5 The following decisions are available to the Sub-Committee:
- (a) That the Member has failed to follow the Code of Conduct and if so what sanctions/actions should be taken; or
 - (b) The Member has not failed to follow the Code of Conduct.

3 RECOMMENDATION

- 3.1 It is proposed that the Sub-Committee **RESOLVES**

To determine the allegation, having considered all representations made at the hearing.



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Background Papers:-

None.

For further information please contact Michelle Power on:-

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If you would like this report in large print, Braille or another language please contact 01702 318111.