

MINUTES of a meeting of the ASSESSMENT SUB COMMITTEE held in the Board Room, Council Offices, Coalville on MONDAY, 26 NOVEMBER 2018

Present: Councillors R Ashman, J Clarke and D Harrison

Officers: Mrs M Meredith and Miss E Warhurst

## **1 ELECTION OF CHAIRMAN**

RESOLVED THAT:

Councillor R Ashman be appointed Chairman for the meeting.

## **2 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**

No apologies for absence received.

## **3 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

All members of the Sub-Committee declared that they had interacted with the subject member as a fellow councillor, but had not discussed the subject matter of this complaint with him.

## **4 ALLEGATIONS OF A FAILURE TO OBSERVE THE CODE OF CONDUCT**

The Monitoring Officer reminded members that at the Assessment Sub-Committee meeting on 2 October 2018, the press and public had not been excluded. No additional information would be disclosed at this meeting, therefore she advised members that the meeting should remain open to the public.

Members considered an update report further to the report on 2 October 2018 relating to two complaints made about Councillor J Bridges who is a District Councillor of North West Leicestershire District Council. At the meeting on 2 October 2018, members had requested that the Monitoring Officer take further action to meet attempt to resolve the complaint informally. The Monitoring Officer outlined the steps she had taken and advised that it had not been possible to resolve the matter informally.

Given that the informal resolution process had been unsuccessful, the matter had been referred to the Assessment Sub-Committee in order that it could consider the report and determine whether to:

- refer the complaint to the Monitoring Officer to take other action;
- request further information from the parties;
- refer the complaint to the Monitoring Officer for investigation;
- take no further action in respect of the complaint.

The Monitoring Officer advised that she had met with Mr Pearson, the Independent Person, to discuss the matter and his comments had been reported to members. She advised members that they were not bound to follow the recommendations of the Independent Person but should have regard to them along with all the other available information, including the additional letter received from Mr Sharp

Chairman's initials

The Monitoring Officer reminded members that they were not being asked to make a finding as to whether Councillor J Bridges had breached the Code of Conduct, but to determine whether any further action was warranted.

Mr Pearson, the Independent Person, was invited to speak. He expressed his views regarding the costs associated with an investigation and what could be achieved. He felt that members were not well served by the process for call-in; he noted that changes were being made to the process, however felt that this was not sufficient to protect members. He made reference to the burden on members in respect of dealing with planning applications in a timely manner. He also emphasised the importance of training and felt that the frequency of this should be increased.

Members considered the details of the complaint and the update report. The expressed disappointment that it had not been possible to resolve the complaint informally. Members thanked Mr Pearson for his views on the matter.

The meeting was adjourned for deliberation at 10.46am and reconvened at 11.06am.

RESOLVED THAT:

No further action be taken in respect of the complaint.

The meeting commenced at 10.30 am

The Chairman closed the meeting at 11.08 am

Chairman's signature