

Council	
Meeting Date	24 July 2024
Report Title	Report of standards subcommittee 27 November 2023
SMT Lead	Larissa Reed, Chief Executive
Head of Service	
Lead Officer	
Classification	Open
Recommendations	Council is asked to note the findings of the standards subcommittee held on 27 November 2023

1 Purpose of Report and Executive Summary

- 1.1 On 27 November 2023 a hearing was held by the standards subcommittee relating to complaints under the code of conduct against Cllr Richard Palmer. This report updates council on the subcommittee's finding.

2 Background

- 2.1 An email sent to a Council Officer by Cllr Palmer in relation to a report for a planning application on 7 March 2023 resulted in a complaint to the monitoring officer (David Clifford) from a solicitor representing the council officer (who had resigned from the council).
- 2.2 The report of the monitoring officer made a preliminary finding that Cllr Palmer's comments amounted to a breach of the code of conduct and recommended that a standards subcommittee should be held to make a definitive finding. This meeting was held on 27 November 2023.
- 2.3 The agenda and minutes for the Sub Committee hearing can be found here. <https://ws.swale.gov.uk/meetings/ieListDocuments.aspx?CId=229&MIId=4076>

3 Proposals

- 3.1 The subcommittee considered the relevant evidence, as well as the views of Cllr Palmer, the monitoring officer (Robin Harris) and the council's two independent persons appointed under s28 of the Localism Act. It unanimously determined that there had been a breach of the following paragraphs of the code of conduct:
- Section 1.2 – I treat local authority employees, employees and representatives of partner organisations and those volunteering for the local authority with respect and respect the role they play; and •
 - Section 2.1 - I do not bully any person.
- 3.2 The subcommittee resolved the following sanctions should be applied
- That the findings of the Panel into the consideration of a breach of the

- Code be reported to Full Council;
- That the Group Leader be recommended to remove Cllr Palmer from the Standards Committee until the end of the civic year 23/24; and
- That Robin Harris should arrange relevant training for Cllr Palmer

3.3 Council is now **recommended** to note the findings of the standards subcommittee

4 Alternative Options

4.1 As the report is solely for noting, there are no alternative options.

5 Consultation Undertaken or Proposed

5.1 Not applicable.

6 Implications

Issue	Implications
Corporate Plan	The promotion of high standards of member conduct contributes to the corporate priority 'Running the Council'
Financial, Resource and Property	None identified at this stage.
Legal, Statutory and Procurement	None identified at this stage.
Crime and Disorder	None identified at this stage.
Climate and Ecological Emergency	None identified at this stage.
Health and Wellbeing	None identified at this stage.
Risk Management and Health and Safety	None identified at this stage.
Equality and Diversity	None identified at this stage.
Privacy and Data Protection	The press and public were exempt for much of this hearing Under Section 100A(4) of the Local Government Act 1972, as amended, the press and public be excluded from the meeting for the following item of business on the grounds that it involves the likely disclosure of exempt information as defined in paragraph 1 of Part 1 of Schedule 12A of the Act. 1. Information relating to any individual.

7 Appendices

None

8 Background Papers

