



# **CODE OF CONDUCT FOR COUNCILLORS DECISION NOTICE: TO DISPOSE OF COMPLAINTS BY MEANS OF INFORMAL RESOLUTION**

## **Multiple Complaints Concerning Members of Horninglow and Eton Parish Council**

### **Background**

Since June 2019 I have received four separate formal complaints against three members of Horninglow and Eton Parish Council. One of those complained of is no longer a Parish Councillor. In addition, I have received, at a conservative estimate, in excess of 250 emails on the subject of issues at the Parish Council and I have also received a large number of telephone calls on the same subject.

Over the course of the last year I have given informal support to the Parish Clerk, putting her in contact with an external training provider who has delivered a training session on the Code of Conduct for Parish Councillors; and also recommending another external training provider who would be well-placed to deliver mediation and dispute resolution training to Horninglow and Eton Parish Council. The Parish Council rejected the idea of engaging the second training provider.

### **Decision**

**In consultation with the Independent Person I have determined that Horninglow and Eton Parish Council must engage the services of the training provider recommended by the Monitoring Officer for the purpose of undergoing mediation and dispute resolution training. It is acknowledged that the training session will not be able to take place until after the end of the lockdown measures currently in place. In the meantime it will be sufficient for the Parish Council to authorise its Clerk to make a provisional booking with the training provider and it will be also helpful if the trainer could provide initial guidance online.**

### **Summary of reasons for decision**

The complaints are all based to some extent upon the difficulties of Members in engaging with one another. I have no doubt that all Members share the common goal of working in the interests of their community but at the same time they have difficulty communicating with one another and even greater difficulty in engaging in debate. These issues have given rise to a genuinely held belief on all sides that there is a lack of respect and even bullying behaviour in evidence. The training I have mandated is aimed at eliminating the root cause of the issue, thereby equipping Members to work together in the interests of residents.

### **Notice of decision**

This decision notice will be sent to the Complainants; to the Members against whom the allegations were made; and to the Parish Clerk. The decision will also be reported to the next meeting of the Council's Standards Committee.

### **Appeal of decision**

There is no right of appeal for the Complainant or for the Councillor against a decision of the Monitoring Officer.

If someone feels that the Council has failed to deal with a Complaint properly, they may make a complaint through the Council's ordinary complaints process. This process would not re-consider the original complaint but would consider the way in which the complaint had been handled.

### **Terms of reference and Complaints Procedures**

The Terms of Reference of the Standards Committee and its Complaints Procedures are available on the Council's website ([www.eaststaffsbc.gov.uk](http://www.eaststaffsbc.gov.uk)) and from the Monitoring Officer.

### **Additional Help**

If you need additional support in relation to this decision notice or future contact with us, please let us know as soon as possible. If you have difficulty reading this decision notice we can make reasonable adjustments to assist you, in line with the requirements of the Equality Act 2010.

We can also help if English is not your first language.

**Signed: Angela Wakefield**

Date: 24<sup>th</sup> April 2020

Angela Wakefield  
Monitoring Officer,  
East Staffordshire Borough Council,  
Town Hall,  
Burton upon Trent,  
Staffordshire DE14 2BE  
Tel: 01283 508267  
E-mail: [angela.wakefield@eaststaffsbc.gov.uk](mailto:angela.wakefield@eaststaffsbc.gov.uk)