



Leigh-on-Sea Town Council

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Chairman: Cllr Keith Evans | **Vice Chairman:** Cllr Dr. David Bowry

Town Clerk: Helen Symmons PSLCC



MINUTES OF A MEETING - STAFFING COMMITTEE
TUESDAY 7th MARCH 2023
HELD AT LEIGH COMMUNITY CENTRE

Present: Cllrs: David Bowry, Vinice Cowell, Keith Evans, Jill Healey and Carole Mulroney (from minute 41)

Absent: *Cllrs Anita Forde and Andy Wilkins*

In Attendance: Helen Symmons (Town Clerk) Ingmar Lindberg-Jones (Admin Assistant)

The meeting opened at 16:20

36. HOUSEKEEPING ANNOUNCEMENTS

The Chairman made the appropriate announcements.

37. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Cllr Wilkins

38. DECLARATION OF MEMBERS' INTERESTS

None

39. APPROVE OF THE PREVIOUS MINUTES

The minutes of 28th February 2023 were agreed and signed.

40. PROPOSAL OF PUBLIC STATEMENT

It was moved to bring this item forward and **RESOLVED with recommendation to Council** that a public statement be made by Council as follows:

'As a Council we are proud to have signed up to the Civility and Respect Pledge and we fully support all our councillors, officers and community centre staff in the execution of their duties without harassment, bullying or intimidation and that should such behaviour be found to occur we will do all within the powers available to us to highlight and eradicate it.'

Cllr Mulroney joined the meeting

41. PROPOSED AMENDMENT TO STAFF HANDBOOK RE ONLINE HARASSMENT AND BULLYING

The Committee **RESOLVED with recommendation to Council** that the following amendments be made to the Staff Handbook, subject to confirmation from the Monitoring Officer at Southend City Council:

LTC Staff Handbook - Section 8.4 Harassment - page 54 - at para.4 add:

A definition of bullying is given in the next section of this policy, but harassment and bullying are closely linked *and may occur face-to-face, in meetings, through written communication, including electronic communication such as email or on social media, by telephone, or through automatic supervision methods. It may occur on or off work premises, during work hours or non-work time.*

LTC Staff Handbook - Section 8.5 Bullying - page 56 - after para.1 add:

Consequences

For Members who the council reasonably believe have been bullying or harassing another person(s), the range of options available to the council are limited and must be reasonable, proportionate and not intended to be punitive. In some cases, counselling or training in appropriate skill areas e.g. interpersonal communication, assertiveness, chairmanship etc. may be more appropriate than a penalty.

Options may include: admonishment, request to issue an apology or giving an undertaking not to repeat the behaviour, removal of further opportunities to harass/bully such as removal from a committee(s) where direct contact with the employee or decision making about that employee will take place, removing the right to representation on any outside bodies where there will be contact with the employee who has raised the complaint, or censure of the member.

In addition, the council must ensure it is able to operate its duty of care towards the employee and provide a safe working environment.

A referral under the Code of Conduct to the Monitoring Officer may be an appropriate step and there may be further sanctions as a result of the reviewing of evidence under the Code in place at the time. Parish/Town Councils do not have the power to increase penalties imposed arising from a complaint under the Code.

A complaint to the Police under the Protection from Harassment Act 1997 may also be warranted.

This list is not exhaustive.

The meeting closed at 16:45pm