

INITIAL ASSESSMENT OF COMPLAINT
DECISION NOTICE

Subject Member: Cllr Hunt – Cambridgeshire County Council

Background

1. A complaint was received by the Monitoring Officer on 26 July 2017 via East Cambridgeshire District Council from Mr Cranfield (“the Complainant”). The complaint alleged that Cllr Bill Hunt (“the Subject Member”) had brought his office or authority into disrepute and was preventing access to information which the public were legally entitled to in breach of paragraphs 2.2(e) and 3.2 respectively of the Council’s Code of Conduct due to his comments and behaviour at a meeting of Soham Parish Council on 10 July 2017.

Evidence Considered

2. The following documents and information were considered for the purposes of this complaint:-
 - a) Complaint and email from the Complainant to East Cambridgeshire District Council;
 - b) Draft minutes of Soham Town Council meeting 10 July 2017;
 - c) Response and evidence of the Subject Member;
 - d) East Cambridgeshire District Council Code of Conduct;
 - e) Cambridgeshire County Council Members Code of Conduct.

Jurisdiction

3. For a complaint to be considered in connection with the Member’s Code of Conduct, the following test must be satisfied:
 - a) the complaint was made against a person who, at the time the alleged action took place, was a member of Cambridgeshire County Council; and
 - b) the Subject Member had signed up to the Members’ Code of Conduct in force at the time the alleged action took place; and
 - c) the Subject Member was conducting the business of their authority or acting, claiming to act or giving the impression of acting as a representative of the authority.
4. The Independent Person has concluded all three limbs of this test are satisfied in this matter.

Initial Assessment Decision

5. The Independent Person has considered whether the actions of the Subject Member described in paragraph 1 above constitute a breach of the following provisions of the Members' Code of Conduct:
 - a) You must not conduct yourself in a manner which could reasonably be regarded as bringing your office or authority into disrepute (paragraph 2.2(e))
 - b) You must not prevent another person from gaining access to information to which that person is entitled by law (paragraph 3.2)

6. The Independent Person noted that the words allegedly spoken by the Subject Member were not in themselves rude, the meeting was fraught and contentious and the suggestion of providing the councillor's report via email was not depriving the public of information to which they were legally entitled.

7. Based on the evidence available, the Independent Person has concluded the following:
 - a) That there is insufficient evidence of any breach or potential breach of paragraph 2.2(e).
 - b) That there is no evidence of a breach of paragraph 3.2.

8. The Independent Person accordingly concludes that no further action is warranted. The Monitoring Officer concurs.

Approved by: Gillian Holmes (Independent Person)
Quentin Baker (Monitoring Officer)

Dated: 11 September 2017