



# MINUTES

## AUDIT AND STANDARDS Committee

<b>Date:</b>	Wednesday, 25 January 2023
<b>Venue:</b>	Town Hall, St Annes.
<b>Committee Members Present:</b>	Councillor Ellie Gaunt (Chairman) Councillor Ed Nash (Vice-Chairman)  Councillors, Brenda Blackshaw, Delma Collins, Peter Collins, Will Harris, Gavin Harrison, Elaine Silverwood.
<b>Other Councillors Present:</b>	Councillors Karen Buckley, Sue Fazackerley MBE, Cheryl Little.
<b>Independent Persons Present:</b>	Mr P Clements and Mrs H Broughton
<b>Officers Present:</b>	Tracy Manning, Ian Curtis, Sharon Wadsworth
<b>Other Attendees:</b>	Mark Towers – Investigation Officer

### 1. Declarations of Interest

Members were reminded that any disclosable pecuniary interests should be declared as required by the Localism Act 2011 and any personal or prejudicial interests should be declared as required by the Council's Code of Conduct for Members. No interests were declared on this occasion.

### 2. Substitute Members

The following substitutions were reported under Council Procedure Rule 23(c):

Councillor Brenda Blackshaw for Councillor Brian Gill  
Councillor Gavin Harrison for Councillor John Singleton JP  
Councillor Elaine Silverwood for Councillor Paul Hayhurst

### 3. Exclusion of the Public

Members of the committee were invited to consider passing a resolution excluding the public from the meeting for the consideration of item 4 below in accordance with the provisions of Section 100(4) of the Local Government Act 1972. This was on the grounds that the business to be discussed was exempt information as defined in paragraphs 1 and 2 (Information relating to an individual and Information which was likely to reveal the identity of the individual) of Schedule 12A of the Act.

Following a brief debate it was RESOLVED to exclude the public

#### 4. Interests – Fairhaven Catering Facility

Prior to introducing the report, the Chairman, Councillor Gaunt, informed the committee that investigation referral notice reference 01/22 was to be deferred pending consideration of further information and provided an overview of the complaint handling procedure for the remaining investigation cases 02/22 and 03/22.

Ms Manning advised members that a formal investigation had been instigated to establish the facts following a complaint made against Councillors Shirley Green and Cheryl Little following conferral with Mr. Clements, Independent Person. Both investigations had been conducted by Mr Mark Towers, Monitoring Officer at Blackpool Council. The complaint regarding Councillor Shirley Green had subsequently been closed as no breach of the elected member code of conduct had been found as a result of the investigation.

The report of Mr Towers regarding Councillor Cheryl Little outlined the allegation, background, evidence gathered, and other considerations. Mr Towers attended to introduce his report and assisted members of the committee by addressing questions and points of clarification. The views of the Independent Person were also provided.

It was RESOLVED:

1. To note the conclusion of the investigator that Councillor Shirley Green did not have an interest in relation to business concerning proposed catering facility and was therefore found not to have breached the code of conduct and the subsequent closure of this matter
2. To uphold the complaint that Councillor Little breached the code of conduct by failing to declare a personal interest at the council meeting on March 3, 2022 in relation to the item of business concerning a proposed catering facility ; and to recommend that Councillor Little's political group remove her as a member of the Tourism and Leisure Committee until that committee is discontinued in the new municipal year drawing the formal decision notice to the attention of the council as an information item at the next Council meeting.

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