



MINUTES

AUDIT AND STANDARDS Committee

Date:	Thursday, 20 April 2023
Venue:	Town Hall, St Annes.
Committee Members Present:	Councillor Ellie Gaunt (Chairman) Councillor Ed Nash (Vice-Chairman) Councillors Delma Collins, Peter Collins, Will Harris, Michael Sayward.
Other Councillors Present:	Councillors Karen Buckley, Sue Fazackerley MBE
Independent Persons Present:	Mr P Clements
Officers Present:	Tracy Manning, Ian Curtis, Sharon Wadsworth
Other Attendees:	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 Michael Sayward for Councillor John Singleton JP

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. Allegations of Misconduct

Ms Manning advised members that a formal investigation had been instigated to establish the facts following a complaint made against Councillor Brian Gill following conferral with Mr. Clements, Independent Person. The investigation had been conducted by Mr Mark Towers, Monitoring Officer at Blackpool Council.

Minutes – Audit and Standards Committee – 20 April 2023

The report of Mr Towers regarding Councillor Gill 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.

A detailed submission from Councillor Gill had been circulated to members for review prior to the meeting and this was also considered as evidence.

It was RESOLVED:

1. To uphold the complaint that Councillor Gill had failed to follow the code of conduct and brought his office into disrepute by publishing social media posts which he knew to be significantly inaccurate about the value of council's investment into the catering facility and at the council meeting on March 3 2022, by continuing to imply that any decision of the Planning Committee on a future planning application in respect of the proposed catering facility would be tainted by bias or predetermination arising from members having already voted in favour of the design, location and layout, despite having been assured that this was not the case and having been given the opportunity to withdraw his remarks at the council meeting concerned.
2. To recommend that Councillor Gill undergo approved training on planning and social media and recommend to Councillor Gill's group leader that he should not in the new municipal year or afterwards be nominated for a position carrying a special responsibility allowance or for appointment to the Planning Committee until he has undergone such training.
3. That Councillor Gill should apologise to the complainant for the distress that has been caused to her.

Fylde Council copyright 2023

You may re-use this document/publication (not including logos) free of charge in any format or medium. You must re-use it accurately and not in a misleading context.

The material must be acknowledged as Fylde Council copyright and you must give the title of the source document/publication.

Where we have identified any third party copyright material you will need to obtain permission from the copyright holders concerned.

This document/publication was also available on our website at www.fylde.gov.uk
any enquiries regarding this document/publication should be sent to the Town Hall, St Annes Road West, St Annes FY8 1LW, or to listening@fylde.gov.uk.