

Standards Hearing Procedure - (Parish Councillor)

1. Formal Introductions of those present by the Chairman

- Members introduced
- Officers introduced – Monitoring Officer (MO) (or his/her Deputy),
- Independent Investigator and Independent Person introduced

2. Preliminary Issues

- Confirm Members interests disclosed in accordance with Code of Conduct (If Relevant)
- confirm meeting is quorate
- if the subject member is not present, decide whether to proceed
- Confirm whether the meeting will be held in public or in private session. If the meeting will be held in public session, confirmation that the Panel may decide to make their determination in private.
- Determine whether any additional witnesses are present, and whether they have been presented by the Subject member or Complainant. Determine whether the witnesses will be allowed to speak.

3. Hearing of complaint and findings

- MO outlines the complaint
- Independent Investigator presents their report
- Complainant to make any further comments and invite any of their own witnesses to speak. The Panel may determine the amount of time the complainant, or witnesses, are provided to speak.
- Panel may cross-examine the complainant and witnesses
- Subject member to make any further comments and invite any of their own witnesses to speak. The Panel may seek to clarify the amount of time the complainant, or witnesses, are provided to speak.
- Panel may cross-examine the subject or witnesses.
- The Independent Person to present their views to the Panel
- The Panel may ask further questions of the Independent Person, and any of the other parties present.

4. Determination

- The Panel may resolve to close the meeting to deliberate in private.
- If so, the Panel to ask the Subject member, Complainant and any witnesses, members of the public and press to leave the room.
- Panel to determine whether the member failed to follow the Code of Conduct
- Panel to determine any sanctions or recommendations in light of their findings as to whether the member breached the Code of Conduct

5. Confirmation

- All parties are recalled to the meeting
- The Chairman to summarise the Panel's deliberations and announce their finding as to whether the member has breached the Code of Conduct
- The Chairman to confirm any sanctions to be undertaken (or, in respect of Parish Councillors, to be recommended to the Parish Council)
- The Chairman to confirm that a decision notice will be placed on the Council's website and available for public inspection.
- Chairman to close the meeting

Notes on the outcomes of Hearing Panels:

The decision of the Hearing Panel is final. There are no further rights of appeal.

The Panel may decide on the following Sanctions where they identify that a Councillor has breached the Code of Conduct:

1. Publish its findings in respect of the subject member's conduct;
2. Report its findings to the Town / Parish Council for information;
3. Recommend that the Town/Parish council arrange training for the subject member;
4. Recommend to the Town / Parish council that the subject member be removed from any or all outside appointments to which he/she has been appointed or nominated by the town / parish Council.

When determining the sanctions that should be employed, the Panel may take into account any subsequent action undertaken by the Councillor to remedy the breach (for example, receipt of training or apology)

In respect of Parish Councillors, the Monitoring Officer will notify the Parish Clerk within two weeks of the hearing of the outcome. The Parish Council is required to consider the Panel's findings, and determine whether they agree with the findings or propose other action to be taken.