

SAXMUNDHAM TOWN COUNCIL

Minutes of the adjourned meeting of the Staffing Sub-Committee held on Friday 7 June 2024 at The Town House at 2pm.

Present:

Cllr Elizabeth Clark (Chair)

Cllr John Findlay

Cllr John Fisher

Apologies: Cllr James Sandbach

GRIEVANCE

The Committee had been adjourned on 24 May 2024 and was due to consider oral and written statements from two councillors who had been named in a staff grievance.

However, since the last meeting of the Sub-Committee, legal advice had been issued by the National Association of Local Councils, and distributed by the Suffolk Association of Local Councils, following a High Court ruling in relation to Ledbury Town Council. This had established that any grievance relating to the Code of Conduct must be referred to the principal authority's Monitoring Officer (unless it could be resolved by informal mediation at town or parish council locally). Indeed, it would be unlawful for a town or parish council to consider such a grievance.

A town and parish council was however able to consider elements of the grievance which did not relate to the Code of Conduct once the scope of the Monitoring Officer's investigation was clear.

The Chair of the Committee had notified the two councillors concerned of this development.

In these circumstances it was

RESOLVED:

- **That the Committee could not consider the grievance further at this stage;**
- **That the staff member who had lodged the grievance be invited to refer her Code of Conduct complaint to the Monitoring Officer;**

- That any matters in the grievance which were not within the scope of the Monitoring Officer could be considered later;
- That any matters arising in relation to the Town Council's engagement with the organisation referred to in the grievance could be a matter for further report to the Town Council.

[Note: the Committee had informal meetings with both the staff member who had lodged the grievance and one of the two councillors who were the subject of the grievance to explain the position. The staff member indicated that she would be referring her grievance to the Monitoring Officer as a Code of Conduct complaint].