

## **SWALE BOROUGH COUNCIL - STANDARDS HEARING SUB-COMMITTEE**

### **DECISION NOTICE**

#### **Complaint No: SBC 026-21**

On 25 April 2022, a standards hearing sub-committee of Swale Borough Council considered a report of the monitoring officer into the alleged conduct of Cllr Monique Bonney, a member of Swale Borough Council.

#### **Complaint summary**

The complainant alleged that Cllr Bonney breached the members' code of conduct by making an unsubstantiated allegation that the policy position taken by opposition members at a meeting of the local plan panel on 7 October 2021 was at the behest of those members' "sponsors" rather than being those members' considered view of the needs of the borough and the community.

#### **Consultation with Independent Person**

The Independent Person concluded that from the evidence presented the subject member had breached paragraphs 9 and 10 of the Code of Conduct.

#### **Findings**

After considering the content of the report and oral submissions by the investigating officer and the subject member, as well as the views of the independent person, the standards hearing subcommittee made the following determination:

1. Whether Cllr Bonney intended to imply that opposition members of the local plan panel were trying to slow down the process, and/or had undeclared pecuniary interests in the proceedings or if, in the alternative, Cllr Bonney was intending to address her concerns relating to donations to political parties when in government, the panel were of the view that the actual words used related to opposition members of the local plan panel and there was no evidence to substantiate that allegation.
2. Therefore the panel found that there was a breach of paragraph 10 of the code of conduct, which refers to "Always treating people with respect, including the organisations and public I engage with and those I work alongside".

#### **Sanctions applied**

The sub-committee solicited the opinions of the monitoring officer and the independent person as to whether a sanction should be applied. The sub-committee also consulted Cllr Bonney on this point.

The sub-committee determined that the appropriate sanction was for Cllr Bonney to make a public apology at a convenient meeting, which would likely be the next planning and transportation policy working group. Cllr Bonney undertook to make an apology at an appropriate meeting.

## **Recommendations for promoting high standards of conduct**

None.

## **Appeal**

There is no right of appeal against the standards hearing subcommittee's decision.

## **Notification of decision**

This decision notice is sent to:

- Councillor Bonney
- Complainant
- Monitoring Officer

## **Additional help**

If you need additional support in relation to this decision notice or future contact with the Borough Council, please let us know as soon as possible. If you have difficulty reading this notice, we can make reasonable adjustments to assist you, in line with the requirements of the Equality Act 2010. We can also help if English is not your first language.

If you require additional assistance, in the first instance please contact the Monitoring Officer on 01795 417269.

Hannah Perkin  
**Signed**.....

29 April 2022  
**Date**.....

**Councillor Hannah Perkin**  
**Chair of the standards hearing subcommittee**