

**BOROUGH COUNCIL OF KING'S LYNN & WEST NORFOLK**

**STANDARDS COMMITTEE**

**Minutes from the Meeting of the Standards Committee held on Wednesday,  
7th May, 2025 at 5.30 pm in the Council Chamber, Town Hall, Saturday  
Market Place, King's Lynn PE30 5DQ**

**PRESENT:** Councillor J Osborne (Chair)  
Councillors B Ayres and S Bearshaw

**Subject Member:**  
Borough Councillor T Parish

**Officers:**  
James Arrandale, Deputy Monitoring Officer  
Emma Briers, Democratic Service Officer

**Independent Person:**  
Amanda Orchard

**Investigating Officer:**  
Jo Winter

**Councillors attending under Standing Order 34:**  
Councillor C Joyce

1 **APPOINTMENT OF CHAIR FOR THE HEARING**

**RESOLVED:** Councillor J Osborne was appointed Chair for the meeting.

2 **APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**

There were no apologies for absence.

3 **DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

There were no declarations of interest.

4 **EXCLUSION OF PRESS AND PUBLIC**

The Chair invited the Panel and Councillor Parish to consider excluding the press and public from the hearing.

Councillor Parish requested the press and public were excluded as the personal matters would be discussed in the Hearing.

Councillor Bearshaw agreed with Councillor Parish's submissions and proposed that the press and public be excluded. The proposal was seconded by Councillor Ayres and agreed by the Panel.

The Chair invited the Panel to outline reasons why the press and public should be excluded.

Councillor Bearshaw advised that public discussion of personal information of Councillor Parish was not in the interest of the public.

The Chair read out the resolution for the Panel to exclude the press and public from the hearing.

The Democratic Service Officer advised that the hearing would continue to be recorded and that no unauthorised recordings would be permitted.

**RESOLVED:** That under Section 100(A)(4) of the Local Government Act, 1972, the press and public be excluded from the meeting for the following item of business on the grounds that it involves the likely disclosure of exempt information as defined in Paragraph 1 and 3 of Part 1 of Schedule 12A to the Act.

5 **TO CONSIDER THE LOCAL INVESTIGATION AS TO AN ALLEGATION AGAINST BOROUGH COUNCILLOR TERRY PARISH**

At the invitation of the Chair, the Investigating Officer presented the report.

Councillor Parish asked the Investigating Officer a question in which the Investigating Officer responded. The Panel had no questions.

Councillor Parish presented his case to the Panel.

The Chair invited questions from the Panel to Councillor Parish in which he responded.

The Investigating Officer summed up the complaint.

Councillor Parish summed up his case.

The Independent Person provided advice to the Panel on the Investigating Officer's report.

**At 6:14pm** the Panel retired to consider the decision in private with the Deputy Monitoring Officer, the Independent Person and the Democratic Services Officer.

The Investigating Officer left the meeting at this point.

*Councillor C Joyce, under Standing Order 34 left the meeting at 6:14pm.*

**The Panel reconvened at 7:09pm**

The Chair read out the decision of the Panel that the Code had been breached.

Councillor Parish then made representations on any sanction that the Panel may wish to impose.

**At 7:14pm** the Panel retired to consider what action was to be taken following the decision it had made that the Code had been breached.

**The Panel reconvened at 7:54pm**

The Chair gave the Panel's decision on recommended sanction.

The Chair confirmed that a formal decision notice would be prepared by the Deputy Monitoring Officer and published within 7 working days following the Hearing. A copy would be sent to the complainants and to the Borough Councillor.

The Chair also confirmed that the decision notice would be made available for public inspection and reported to the next meeting of the Standards Committee.

**The meeting closed at 7.59 pm**

Borough Council of  
**King's Lynn &  
 West Norfolk**



**Borough Council of King's Lynn and West Norfolk**

**Standards Committee Hearing  
 (held in exempt session)**

**Date: 07 May 2025**

**Borough Councillor Terry Parish**

**DECISION NOTICE**

Standards Committee Members	Borough Councillor B Ayres Borough Councillor J Osborne (Chair) Borough Councillor S Bearshaw
Subject Member	Councillor T Parish
Council Officers	Emma Briers, Democratic Services Officer
Independent Person	Amanda Orchard
Deputy Monitoring Officer	James Arrandale
Investigator	Jo Winter
Attending under Standing Order 34	Councillor C Joyce

## **Decision Notice**

**Standards Committee Hearing**  
**Borough Council of King's Lynn and West Norfolk**  
**Date: 07 May 2025**

### **1. Summary of the Complaints:**

This hearing was convened to consider a complaint against Cllr Terry Parish. The complaint was submitted by Cllr Moriarty.

The complaint arose from emails sent by Cllr Parish to Cllr Lintern, acting chair of Planning Committee, regarding matters before the Committee's meeting on 4 November 2024. It was alleged that these emails may have influenced, or attempted to influence, Cllr Lintern's decision-making.

### **2. Relevant sections of the Council's Code of Conduct (the "Code of Conduct") and its Members' Code of Good Practice for Planning (the "Planning Code")**

The Initial Complaint did not specify sections of the Code of Conduct and the Planning Code which had potentially been breached. The Investigator's Report did identify specific obligations on Councillors as follows:

- Within the Planning Code:
  - o Section 1.4 (openness and transparency) and
  - o Section 3 (regarding impartiality and integrity of decision-making)
- Within the Code of Conduct:
  - o The General Principles
  - o Section 3 (Impartiality)
  - o Section 5 (Disrepute)
  - o The Nolan Principles

### **3. Summary of evidence considered and representations made**

The Investigator presented her report. She referred the Panel to her finding that, while Cllr Parish did not explicitly instruct Cllr Lintern as to how to act, and while there was no direct evidence that the emails altered any decision, the nature and timing of those emails could be interpreted as attempts to unduly influence the decision-making process, and raised concerns regarding impartiality, integrity, and fairness and transparency in decision-making. She therefore upheld the complaint.

Cllr Parish asked, and the Investigator responded to, questions regarding the impact of the press coverage of the conduct in issue. The Panel had no questions for the Investigator

Cllr Parish then presented his case. He affirmed that he had not intended to apply any influence to Cllr Lintern, but only to communicate his opinions. He reiterated that this was a misjudgment that had only occurred due to exceptional circumstances, and he regretted it.

The Investigator had no questions. Cllr Parish responded to a question from Cllr Ayres about the tone of some of the emails.

The Investigator and Cllr Parish both summed up.



The Independent Person stated that she considered the investigator's report to be very robust and agreed with its findings. She commended the parties' openness and honesty in the process. She also recognised Cllr Parish's difficult circumstances at the time of the conduct.

#### **4. Conclusions on Breach**

In reaching its decision the Panel listened closely to the detailed submissions made by the parties in respect of the individual elements of the Complaint, and to the points raised by the Independent Person.

The Panel acknowledged the candour of Cllr Parish in responding to the Complaint and in engaging during the hearing. The Panel recognised Cllr Parish's passion for dealing conscientiously with his planning work, that he treats it as a serious job and puts service before self. The Panel further acknowledged the circumstances that he found himself in at the time.

Notwithstanding this, the Panel held that there was a clear breach of both the Code of Conduct and the Members' Code of Good Practice for Planning. The Panel recognised Cllr Parish's own admissions regarding the inappropriateness of the emails sent to Cllr Lintern.

The Panel agreed with the recommendations of the Investigating Officer and the Independent Person in favour of upholding the complaint. In particular the Panel agreed with the Investigator's submission that the messages sent to Cllr Lintern create the perception of undue influence.

The Panel specifically considered that the emails were inconsistent with section 1.4 of the Members' Code of Good Practice for Planning, section 5.1 of the Code of Conduct regarding disrepute and the Nolan principle of openness. The Panel considered that there was also a breach of the Respect principle within the Code of Conduct, in that the emails failed to respect Cllr Lintern and the remainder of Planning Committee.

#### **5. Decision on Breach**

The Panel found that Cllr Parish breached the Code of Conduct and the Planning Code.

#### **6. Submissions and Conclusions on Sanctions**

The Panel heard submissions from Cllr Parish in the hearing regarding sanction. Cllr Parish noted he had stepped back from his role as Chair while this process was ongoing.

In its deliberations, the Panel took account of Cllr Moriarty's written submissions, but considered that those submissions did not justify the conduct. The Panel took note of the Investigator's assessment that the concerns raised in the complaint were serious, and also noted observations from the Independent Person on the importance of maintaining public confidence in the integrity of Planning Committee.

The Panel was mindful of the mitigating and aggravating features relating to sanctions in the LGA Guidance on Code of Conduct Complaints, including as mitigating factors (i) Cllr Parish's circumstances at the time, and (ii) Cllr Parish's apology and acknowledgement that he should not have sent the emails. The Panel also took account of the recommendations in the Investigator's report regarding training and processes, and acknowledged that remote attendance could cause frustration.

Balanced against the mitigating factors, the Panel placed emphasis on the need to maintain public confidence in the planning process.

In this context, the Panel considered that the necessary and proportionate sanction was for to recommend that Cllr Parish be removed from Planning Committee.

## **7. Decision on Sanction**

The Panel determined to recommend to Cllr Parish's Group Leader to remove Cllr Parish from Planning Committee.

At the same time, the Panel recognised the wider contributions of Cllr Parish to Council business. The Panel observed that its decision was intended to safeguard the integrity of the Council's planning functions; it does not consider that the sanction should preclude him from continuing to actively contribute to other areas of Council business.

Signed.......... Date: 13<sup>th</sup> May 2025

Councillor J Osborne, Chair of the Standards Committee Panel Hearing