

REPORT TO STANDARDS COMMITTEE

APPENDIX B – REPORT OF STANDARDS HEARING ON 07 MAY 2025

Executive Summary

This is a summary for Standards Committee of the Standards Hearing held on 07 May 2025.

Summary Background

- A meeting of Planning Committee took place on 4th November 2024. Cllr Parish, the appointed Chair of the Committee, was unable to attend in person, but appeared under Standing Order 34. Cllr Lintern chaired the meeting in his place.
- During the Committee Meeting, Cllr Parish sent a number of emails to Cllr Lintern regarding various of the agenda items.
- On 27th January 2025, following disclosure of these emails, Cllr Moriarty raised a complaint against Cllr Parish, alleging that the emails may have breached the Members' Code of Good Practice for Planning (now the Planning Member Code of Conduct, the "**Planning Code**") and the Code of Conduct.
- The complaints were referred to independent investigators "Making a Difference", appointed via East of England LGA. The investigator interviewed Cllr Parish, Cllr Moriarty and Cllr Lintern, and issued a final report was issued on 26 March 2025, concluding that there appeared to be breaches of the Codes of Conduct, and recommending referral to a Standards hearing.
- In the Standards Hearing on 7th May 2025 (the **Hearing**), a cross-party Panel held that Cllr Parish had breached the Planning Code and the Code of Conduct.
- The Panel recommended that Cllr Parish be removed from Planning Committee.

Matters for Consideration by Standards Committee

The Investigator's Report recommended that the Council should consider whether to:

- a. Implement refresher training for all Planning Committee members on governance standards, transparency and ethical communication; and
- b. Introduce clearer guidance to regulate communication between Committee members and other (SO34) members during meetings, in particular relating to email and messaging.

In the Hearing, the Panel noted these recommendations, and acknowledged that members attending remotely could reasonably experience frustration in the course of debate as a result of not being physically present.

Planning Committee members receive training upon induction when members join (i.e. as a one-off). While members receive ongoing technical training, there is no formal programme of ongoing governance training. The Planning Code has recently been updated in March 2025, and in section 5 includes detailed "*do's and don't's*" relating to predetermination and bias.