

**DORSET COUNCIL
DECISION NOTICE**

Complaint Reference: xx

Subject Member: Councillor A Hollingshead and Councillor A Chase

Date of Hearing: 9 November 2022

Audit and Governance (Hearing) Sub-Committee

1. Summary of the Complaint

The Complainant alleged that Councillor Hollingshead and Councillor Chase breached sections of Shaftesbury Town Council Code of Conduct relating to behaviours and general obligations arising from a Press or Media Statement issued by the Councillors on 15 December 2021.

2. The Conduct of the Hearing

The conduct of the hearing is as detailed in the Audit and Governance (Hearing) Sub-Committee minutes, a copy of which are appended to (and forms part of) this Decision Notice.

3. The Hearing Sub-Committee's Decisions

3.1 The Hearing Sub-Committee's decisions are detailed in the appended minutes. However, the Hearing Sub-Committee's key conclusions are also set out below.

3.2 Members of the Sub-committee having reviewed the papers provided in the agenda pack, taken account of the view of the Independent Person, and after lengthy deliberation:

3.2.1 agreed with the recommendation of the Investigating Officer that the conduct of Councillor Hollingshead and Councillor Chase did not amount to a breach of paragraphs 2.1, 2.2, 4, 5.1, and 6.1 of the Shaftesbury Town Council Code of Conduct.

3.2.2 considered that the evidence did not show a breach of confidentiality or of bringing the councillors roles or their council into disrepute. The Sub-Committee considered that the wording of the press release was an unfortunate and ill-judged statement but, in their view, this did not amount to bullying or harassment or improper use of position.

3.2.3 considered it unfortunate that Cllr Hollingshead and Cllr Chase did not reflect more carefully before releasing the statement which although it quoted the findings of the Sub-committee in September 2021 none the less embellished it in a way which was not necessary and with the benefit of hindsight and perhaps advice from others should not have been issued in the form that it was.

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Jonathan Mair

Monitoring Officer

Right of Appeal: There is no right of appeal against the decision of the Audit and Governance (Hearing) Sub-Committee.