

## **DORSET COUNCIL DECISION NOTICE**

Complaint Reference:  
Subject Member: Councillor B Pipe  
Date of Hearing: 11 January 2024  
Audit and Governance (Hearing) Sub-Committee

### **1. Summary of the Complaint**

The Complaint raised concerns about the conduct of Councillor Pipe for several reasons stating that he has seriously undermined the good working relationship between members and officers and it was alleged that Councillor Pipe had brought the Council and the position of an elected member into disrepute.

### **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**

The sub-committee found that Councillor Pipe failed to treat officers with respect firstly at an internal officer team meeting in May 2023 and further at a People, Health and Scrutiny Committee meeting in September 2023. The sub-committee further found that Councillor Pipe's behaviour amounted to bullying and harassment. The behaviour was offensive and not acceptable in any circumstance.

The conduct of Cllr Pipe amounted to a breach of the following provisions of the Dorset Council Code of Conduct.

#### Dorset Council Code of Conduct

- Section 1 – Respect
  - As a councillor:
    - 1.2 I treat local authority employees, employees and representatives of partner organisations and those volunteering for the local authority with respect and respect the role they play.
- Section 2 - Bullying, Harassment, and Discrimination
  - As a councillor:
    - 2.1 I do not bully any person.
    - 2.2 I do not harass any person.

The conduct of Cllr Pipe amounted to a breach of the following sections of the Member/Officer Protocol;

- 1.2 The relationship between Members and Officers is based on the following principles:

- (d) in everything they do, Members and officers of the Council must act within the law and comply with relevant codes of conduct;
- (e) dealings between Members and officers are based on mutual trust and respect;

#### **4. Sanctions**

The Sub-committee decided that the sanctions set out in Para 4.1 (below) were an appropriate and proportionate response to the complaint.

4.1 It was agreed that Cllr Pipe:

4.1.1 Send a written apology to the relevant Executive Director to share with their staff, plus any officers that had since left the authority, if considered appropriate.

4.1.2 Undertake external Equality, Diversity and Inclusion training tailored in response to the details of this complaint and to be determined by the Monitoring officer in addition to a mentor being put in place to offer ongoing guidance and support after the training has been concluded.

#### **5. Right of Appeal**

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

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Jonathan Mair  
Monitoring Officer