

MEMBER CODE OF CONDUCT COMPLAINT

REPORT BY: MONITORING OFFICER

Purpose of the Report

This report is to inform Full Council of the outcome of a complaint about the conduct of Cllr Alex Fuhrmann, as required by the Council's Member Complaint Process.

This report is for Members information only. There is no recommendation and the outcome is not for discussion or comment.

Background to the Report

The Monitoring Officer received a complaint against Councillor Alex Fuhrmann from Councillors Jane Somper, Laura Beddow and Andrew Parry, supported by Councillors Jill Haynes, Sherry Jespersen, Cathy Lugg, Emma Parker, Carole Jones and Val Potheary.

The complainants alleged Councillor Fuhrmann's use of social media in particular comments sent to Councillor Somper and private messages sent to Councillor Beddow on 18 December 2024 had breached the following parts of the Member Code of Conduct:

Section 1 - requirement to treat councillors and others with respect

Section 2 – requirement for councillors not to bully, harass or discriminate.

The complaint was investigated by Ms M Dolley a solicitor in Legal Services.

The complaint was heard by an Audit and Governance (Hearing) Sub-Committee of Councillors Gary Suttle (Chair), Andy Todd and Neil Eysenck on 25 February 2026. Councillor Fuhrmann did not attend, and the Sub-Committee decided to proceed in his absence.

M Dolley presented the investigation report to the Sub-Committee and the Independent Person Mrs Elizabeth Whatley gave her view.

Following deliberations the Sub-Committee found that Councillor Fuhrmann had:

- breached the code of conduct by failing to treat Councillors Somper and Beddow with respect;
- not breached the code of conduct in respect of allegations of bullying, harassment or discrimination.

The Sub-Committee agreed the following sanctions:

- Councillor Fuhrmann is required to make a written apology to Councillors Jane Somper and Laura Beddow

- The Monitoring Officer is instructed to arrange training for Councillor Fuhrmann; specifically in relation to the Councillor Code of Conduct and use of social media by councillors

The hearing concluded the complaint. There is no right of appeal of the decision. The Complaint Process requires Full Council be informed of the decision.

The decision is recorded in minutes of the hearing and a Decision Notice, both of which have been sent to Councillor Fuhrmann and published on the Council's website along with a version of the Investigation Report.

[Agenda for Audit and Governance \(Hearing\) Sub-Committee on Wednesday, 25th February, 2026, 4.00 pm - Dorset Council](#)