

**Committee Name and Date of Committee Meeting**

Standards and Ethics Committee – 07 March 2024

**Report Title**

Outcome of Standards and Ethics Sub-Committee Hearing re Alleged Breach of the Code of Conduct –Thurcroft Parish Councillor D Fretwell

**Is this a Key Decision and has it been included on the Forward Plan?**

No

**Strategic Director Approving Submission of the Report**

N/A

**Report Author(s)**

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**Ward(s) Affected**

Borough-Wide

**Report Summary**

This report sets out the outcome of a Standards and Ethics Sub Committee Hearing which took place on 19 February 2024 in relation to an alleged breach of the Code of Conduct by Thurcroft Parish Cllr D Fretwell.

**Recommendations**

It is recommended that the Committee:

1. Note the outcome of the Standards and Ethics Sub-Committee Hearing on 19 February 2024.

**List of Appendices Included**

Appendix 1 Decision Notice in respect of the Hearing on 19 February 2024  
Appendix 2 Minutes of the Sub-Committee Hearing on 19 February 2024

**Background Papers**

None

**Consideration by any other Council Committee, Scrutiny or Advisory Panel**

No

**Council Approval Required**

No

**Exempt from the Press and Public**

No

## **Outcome of Standards and Ethics Sub-Committee Hearing re Alleged Breach of the Code of Conduct – Thurcroft Parish Councillor D Fretwell**

### **1. Background**

- 1.1 A Hearing of the Standards and Ethics Committee Sub-Committee took place on 19 February 2024 . The Decision Record in respect of the Hearing is at Appendix 1.
- 1.2 Six complaints were considered at the Hearing to the effect that Councillor Fretwell had breached the Thurcroft Parish Council Code of Conduct by allegedly, as part of an Extraordinary Parish Council meeting, asked a question of one of four candidates about her ability to carry out the role of Parish Councillor. The candidate, a former Parish Councillor, had resigned due to caring responsibilities for her parents. The details of the complaint, Councillor Fretwell's response and the evidence heard by the Sub-Committee are set out in the minutes of the hearing which are at Appendix 2.
- 1.3 As set out in the Decision Record, the Sub-Committee found that Cllr Fretwell's conduct did amount to a breach of the Parish Council's Code of Conduct and it was likely to bring the Parish Council into disrepute.
- 1.4 As such the Sub-Committee made the following Resolutions:
  - (1) That the apology immediately issued by the Subject Member would discharge any recommendation that the Sub-Committee would be minded to make.
  - (2) That the formal decision notice setting out the findings of the Sub Committee be reported to the forthcoming meeting of the Standards and Ethics Committee.
  - (3) That the Monitoring Officer be directed to offer training for all Thurcroft Parish Council to include duties of the Parish Council and the role of Councillors under the Equalities Act.
  - (4) That this decision be reported to Thurcroft Parish Council.

- 1.5 Members are asked to note the Decision of the Sub-Committee.

### **2. Key Issues**

- 2.1 The key issues are set out above.

### **3. Options considered and recommended proposal**

- 3.1 The Sub-Committee considered the evidence and the options open to them having made a finding on the evidence presented.

### **4. Consultation on proposal**

4.1 As required by the Localism Act 2011, one of the Committee's Independent Persons was consulted by the Sub-Committee during the Hearing on 19 February 2024.

**5. Timetable and Accountability for Implementing this Decision**

5.1 The Decision Record and outcome of the hearing to be presented to Thurcroft Parish Council by their Clerk at their next scheduled meeting.

**6. Financial and Procurement Advice and Implications**

6.1 The officer time in dealing with this complaint is met within existing Legal Services resources.

**7. Legal Advice and Implications**

7.1 The Council and the Standards and Ethics Committee have a statutory duty to maintain and promote ethical standards. Pursuant to the Localism Act 2011, the Council is required to adopt an appropriate Code of Conduct and arrangements for the investigation of allegations of breach of the Code of Conduct.

**8. Human Resources Advice and Implications**

8.1 None

**9. Implications for Children and Young People and Vulnerable Adults**

9.1 None

**10. Equalities and Human Rights Advice and Implications**

10.1 None

**11. Implications for Partners**

11.1 None

**12. Risks and Mitigation**

12.1. None

**13. Accountable Officers**

Bal Nahal, Head of Legal Services

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