

The **AUDIT AND STANDARDS COMMITTEE** met at
THE SHIRE HALL, WARWICK on the **30 April 2008**.

Present: -

Independent Members

John Bridgeman (Chair),

County Councillors

Sarah Boad

Les Caborn

Mick Jones

Also: Councillor Kanwardeep Singh

Officers:

Performance and Development Directorate

Jean Hardwick, Principal Committee Administrator.

Greta Needham, Head of Law and Governance.

Jane Pollard, Investigating Officer.

1. General

(1) Apologies for absence

Apologies for absence were received from Mark Magowan and Councillors Tim Naylor, Bob Stevens and John Vereker.

(2) Members' Disclosures of Personal and Prejudicial Interests

None

2. Investigation under the Member Code of Conduct.

The Committee considered the investigator's report into the complaint about Councillor Kanwardeep Singh referred to the County Council by the Standards Board for England for investigation.

The Chair explained the process to be adopted by the Committee for the meeting and gave Councillor Singh the opportunity to comment during the public session and later on when the Committee moved into private session.

In reply to questions from the Chair, Councillor Singh accepted that he had breached the Member Code of Conduct in respect of his failure to declare, as a financial interest on the members' register, his position as director of the company

called 'Perfect Property Services Limited'. He had no other comments to make on the findings of the Investigator's Report.

Jane Pollard said she had nothing to add to her report from which Members would see that Councillor Singh had accepted that he should have registered his appointment as Director of the Company in the County Councils' register of interest. She would be happy to answer any questions on her report.

If the Committee was satisfied that a breach had occurred then the other issue was whether or not any sanction should be imposed and whether there were any aggravating or mitigating circumstances.

Councillor Sarah Boad referred to Councillor Singh having only been a councillor for 3 years and asked what training he had attended during that period. Councillor Singh said that he had attending the basic code of conduct training as part of his induction as a new councillor.

3. Resolution to move into private session.

Resolved that members of the public be excluded from the meeting for items 4 and 5 below on the grounds that their presence would involve the disclosure of confidential or exempt information as defined in paragraphs 1, 2 and 7C of Schedule 12A of the Local Government Act 1972.

4. Investigation under the Member Code of Conduct (exempt report).

The Committee considered the exempt information relating to the investigation.

(At this point Councillor Kanwardeep Singh, Jean Hardwick and Jane Pollard withdrew from the meeting.)

5. The Committee to consider its findings.

The Committee considered and reached a conclusion on its findings.

(Councillor Kanwardeep Singh, Jean Hardwick and Jane Pollard were invited back into the meeting).

Councillor Singh was asked to comment on the Committee's findings, which were read out by the Chair.

Councillor Singh said he welcomed and respected the Committee's decision.

Jane Pollard said she had no comments to make.

6. Announcement of Findings

Resolved, unanimously, that the Committee's findings are as follows –

- (1) There was clear evidence of failure to comply with the Code of Conduct, which the Member has admitted. The failure was to register his interest as an

elected member of Warwickshire County Council (WCC) following his appointment as a Director of a company on 21st July 2006.

- (2) There was no evidence of deliberate withholding of information. It was considered that the failure related to poor administration on Councillor Singh's part.
- (3) That no further action in terms of the form of censure will be imposed other than the fact that the outcome of this hearing will be published.
- (4) It was noted that Councillor Singh has already made a full apology in paragraph 11 (e) of the investigator's report, which the Committee accepts.
- (5) That the Committee imposed a requirement on Councillor Singh to undertake a personal training session on the Code of Conduct with a member of staff of the Law and Governance Division, which will be arranged within the next 30 days.

Councillor Singh said he welcomed and respected the Committee's decision and accepted the requirement to undergo training.

The Chair informed Councillor Singh that he would be advised of his right of appeal against this decision, would receive a written record of the decision within the next 24 hours and a notice of the formal decision would be published in two local newspapers and forwarded to the Standards Board for England.

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Chair of Committee

The Committee rose at 10:55 a.m.