

Report to the Ethical Standards and Member Development Committee

24 January 2024

Subject:	National Cases
Director:	Assistant Director Legal and Assurance and Monitoring Officer – Mike Jones
Contact Officer:	Connor Robinson Connor1_robinson@sandwell.gov.uk Democratic Services Officer


1 Recommendations

- 1.1 That the Ethical Standards and Member Development Committee considers the contents of the report and the cases in Appendix 1 and consider any issues for the Council.

2 Reasons for Recommendations

- 2.1 Officers will inform the Ethical Standards and Member Development Committee about issues arising from local investigations and case law to add to learning at the local level and enhance understanding of ethical standards.

3 How does this deliver objectives of the Corporate Plan?

	<p>High standards of conduct are an essential part of good corporate governance and this in turn has a direct relationship with the delivery of high quality services.</p>
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4 Context and Key Issues

- 4.1 Within its terms of reference, the Ethical Standards and Member Development Committee has a duty to promote high ethical standards amongst Members. As well as complying with legislation and guidance, the Committee will need to demonstrate learning from issues arising from local investigations and case law. Furthermore, it is advisable for the Committee to be kept informed of any particularly notable cases which are publicised as they may also add to learning at the local level.

5 Implications

Resources:	There are no resource implications arising from this report.
Legal and Governance:	By considering national cases of significance the Ethical Standards and Member Development Committee will be better informed and placed to discharge its duty to promote high ethical standards.
Risk:	Awareness of national cases will enhance the Ethical Standards and Member Development Committee's understanding of promoting high ethical standards within its duties.
Equality:	There are no direct equality implications arising from this report.
Health and Wellbeing:	There are no direct implications for health and wellbeing from this report.
Social Value	There are no social value implications arising from this report.
Climate Change:	There are no specific climate change implications arising from this report.
Corporate Parenting:	There are no specific corporate parenting implications arising from this report.

6. Appendices

Appendix 1 – Extract taken from <https://wokingham.today/councillor-guilty-of-breach-of-code/> Dated 16 November 2023.



7. Background Papers

No background papers.



Wokingham Today – 16 November 2023

Councillor guilty of breach of code

A Wokingham Borough councillor has been deemed to have broken its code of conduct.

Following a complaint against Councillor Keith Baker, MBE, member for Coronation ward, an investigation was conducted into allegations which centred on a May 2023 conversation between Councillor Baker and three Woodley Town councillors.

The complainant alleged he had not met the standards relating to “respect,” “unlawful discrimination,” and “disrepute” as set out in the Code of Conduct.

The investigators’ report concluded that of the three allegations, two were not proven but there had been a breach of one clause of Wokingham Borough Council’s Code of Conduct relating to “respect”.

Councillor Baker was asked to make a written apology to the complainant and three witnesses, which he has done, and he will also receive training on aspects of the Code.

In accordance with the Borough Council’s Constitution, the decision notice was published on its website. A copy of the decision notice was also sent to the complainant, the Subject Member, and the Independent Person.

The decision will also be reported at Wokingham Borough Council’s meeting this week.

