

WYRE FOREST DISTRICT COUNCIL

ETHICS AND STANDARDS

COUNCIL CHAMBER, WYRE FOREST HOUSE, FINEPOINT WAY, KIDDERMINSTER

30TH SEPTEMBER 2021 (6PM)

Present:

Councillors: A L L'Huillier (Chairman), S Griffiths (Vice-Chairman),
B S Dawes, I Hardiman, M Rayner and A Totty.

Independent Person: T Hipkiss

Co-opted Members:

Independent Member: R Reynolds

Independent Member: Rev J A Cox

Parish Council Representatives: Councillors R Drew and D Killingworth

Observers:

Councillors: A Coleman, R H Coleman, H E Dyke, P Dyke, C Edginton-White
and P W M Young.

ES.08 Apologies for Absence

Apologies for absence were received from Councillor S Miah and Parish
Councillor W Mack.

ES.09 Appointment of Substitutes

Councillor A Totty was appointed as a substitute for Councillor S Miah.

ES.10 Declarations of Interests by Members

No declarations of interest were made.

ES.11 Breach of Members Code of Conduct

The Committee received a report from the Monitoring Officer to consider the
formal complaint relating to the conduct of a District Councillor and the report
of the Independent Person.

The Monitoring Officer outlined the order of proceedings. She confirmed that
Councillor Oborski had received a copy of all the papers and had provided a
written statement. She would be invited into the meeting to orally present it to
the Committee.

She thanked the Independent Person for the time and effort he had put into his
report which very helpfully aligned the different potential breaches with the
relevant section of the Code.

The Monitoring Officer reminded the Committee that they were responsible for

promoting and maintaining high standards of conduct amongst members of Wyre Forest District Council. She said it was permissible to ask the Independent Person for clarification on any points within his report.

At 6.06pm the Chairman invited Councillor Oborski into the meeting to address the Committee, members were provided with a printed copy of the statement she read out.

Councillor Oborski left the meeting at 6.13pm.

The Committee commenced their deliberation. It was acknowledged that Councillor Oborski was a long standing, experienced Councillor at district and previously county level. She had received regular code of conduct training in various forms. The Committee noted that this was the fourth time the Independent Person had received a referral following complaints relating to the conduct of Councillor Oborski.

In response to comments that Councillor Oborski had demonstrated bias during the public meeting for Woven Oaks site development on 29 July, the Solicitor to the Council advised that the issue would be referred to the Planning Solicitor.

The Chairman thanked the Committee for the full and frank debate. She said she shared their frustrations with the lack of sanctions that was available to them and confirmed that the most severe sanction could impose was to publicly name and shame the Councillor.

It was acknowledged that if the Committee had the power to suspend Councillor Oborski from sitting on committees, they would have considered suspending her for up to 6 months.

Decision: The unanimous decision of the Ethics and Standards Committee was that:

- **This Committee finds that Councillor Oborski has broken the code of conduct in several areas as detailed in the Independent persons report.**
- **Councillor Oborski has brought her office into disrepute and broken several of the general principles of public life that define the standards that all members should uphold.**
- **A notice of censure should be published highlighting the multiple breaches and the importance of all members upholding this Council's code of conduct.**

There being no further business, the meeting ended at 6.51pm.

A copy of the notice of censure can be found on the Council's website at: http://www.wyreforest.gov.uk/council/docs/doc57006_20210930_special_e_and_s_report.pdf