

**Reference LA/TDC/46/3/5/17**

**Complaint:**

The Monitoring Officer, in consultation with the Independent Person appointed by the Council for dealing with Standards matters, has considered a complaint concerning the conduct of Councillor George Gribble, a member of Teignbridge District Council.

This complaint centres around Cllr Gribble's attendance at a social event, while representing the Council and a subsequent telephone conversation and personal visit to the offices by Cllr Gribble to discuss his behaviour on the night.

**Summary of the Complaint:**

That Cllr Gribble acted disrespectfully towards a member of staff through several over-familiar and inappropriate comments and in a subsequent meeting with the same member of staff acted in a bullying and intimidatory manner.

**External investigation**

The Monitoring Officer, in conjunction with the Council's Independent Person, carried out an initial assessment of the complaint, and considered there was sufficient substance to refer it for investigation.

The complaint was sent to an external independent investigator.

The code of conduct only applies when a councillor is acting as a councillor and does not apply to a member's private life. The investigator concluded that Cllr Gribble was conducting the business of his authority and the code of conduct applied.

The investigator interviewed Councillor Gribble, some guests at the event and members of staff.

Relevant Provisions of the Code of Conduct:

*When a member of the council acts, claims to act or gives the impression of acting as a representative of the council, he/she has the following obligations.*

- 1 *He/she shall behave in such a way that a reasonable person would regard as respectful.*
- 2 *He/she shall not act in a way which a reasonable person would regard as bullying or intimidatory*

## **The findings**

The investigator found that

Councillor Gribble did not behave respectfully towards a member of staff. He therefore failed to follow paragraph 1 of the Code of Conduct.

Councillor Gribble was bullying and intimidatory towards the same member of staff. He therefore failed to follow paragraph 2 of the Code of Conduct.

### **Local Resolution:**

If there is evidence of a failure to comply with the code of conduct the Council's Monitoring Officer, after consultation with the Independent Person, may seek local resolution.

In considering this judgment this case the Monitoring Officer took into account;

- The views of the complainants, their requested resolution and satisfaction with the suggested local resolution.
- The acceptance of Cllr Gribble that his behaviour was wrong and had fallen short of the standards expected.
- The views of the Council's appointed Independent Person and
- On balance whether the local resolution would help ensure higher standards of conduct in future.

The Monitoring Officer concluded that a local resolution could apply and the following resolution was put into effect.

Councillor Gribble undertook training about the code of conduct and behaviour relating to the breaches,

He made a written apology and gave an undertaking about his future behaviour.

All parts of this resolution have now been undertaken.

In accordance with the agreed process the outcomes are reported to the Standards Committee for information.

*Note: It is recognised this is a public report and that the complainants wish to remain anonymous which I support on this occasion. Some of the details which may help identify the complainants have been removed from the report intentionally.*

**Signed Neil Aggett Dated 4 December 2017**  
**Monitoring Officer for Teignbridge District Council**

I have been consulted and support the decision taken.

**Signed G Barnicott Dated 4 December 2017**  
**Mr G Barnicott Independent Person**