

Our ref:

Your ref:

Date: 1<sup>st</sup> May 2024

Mrs M Clough  
Clerk  
Betley, Balterley & Wrinehill Parish Council

By e-mail only: betley.balterley.wrinehill@gmail.com



Castle House  
Barracks Road  
Newcastle-under-Lyme  
Staffordshire  
ST5 1BL

Dear Mrs Clough

We are writing as the Newcastle-under-Lyme Borough Council Standards Sub Committee Hearing Panel, which was convened to hear and determine complaints made against Parish Councillor Angela Drakakis-Smith.

### **Decision**

The panel agrees in full with the conclusions of the independent report commissioned to investigate the complaints. We find that Councillor Drakakis-Smith's conduct, as detailed in the report, was in breach of the Code of Conduct, paragraphs 1.2, 2.1-3 and 5.1.

We enclose a copy of a letter addressed today to Councillor Drakakis-Smith detailing our decision and our reasoning.

### **Sanctions**

We recommend the following sanctions, having had regard to the seriousness of the conduct code breaches in question, relevant guidance, and the range of sanctions available in the circumstances.

- We recommend that our decision is reported to the Parish Council at the next available meeting.
- We recommend that this letter and our letter to Councillor Drakakis-Smith are made public.
- We recommend that the Parish Council formally censures Councillor Drakakis-Smith.
- In consideration of the breach of paragraph 5.1 (bringing the authority into disrepute) we recommend that the Parish Council removes Councillor Drakakis-Smith from any external appointments or positions of responsibility that she holds in her role as a Parish Councillor.

### **Next steps**

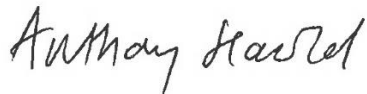
The following is an extract from the Local Government Association's Guidance on Member Model Code of Conduct Complaints Handling (21 September 2021), which we hope is helpful.

*“Note that where the subject member is a parish or town councillor, the matter is referred back to their council to say that a breach of the Code has been found and with a recommended sanction. The town or parish council must then meet to consider whether to impose that sanction or to replace it with another relevant sanction. They cannot overturn the finding that there has been a breach of the Code and if they wish to impose a different sanction they should seek advice from the clerk and/or the monitoring officer. The panel should also ask the parish or town council to report back to the monitoring officer within three months to confirm that they have met to discuss the sanction, and if necessary, to write again once the sanction has been fulfilled.”*

We recognise that the matters covered by this standards investigation have been extremely unpleasant for a number of people in the parish and involved in the work of the Parish Council. Nevertheless, as we have written to Councillor Drakakis-Smith, we do sincerely hope that a positive and productive working relationship can be established now, for the benefit of the whole community that you serve.

If you do have any further questions, please do not hesitate to contact the Monitoring Officer.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Anthony Harold". The signature is written in a cursive, slightly slanted style.

Anthony Harold

**For and on behalf of Councillor Mark Holland, Chair Standards Hearing Panel**

Cc: Chair, Betley, Balterley & Wrinehill Parish Council