

City of Durham

At a Special Meeting of the **STANDARDS COMMITTEE** held in Dragonville Offices, Durham, on Monday, 1st October, 2007, at 9.30 a.m.

Present: Mr B.R.J. Ingleby (in the Chair)
and Councillors Holland, Moderate, Simpson and Thompson (City Council Members)
Councillor Anderson (Parish Council Member)
and Mrs T. Naples (Independent Member).

Also present: Councillor Stoddart, Ms Randle of Steel & Shamash Solicitors, Councillor Kellett, Mrs L Blackie (Investigating Officer), Mrs C Greenlay (Monitoring Officer) and Mr and Mrs Grimes

265. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

There were no apologies for absence

266. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Councillor Thompson declared his membership of the Labour Party and that all parties in this matter were known to him but that his interest did not extend to being as a personal or prejudicial interest. All parties were happy for Councillor Thompson to sit as a member of the panel.

267. COMPLAINT TO THE STANDARDS BOARD FOR ENGLAND – REF: SBE 18323.07

In the light of members of the public and press not being in attendance at the meeting, the Committee did not consider it necessary to exclude the press and public from all or part of the hearing.

Mrs Grimes had complained to the Standards Board for England alleging that Councillor Stoddart had used threatening and abusive behaviour towards her as his fellow councillor on two occasions and used threatening behaviour towards an observer attending a meeting of the City Council's Labour Group meeting and thereby breaching the Council's Code of Conduct.

The complaint was referred by the Standards Board to the City Council for a local investigation. The investigation was carried out by Mrs Lesley Blackie, Monitoring Officer of the City of Durham Council at the time the complaint was received. She found that there was evidence that Councillor Stoddart had failed to comply with the Code of Conduct.

The investigating officer's findings were considered by the Standards Committee who heard in person from Mrs Blackie, Councillor Stoddart, Councillor Kellett and Ms Randle, in accordance with the Local Authorities (Code of Conduct) (Local Determination)(Amendment) Regulations 2004.

Resolved: That Councillor Stoddart had not failed to comply with the City Council's Code of Conduct.

The Meeting terminated at 12.15 p.m.

Chairman