

**STANDARDS COMMITTEE held at COUNCIL OFFICES LONDON ROAD
SAFFRON WALDEN at 9.30am on 28 OCTOBER 2016**

Present: Councillor K Artus – Chairman
Councillors J Loughlin and D Jones
Mr D Pearl (Independent Person)

Officers in attendance: M Cox (Democratic Services Officer), C O'Boyle
(Investigating Officer – Epping Forest DC) and S Pugh (Interim
Head of Legal Services).

SC7 APOLOGIES AND DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no apologies for absence or declarations of interest.

**SC8 HEARING INTO AN ALLEGATION OF A BREACH OF THE CODE OF
CONDUCT**

The Investigating Officer presented her report. The hearing had been called to determine the outcome of an investigation into an allegation that Cllr Paul Gadd had breached the Code of Conduct of Saffron Walden Town Council (SWTC) by not declaring an interest in a matter considered by SWTC.

She explained that Uttlesford District Council (UDC) had refused planning consent for a development off Thaxted Road, Saffron Walden. The developer had appealed against this decision and the matter had been referred for a hearing. UDC had decided not to defend its decision at this hearing.

SWTC and a campaigning group called "WeAreResidents" (WAR) applied to take part in the appeal hearing and agreed to share the cost of resisting the planning appeal on a 50:50 basis. Cllr Gadd was a member of both SWTC and WAR.

SWTC had written to UDC on two occasions in 2015 asking it to meet the costs of SWTC and WAR in resisting the appeal. The letters had been authorised by SWTC's Planning and Road Traffic Committee. Cllr Gadd was not present when the first letter had been authorised but was there at the subsequent meeting. At this meeting he did not declare his interest as a member of WAR.

The Investigating Officer's report concluded that Cllr Gadd should have declared a local non-pecuniary interest under para 7.4 of the Code and part 2 of the Appendix, and not doing so amounted to a breach of SWTC's Code of Conduct.

Cllr Gadd had not been able to attend the meeting but had confirmed via email that he was happy with the factual content of the report and accepted its findings.

Members said the facts in the report were clear and they agreed with the Investigating Officer's findings. However, they felt that Councillor Gadd should have been aware of the requirement to declare his interest as a member of WAR and suggested that further training might be appropriate.

DECISION

The committee accepted the Investigating Officer's findings that Councillor Gadd had breached para 7.2 of the Saffron Walden Town Council Code of Conduct and Part 2 of the appendix in failing to declare a non-pecuniary interest.

The committee recommend the following sanctions

That Councillor Gadd be asked to:

1. Make a written apology to Saffron Walden Town Council and read the apology at a meeting of SWTC.
2. Contact the Interim Head of Legal Services to discuss further his obligations under the Code in relation to declaration of interests.