

AT A MEETING of the Conduct Advisory Panel of HAMPSHIRE COUNTY
COUNCIL held at the castle, Winchester on Friday 26 July 2024

Chairman:

* Councillor Tom Thacker

Councillor Mark Kemp-Gee	* Councillor Rhydian Vaughan MBE
* Councillor Tim Davies	Councillor Jackie Branson
* Councillor David Drew	Councillor Peter Chegwyn
* Councillor Keith House	Councillor Adrian Collett
* Councillor Gavin James	Councillor Alex Crawford
Councillor Peter Latham	Councillor Michael Thierry
Councillor Louise Parker-Jones	Councillor Andy Tree
Councillor Kim Taylor	Councillor Jacky Tustain

*Present

50. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies were received from Councillors Mark Kemp-Gee, Peter Latham, Louise Parker-Jones and Kim Taylor.

51. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Members were mindful that where they believed they had a Disclosable Pecuniary Interest in any matter considered at the meeting they must declare that interest at the time of the relevant debate and, having regard to the circumstances described in Part 3, Paragraph 1.5 of the County Council's Members' Code of Conduct, leave the meeting while the matter was discussed, save for exercising any right to speak in accordance with Paragraph 1.6 of the Code. Furthermore Members were mindful that where they believed they had a Personal interest in a matter being considered at the meeting they considered whether such interest should be declared, and having regard to Part 5, Paragraph 5 of the Code, considered whether it was appropriate to leave the meeting whilst the matter was discussed, save for exercising any right to speak in accordance with the Code.

52. MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING

The minutes of the previous meeting were approved and signed by the Chairman.

53. CHAIRMAN'S ANNOUNCEMENTS

The Chairman formally thanked Councillor Mark Kemp-Gee for his previous Chairmanship of the Conduct Advisory Panel.

54. **DEPUTATIONS**

There were no deputations for the meeting.

55. **APPROVAL OF ABSENCE OF ELECTED MEMBERS OF THE COUNTY COUNCIL - SECTION 85 LOCAL GOVERNMENT ACT 1972**

The Panel considered a report from the Monitoring Officer (item 6 in the minute book) which sought approval for a leave of absence for Councillor Humby until December 2024 to allow for caring responsibilities.

The report was summarised by the Head of Legal Services, who confirmed that the responsibility for approving a leave of absence had been delegated from County Council to the Conduct Advisory Panel since September 2018.

The timing of the period of absence was discussed, which was a three month extension to the six months limit within which a Member needs to attend at least one meeting. It was noted that if a Members seat were to become vacant due to non attendance, this would usually trigger a by election. However, if this were to occur within six months of the County Councils scheduled elections the vacancy would be held until that election.

Some Members were concerned that should the Councillor fail to attend a meeting within the extended time period, the seat would become vacant but a by election would not be held, leading to local residents potentially going unrepresented for a long period. Other Members felt that meetings made up a small part of the County Councillor role, with a large part involving correspondence with constituents. The leave of absence only applied to attendance at meetings and the Member in question could still be representing their constituents through dealing with their correspondence.

Councillor House proposed an amendment that the dispensation was granted until 4 October 2024 instead of 14 December 2024, to allow the opportunity for Councillor Humby to attend the next meeting of County Council on 3 October 2024. This was seconded by Councillor James but lost on a vote with two in favour and four against.

RESOLVED

The Conduct Advisory Panel approved a period of absence from attendance at a meeting of the County Council, its Committees, Outside Bodies or Joint Committees to which he is appointed, pursuant to Section 85 of the Local Government Act 1972 until 14 December 2024 for Councillor Humby for caring responsibilities.

Chairman,