

Code of Conduct Finding

An investigation into a complaint by District Councillor Twiss about Axminster Town Councillor Cllr Hayward has concluded that Cllr Hayward breached the councillor Code of Conduct.

In paragraph 4(a) of the Code of Conduct, it says:

‘You must treat others with courtesy and respect’.

The Investigator found that, in an email to a group of councillors, Cllr Hayward was disrespectful towards a member of staff at the District Council. His report states:

‘Treating people with courtesy and respect involves having regard for them and their feelings and showing politeness towards them. The requirement to treat a person with respect applies even if they are not present.

I found that three of Councillor Hayward’s emails were written in his capacity as a councillor. Having examined the content of these, I have found that...Councillor Hayward was disrespectful...He therefore failed to follow paragraph 4(a) of the Code of Conduct.’

In the Complaints Procedure, where there has been a finding of a breach of the Code of Conduct, it is possible to resolve the complaint to both the complainant and councillor’s satisfaction. In this instance, Cllr Hayward has withdrawn his disrespectful comments and accepted that the officer was not as he described. Cllr Twiss has accepted this, although he would also have preferred Cllr Hayward to apologise for his disrespectful and inappropriate behaviour.

During the course of this complaint, Cllr Hayward stated his wish to make a counter complaint against Cllr Twiss, however there was not sufficient evidence to warrant further action.

This Finding will be posted on the Council’s website on the Standards Committee page under public notices.

Denise Lyon

Deputy Chief Executive and Monitoring Officer

7 May 2014