

Barlow, Amanda

From: Parrock, Steve
Sent: 19 May 2016 18:21
To: Barlow, Amanda
Subject: Confidential - Misconduct Issue

Hi Amanda,

As requested I append a copy of my aide memoir which I referred to during our recent meeting.

Regards
Steve

Cllr Haddock at Full Council:

The member / officer protocol seeks to establish standards which both parties will honour. Unacceptable behaviour (by members or officers) inevitably undermines the mutual respect that is required for the council to optimise its performance and protect its reputation.

In this instance Cllr Haddock's reaction to a legitimate amendment at Full Council led to direct, inappropriate and factually wrong criticism of officers in the most public of places - Full Council attended by the Press, the public and staff.

As the council's Head of Paid Service I will first outline the consequences as I see them.

For staff to be accused of unprofessional conduct in a public forum is especially demoralising, not least because there is no immediate right of reply. Such behaviour impacts upon not only the staff directly involved but potentially all staff and brings the council (and the council as employer) into disrepute.

Staff present were unfairly criticised e.g. "Divide and rule by the staff or something", and had the exchange been reported upon more widely, their professional integrity and reputation could have been damaged.

All staff are working extremely hard in a challenging environment. Cllr Haddock's allegation was unfounded but even if there had been legitimate concerns, these should have been escalated via the Head of Paid Service directly and not through a public meeting.

Cllr Haddock's Media Interview:

In a press interview Cllr criticised a junior officer for the loss of an opportunity to host the Big Weekend Radio 1 festival. This has been investigated by the line manager (Fran Hughes) and found not to be the case. Even if it had been, the appropriate response would have been a referral to the Head of Paid Service or Line Manager not via a press interview.

Although not named, the officers identification can be deduced and therefore this is a clear breach of the member / officer protocol in my opinion and an action which is likely to bring the council into disrepute.

Indeed, any use of the media when it comes to an individual's performance and direct criticism of officers is unacceptable. In reality there was no prospect of Torbay hosting the event as it could not supply a site which met the requirements of the event organisers.

Conclusion

All Councillors are provided with formal training through induction, on-going support and personal guidance. The Council sets out in the Member Code of Conduct and the Member/Officer protocol the very clear expectations upon Members, and these should be demonstrated at all times. Failure to do so, in my view, brings the Council into disrepute.

All Councillors, and especially Executive Leads, need to appreciate the impact of their actions upon staff and indeed, the wider ramifications of acceptable behaviour in public office.

Sent from my iPad