



Bromsgrove District Council and Alvechurch Parish Council

Case no. SBE 01519-KT3SN and SBE 01797-JVTCP
Member: Councillor Roger Hollingsworth
Authority: Bromsgrove District Council and Alvechurch Parish Council
Date received: 22 Jul 2008
Date completed: 22 Dec 2008

Allegation:

The member brought his office or authority into disrepute, prevented someone from accessing information and improperly secured an advantage or disadvantage.

Standards Board outcome:

The ethical standards officer found no evidence of a breach of the Code of Conduct.

The complainant, a member of Alvechurch Parish Council, alleged that Councillor Roger Hollingsworth, leader of Bromsgrove District Council and also a member of Alvechurch Parish Council, brought his office or authority into disrepute, prevented the town clerk from accessing information to which he was entitled and used his position as a district councillor to another's disadvantage.

It was alleged that Councillor Hollingsworth urged the Alvechurch Parish Council at their meeting on 12 May 2008 to apply for planning permission to change the use of the Rowney Green sports pavilion, and said that failing this, he would report the matter to the district council's planning enforcement section.

It was further alleged that Councillor Hollingsworth was party to the parish council's decision that the clerk should ask the district council's planning officer whether a change of use was necessary. The complainant stated that Councillor Hollingsworth, as leader of the district council, used his position improperly by instructing the planning officer not to return the clerk's calls and referring the matter to the enforcement officer instead.

The ethical standards officer took the view that Councillor Hollingsworth had changed his mind following the parish council meeting and requested that the district council's planning section decide whether enforcement action was required in respect of the pavilion. He did not do this in any improper way and acted in accordance with council procedures. Councillor Hollingsworth informed the clerk of the situation and the enforcement officer then contacted the clerk and decided after investigating that planning permission was not necessary.

The ethical standards officer found no evidence of any failure to comply with the Code of Conduct.

Relevant paragraphs of the Code of Conduct

The allegations in this case relate to paragraphs 4(b), 5, and 6(a) of the Code of Conduct.