



Council Meeting – 30 November 2009

Report Title: **Notification of Standards Committee Hearing Panel Decisions, 21 and 22 October 2009**

Forward Plan reference number (if applicable): n/a

Report of: **Monitoring Officer**

Wards(s) affected:

Report for: Non key decision.

1. Purpose

- 1.1 To inform the Council Meeting of decisions taken by the Standards Committee Hearing Panel in response to complaints made against two elected Members of the Council. It was originally intended to report the outcome orally to the Council meeting but this was reconsidered and a formal report thought more appropriate.

2. Recommendations

- 2.1 That the Council note these decisions taken by the Hearing Panel as part of the Standards Committee's new responsibility to determine complaints of breach of the Code of Conduct made against Members of this Council.

Report Authorised by: **Monitoring Officer**

Contact Officer: **John Suddaby, Monitoring Officer Tel: 0208 489 5934**

3. Chief Financial Officer Comments

- 3.1 The Chief Financial Officer has been consulted and has no further comments to add.

4. Head of Legal Services Comments

The Hearing Panel, a sub-committee of the Standards Committee is responsible under legislation for determining complaints made against elected Members of Haringey Council that they have broken the Haringey Code of Conduct for Members.

5. Local Government (Access to Information) Act 1985

The following papers have been used in the preparation of this report and can be inspected at River Park House, 225 High Road Wood Green, London, N22 8HQ by contacting Ken Pryor on 020 8489 2915.

Background papers

Decisions of Hearing Panel 21/10/09 and 22/10/09, complaint reference SC3/089

6. Financial Implications

6.1 During the period 26 October – 31 December Cllr Oakes will not be eligible for payment of any Members Allowance. As a consequence, a very small saving will be made against the Members allowances budget. Costs associated with the proposed training will be met from within existing budgets

7. Legal Implications

7.1 The decisions taken by the Hearing Panel were within the powers set out in the Regulations.

8. Report

On Wednesday 21 October 2009 and Thursday 22 October 2009, the Standards Committee hearing panel met to consider a complaint against two elected members, Councillor John Oakes and Councillor Ron Aitken hearing the complaint against each separately.

At the first hearing, on 21 October, the panel found that Councillor John Oakes had acted in breach of Paragraph 4(a) of the Council's Code of Conduct for Members by disclosing confidential information to the press and thereby conducted himself in a manner which could reasonably be regarded as bringing his office as Councillor and the Council into disrepute. The panel suspended Councillor Oakes from his office for a period from 26 October 2009 until the end of the calendar year, 31 December 2009 and recommended that the Councillor should undertake further training.

On Thursday 22 October 2009, the same hearing panel considered a complaint against Councillor Ron Aitken that he had provided confidential information to Councillor Oakes and had colluded with Councillor Oakes to pass this information to the press. The panel found that Councillor Aitken had not breached the Council's Code of Conduct for Members in either respect and dismissed the complaint against him.

The findings of the hearing panel have been published in the press as required by law and have been placed on the Council's website.