

Joint Essex County Council and Essex Fire Authority

**Consideration and Hearing Sub-Committee
Held on Thursday 15 December 2011**

Decision Summary

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| Name of Complainant: | Mr J T Pharro |
| Name of Member | Councillor B S Wood |
| Name of Investigator | Avril Thain, Essex Legal Services |
| Monitoring Officer: | Terry Osborne |
| Membership: Mr T French Independent Chairman Councillor J Pike Councillor C Pond | |
| Summary of the Allegation: Mr J. T. Pharro alleged that Councillor Brian Wood, a Member of Essex County Council, failed to comply with the County Council's Code of Conduct at the Canvey Island East Neighbourhood Meeting on 4 th November 2010 in that he spoke inappropriately to the complainant. Paragraph 3(1) of the County Council's Code of Conduct was considered, namely failing to treat others with respect. | |
| Summary of Evidence The Sub-Committee considered the following written evidence: The Investigators Report, complaint form and accompanying letter, e mail correspondence, the Code of Conduct, the apology letter sent by Councillor | |

Wood to Mr Pharro and the e mail response to the apology letter.

Findings of Fact

- The Sub-Committee found that Councillor Wood told Mr. Pharro he was a nasty aggressive person who was not fit to be a school governor.
- They found that the comment was said in the heat of the moment following various email exchanges months prior to the incident in question.
- They found that Councillor Wood regretted using the words but, nevertheless, he had shown a lack of consideration and thoughtfulness for Mr. Pharro's feelings.

Findings on Breach of the Code

The Sub-Committee found that Councillor Wood had breached Paragraph 3(1) of the Code of Conduct in that he had failed to treat Mr Pharro with respect.

Sanction

The Sub-Committee considered the list of possible sanctions set out in the procedure and agreed to write to Councillor Wood advising him that they wished to convey their disappointment at his behaviour and to ask him to ensure that his language is more temperate in future. They also wished to convey that they expect the very highest standards from the Members of Essex County Council and expect them to be respectful to all residents, and finally that they hoped this would not happen again.

Right of Appeal

The Sub-Committee noted that Councillor B Wood does have the right to Appeal this decision to the First Tier Tribunal (Local Government Standards for England) within 28 days of the Hearing.

Date of Decision

Thursday 15 December 2011.