

9th FEBRUARY 2023



SUFFOLK JOINT STANDARDS BOARD SUB-COMMITTEE DECISIONS NOTICE

**DECISIONS BY THE SUFFOLK JOINT STANDARDS SUB-COMMITTEE ON
THURSDAY, 9 FEBRUARY 2023**

Sub-Committee Members:

Councillor Paul Ekpenyong (Chair)
Councillor John Matthissen
Councillor Mike Norris

Complainants:

Councillor Alastair McCraw – Babergh District and Brantham Parish Council

Subject Member:

Councillor Mark Aherne – Brantham Parish Council

Officers:

T Halliday – Monitoring Officer, West Suffolk District Council
J Robinson – Deputy Monitoring Officer, Babergh & Mid Suffolk District Councils
J Snell – Deputy Monitoring Officer, Babergh & Mid Suffolk District Councils (Observer)
A Norman – Lead Officer for Overview & Scrutiny and Projects, Babergh & Mid Suffolk District Councils (Clerk)

On the 9th February 2023 the Suffolk Joint Standards Sub-Committee for Babergh and Mid Suffolk met to consider why Councillor M. Aherne had not complied with the sanctions imposed by the Deputy Monitoring Officer.

The Deputy Monitoring Officer had previously investigated a complaint against Councillor M. Aherne regarding his conduct towards the Clerk of Brantham Parish Council. After consultation with the Independent Person, it was concluded that Councillor M. Aherne had breached Parts 1 and 2 of the Suffolk Local Code of Conduct (2012).

The Deputy Monitoring Officer imposed the following sanctions on Councillor M. Aherne:

- To publicly apologise to the Clerk at the next available full Council meeting
- To undertake Code of Conduct training and Equality and Diversity training as soon as possible, but no later than three months from the date of the response letter (February, 2022)
- To undertake training on responsibilities as an employer within three months of the date of the response letter (February, 2022)

Councillor M. Aherne has not complied with any of the sanctions issued to him.

Councillor M. Aherne did not attend the Joint Standards Sub-Committee Hearing to put forward any mitigations as to why he had not complied with any of the sanctions.

Decision

Cllr M. Aherne demonstrates a complete disregard for the Code of Conduct for Members of Brantham Parish Council and continues to demonstrate persistent and unreasonable behaviour towards Officers and Members of Brantham Parish Council and Babergh District Council including the Monitoring Officer.

We recommend the following sanctions to Brantham Parish Council:

- **That Councillor Aherne comply with the sanctions previously imposed by Brantham Parish Council following the Monitoring Officer's recommendations**
- **That Councillor Aherne be given a single point of contact at Brantham Parish Council for the period of one year with a review after the first six months**
- **That the outcome of this decision and the sanctions imposed are published on Brantham Parish Council's website and other local media publications**

We request confirmation from Brantham Parish Council that these recommendations will be taken forward within the next three months.

Teresa Halliday
Monitoring Officer