

West Devon District Council

Standards Complaints Assessment Decision

Reference Number:	WD05 021019
Complainant:	Ms Emma James
Councillor:	Cllr Paul Vachon
Council:	Okehampton Town Council
Monitoring Officer:	Mrs Catherine Bowen
Independent Person:	Mr Trevor Kirkin
Confidentiality requested?	No

1. Documents considered:

- Standards Complaint form in relation to the Complaint reference WD05 021019 together with supporting documentation
- Response to the complaint from Cllr Vachon
- Okehampton Town Council Code of Conduct
- West Devon Borough Council's procedure for 'Dealing with Complaints'
- Final Report of an Investigation Conducted Under Part 3 of Chapter 1 – The Local Government Act 2000 (as amended) and Chapter 7 of Part 1 – the Localism Act 2011.

2. Summary of complaint

The Complainant has set out that in her view, in the period leading up to and during a Full Council meeting of Okehampton Town Council on 30 September 2019 Cllr Vachon:

- Failed to treat her with courtesy and respect,
- Failed to have regard to professional advice,
- Bullied or intimidated her and
- Brought the office of Councillor or the Council in disrepute.

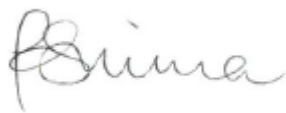
3. Outcomes:

(Referred to in the Criteria in 'Dealing with Complaints' Procedure):

- To take no further action

- To refer for informal resolution
- To refer the complaint for investigation
- To refer the matter to the Police
- To refer the complaint to the Scrutiny Panel (or subcommittee)

4. <u>Decision and reasons:</u>
Decision: to take no further action
<p>Reasons for decision:</p> <p>Following the Formal Assessment of the Complaint and the Decision Notice issued on 13 December 2019, the matter was referred for Investigation. The Investigating Officer found the following breaches of the Code of Conduct:</p> <p>4(a) you must treat others with courtesy and respect, 5(c) you must not bully any person and 5(h) you must not conduct yourself in a manner or behave in such a way so as to give a reasonable person the impression that you have brought your office or the Council into disrepute.</p> <p>On 10 March 2020 and before a resolution or sanction could be agreed, Cllr Vachon resigned as a Councillor of Okehampton Town Council.</p> <p>In accordance with section 11.5 of West Devon Borough Council's procedure for 'Dealing with Complaints' the complaint will not be considered any further and this Complaint is closed.</p> <p>There is no right of appeal or review of this decision by the Complainant or Cllr Vachon.</p>



Fiona Shirra

Date: 11 March 2020

Signed by the Deputy Monitoring Officer for West Devon District Council



Trevor Kirkin

Date: 11 March 2020

Signed by Mr Trevor Kirkin (Independent Person for West Devon Borough Council)