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Dear All

A Meeting of THE STANDARDS PANEL was held on Friday, 22 July 2022 to consider the External Investigator's report on two complaints against Haslemere Town Councillor Kirsten Ellis.

The decision of the Panel is set out below.

8 PANEL DECISION ON WHETHER THE CODE OF CONDUCT HAS BEEN BREACHED

We have carefully considered the evidence and the submissions made to us today. We have considered the four points made to us by Mr Kenyon. We find that Cllr Ellis was acting in her capacity as a Town Councillor on 28 November 2019; we find that the Haslemere South Residents Association was a group who aim to campaign and influence public opinion and policy; we find that Cllr Ellis was a member of the Haslemere South Residents Association, as she gave evidence of today, and we further find that the Neighbourhood Plan settlement boundary was highly relevant to Haslemere Town Council meeting on 28 November 2019.

Therefore, having studied the Register of Interests form, we find that Cllr Ellis failed to adequately register her membership of the Haslemere South Residents Association and breached paragraph 5(5) of the Haslemere Town Council Code of Conduct that requires registration of non-pecuniary interests.

We find that by failing to disclose her membership of the HSRA at the 28 November 2019 meeting, Cllr Ellis breached the said code.

We further find that by failing to declare that interest and failing to exclude herself from consideration of item 109/19 (the Neighbourhood Plan) by withdrawing from the Chamber, Cllr Ellis breached paragraphs 5(1), 6(4) and 6(5) of the Haslemere Town Council Code of Conduct.

This is the unanimous decision of the Panel.

NOTE: This decision will be published by Waverley Borough Council and the Haslemere Town Council informed of the Panel's findings so that they, Haslemere Town Council, can decide such action they consider appropriate.

If Cllr Ellis chooses, within 14 days, to appeal against the decision of the Standards Panel, the decision will be reviewed by another three members of the Standards and General Purposes Committee who have not been involved.

Robin Taylor
Head of Policy and Governance
and Monitoring Officer