

Questioner:	Sarah Melia, Leominster
<p>Question:</p> <p>Reference Cllr Cornthwaites question at 35mins into the Audit and Governance Committee meeting of 23/07/24 about the support available for Cllr's who have a code of conduct issue raised about them.</p> <p>If someone who reports a code of conduct issue about a Cllr. requires support from a third party, will they be allowed to nominate someone to support them, in the same way proposed by Cllr Cornthwaite for the person having the complaint made against them? If someone requires support following a complaint being made against them or by them and they speak to a third party, that third party is not bound by the confidentiality agreement signed by Cllr's at all levels. Is nominating someone who has not signed a confidentiality agreement, to act as a support person to complainant or complainer, deemed appropriate by the committee?</p> <p>Response from the Chairperson:</p> <p>Investigations are considered more effective and fair when confidence is maintained. However, the Council recognises that circumstances sometimes dictate that it would be prudent to promote other priorities over confidentiality. This could include where a party requires pastoral wellbeing support during what can be stressful experience for the individual. In this situation, the party (whether councillor or non-councillor) is asked to contact the Council to discuss the appropriateness of the support and limitations or controls that may be necessary to maintain confidence.</p>	
<p>Supplementary Question</p> <p>Many thanks to the written response to my initial question. No support for either party is mentioned in the procedure document relating to this process, neither is the request for confidentiality of parties involved. Will this be remedied in the documents in future?</p> <p>Response from the Chairperson:</p> <p>Thank you, Miss Melia, for asking your questions and for following up on this issue and making such relevant comments. The standard position relating to confidentiality is covered by the policy. Should it be felt appropriate I am sure that conversations will take place between relevant parties and common sense will prevail. It is difficult to cover off each and every situation that arises but if the Monitoring Officer or the Committee consider at some point that guidance should be updated, we will do this.</p>	