

Motions

The following Motion has been submitted by Councillor Martin Wale:

Council has no confidence in the leadership of Cllr Val Keitch due to the facts that this Council was misled, misinformed and criminal allegations were delayed from being reported to the Police with proper diligence before, during and after the Appointment of Clare Pestell as Chief Executive of South Somerset District Council.

Explanation.

Full Council was misled by Cllr. Keitch and the then Chief Executive by recommending to the Appointments Committee and then full Council that the only candidate for the role of Chief Executive was the best and only Candidate for this position, knowing that serious professional and criminal allegations had been made against her and other senior members of that candidates directorate.

The option of delaying the selection process was not considered and the process pushed through both the Appointments Committee and full Council on the recommendation of the Leader and the then Chief Executive, whose last action as Chief Exec was to highly recommend Claire Pestell for the role, knowing of the allegations and of her business interests and the difficulties she was having balancing her two roles, prior to his departure to New Zealand.

It has been stated by Cllr Keitch that it wouldn't have been fair to not go ahead with the selection process in relation to the candidate because at the time the complaints were unsubstantiated.

The fact that all Councillors were misled and misinformed to hurry this flawed selection process through is more than unfair and display's abuse of the proper process required to be taken by a Leader of this Council.

An independent Investigation report headed Corruption, Fraud and Bullying was served on Cllr Keitch on 26th June 2021. This report fully upheld all the allegations from the original whistleblower and uncovered more. These are serious criminal allegations, however these were not reported to Police until Thursday 16th December, a period of six months. This report was only made because I was to make a statement to Council on that evening.

To not support this motion is to condone misleading and misinforming Council and for six months covering up and not reporting criminal allegations of Corruption, Fraud and Bullying and not taking proper action by, at least, delaying the selection process for Chief Executive.
