Present:  Councillor Harrington (Chairman) and Councillors Blackwell and B Patel.

Officers present:  Mr C Pittman (Monitoring Officer) and Ms P Lawton (Principal Democratic Services Manager).

Also present:  Councillor Bass and Mr M Bletsoe-Brown.

The sub-committee appointed Councillor Harrington as Chairman.

1. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE
   RESOLVED to note that there were no apologies for absence.

2. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST
   RESOLVED to note that in accordance with the Localism Act 2011, the council’s code of conduct and the council’s constitution, no interests were declared.

3. ANY OTHER ITEMS THAT THE CHAIRMAN DECIDES IS URGENT
   RESOLVED to note that there were no urgent items for consideration.

4. EXCLUSION OF THE PUBLIC
   The sub-committee considered whether the public interest in maintaining the exemption outweighed the public interest in disclosing the information. After careful consideration of the various opposing factors set out in the report, the sub-committee RESOLVED not to exclude the public from the meeting for the business specified in item number 5 because the public interest in disclosing the information outweighed the public interest in withholding the information.

5. CONSIDERATION OF THE INVESTIGATING OFFICER’S REPORT INTO AN ALLEGED BREACH OF THE CODE OF CONDUCT BY A MEMBER OF THE COUNCIL (REF: WB2)

   The sub-committee heard from the Monitoring Officer and Councillor Bass in relation to the findings of fact in the investigator’s report.

   The Monitoring Officer presented his report in relation to the investigation report and findings in respect of the allegation of misconduct against Councillor Bass. It was reported that Councillor Bass had expressed grave misgivings about the evidence presented to the Investigating Officer and in relation to the persons interviewed. It was noted that the Investigating Officer had listened to recordings of the meetings of 24 November 2009 and 20 April 2010 and therefore had not needed to interview those present at the meetings in question.
Councillor Bass stated that he did not agree with the findings and conclusions in the investigators report, and that he believed the investigation had not been carried out properly, and had taken a biased view.

The Sub-committee **RESOLVED** to note that the findings of fact in the report were disputed by Councillor Bass and invited submissions.

Councillor Bass outlined the sequence of events relating to the setting up of the Sywell Aerodrome JCC, specifically in relation to his concerns about the impartiality of the Chairman.

(Mr Bletsoe-Brown joined the meeting at 10.40am.)

The Monitoring Officer reminded the Sub-committee of their remit in determining the allegation, which related specifically to Councillor Bass’ conduct at the meetings of the Sywell Aerodrome JCC on 24 November 2009 and 20 April 2010, and not general issues relating to Sywell Aerodrome.

The Sub-committee heard a recording of the meeting of the Sywell Aerodrome JCC held on 24 November 2009.

(The Sub-committee was adjourned at 11.45am and re-convened at 2.30pm; Mr Bletsoe-Brown joined the meeting at 2.40pm.)

The recording of the meeting of the Sywell Aerodrome JCC held on 24 November 2009 recommenced.

Councillor Bass was invited to comment upon the recording of the meeting of the JCC held on 24 November 2009, specifically in relation to his conduct towards the Chairman of the JCC, the Clerk to the JCC, and the Sywell Aerodrome Manager. Councillor Bass

The Sub-committee heard a recording of the meeting of the Sywell Aerodrome JCC held on 20 April 2010.

(The Sub-committee adjourned at 16.40 and re-convened at 16.50.)

Councillor Bass was invited to comment upon the recording of the meeting of the JCC held on 20 April 2010, specifically in relation to his conduct towards the Chairman of the JCC, the Clerk to the JCC, and the Sywell Aerodrome Manager.

Councillor Bass stated that in his opinion, neither of the recordings provided evidence of undue aggression towards any of the subjects of the complaint, and that there was no case to answer.

Mr Bletsoe-Brown was called to give evidence. He outlined the detail of his complaint, and was questioned by the Sub-committee and Councillor Bass.

The sub-committee questioned Councillor Bass and the Monitoring Officer on a number of issues relating to and arising out of the investigator’s report to
determine if the member had failed to comply with the Code of Conduct and, if so, to apply any sanction if appropriate.

The Sub-committee retired to consider the evidence presented to them, and to reach a decision.

RESOLVED that:

(i) in relation to Mr Bowden, Chairman of the JCC:
   (a) there was no breach of paragraph 3.1 of the Council’s Code of Conduct for Members ‘failing to treat others with respect’ (unanimous vote);

(ii) in relation to Mr Bell, Sywell Aerodrome Manager:
   (a) there was no breach of paragraph 3.1 of the Council’s Code of Conduct for Members ‘failing to treat others with respect’ (majority vote);

(iii) in relation to Mrs Puttman, Clerk to the JCC:
   (a) there was no breach of paragraph 3.1 of the Council’s Code of Conduct ‘failing to treat others with respect’ (majority vote);
   (b) there was no breach of paragraph 3.2(b) of the Council’s Code of Conduct for Members ‘bullying’ (majority vote);

(iv) there was no breach of paragraph 5.0 of the Council’s Code of Conduct ‘conducting oneself in a manner which could reasonably regarded as bringing their office or authority into disrepute.

6. ANY OTHER CONFIDENTIAL OR EXEMPT ITEMS WHICH THE CHAIRMAN DECIDES ARE URGENT

RESOLVED to note that there were no other confidential or exempt items for consideration.

The meeting closed at 18.15 pm.

Chairman