



## Doncaster Metropolitan Borough Council

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**Case no.** SBE19779.07  
**Member:** Councillor Margaret Pinkney  
**Authority:** Doncaster Metropolitan Borough Council  
**Date received:** 07 Sep 2007  
**Date completed:** 24 Sep 2008

### Allegation:

The member disclosed confidential information.

### Standards Board outcome:

The ethical standards officer found that no action needs to be taken.

The complainant alleged that Councillor Margaret Pinkney disclosed confidential information about her position as a member of Doncaster Metropolitan Borough Council's Chief Officers' Investigatory Sub-committee. The sub-committee was set up on 22 September 2006 to consider allegations about the then chief executive, known at the council by the title of managing director, Susan Law.

The complainant provided the ethical standards officer with a schedule of emails between Councillor Pinkney and a third party and identified 50 items dated between 23 September and 28 November 2006 containing the confidential information Councillor Pinkney was alleged to have disclosed improperly.

The ethical standards officer considered that, in order to obtain professional advice, Councillor Pinkney disclosed confidential information without authority in the case of five of these emails. Because Councillor Pinkney did not obtain an express agreement from her adviser that he would not further disclose the information in question, the ethical standards officer concluded that Councillor Pinkney had failed to comply with the Code of Conduct.

On the understanding that Councillor Pinkney recognises the need to obtain an express confidentiality agreement when disclosing confidential information in order to obtain professional advice, the ethical standards officer's finding, under s59(4)(b) of the Local Government Act 2000, is that no action needs to be taken in respect of these matters.

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### Relevant paragraphs of the Code of Conduct

The allegation in this case relates to Paragraph 3(a) of the Code of Conduct.

Paragraph 3(a) states that "a member must not disclose information given to him in confidence by anyone, or information acquired which he believes is of a confidential nature, without the consent of a person authorised to give it, or unless he is required by law to do so".