

Submission received by email from Cllr Mark Warters 08:45am 31 January 2024

Following on from the Joint Standards Committee Hearings Sub Committee of the 18th December referred to in tonight's agenda at item 4 I am intrigued that the decision appears to now prevent serving Parish and of course serving City of York Councillors from delivering political leaflets or engaging in canvassing lest they be cited in similar complaints in the future.

In April of last year the Monitoring Officer confirmed in writing that the content of the newsletters in question was not the issue but the method of delivery was, subsequently at no doubt substantial cost to the public purse, a Standards Case was pursued by the CYC Standards System on the grounds that I had somehow misused the resources of Osbaldwick Parish Council as the Parish Councillors were deemed to be, to deliver my pre election leaflet as well as a completely benign Osbaldwick PC leaflet.

Back in April when the MO first raised concerns on this the matter of Parish Councillors from various Parish Councils across York delivering political Lib Dem leaflets across Osbaldwick and Derwent Ward was highlighted, to which the MO studiously avoided addressing.

Following correspondence with the deputy MO on Monday it was confirmed that "in a like for like situation, I am confident that the same conclusion would have been reached as the LGA guidance on use of resources is clear".

So if Parish or City Councillors engage in delivering leaflets or canvassing for candidates in the Mayoral or General Elections due this year those candidates will be misusing the resource of the relevant Parish Council or City of York Council and will certainly be subject to complaints by me.

Could make for an interesting increase in workload for the CYC Joint Standards Committee as after all the Committee wouldn't want to be running a two tier regime?

How the Standards Complaint that concluded on the 18th December made its way to that stage with various matters of procedure set down in the relevant protocol not followed is the subject of a complaint to The Local Government Ombudsman.

The decision and conclusion reached is now a different problem that won't go away for JSC.