

CONSULTATION RESPONSES

Cllr David Westley

Conservative Group Leader

"I accept it would be unreasonable to exercise the 6 month Rule at the present time given the April Full Council Meeting was cancelled.

However, I would like clarification of what will be the position once meetings resume, even if they are conducted remotely.

I consider it would be unacceptable if the 'clock only starts ticking' from the date of the dispensation and another 6 months of non attendance were allowed to elapse before the Rule could be invoked."

Cllr Ian Moran

Leader of the Council

"I agree with David"

Cllr Adrian Owens

Our West Lancs Group Leader

"Thank you for asking my views. I trust they will be given due consideration and that an accurate reflection of these comments will be included in the final record of decision.

I have some concerns about the proposed decision and would make the following comments:

I note Cllr Hodson's failure on two occasions to respond to Member Services, the first on 26 February and the next on an unspecified date. No explanation for these omissions is provided in the draft record of decision.

I note that personal reasons are cited for the sustained non-attendance. There can be strong and very understandable reasons that prevent a councillor attending meetings. I also appreciate and fully respect a person's right to privacy. However, there is nothing, even in the most general terms, as to what these personal reasons might be. What is important is that you, as the decision-maker, should know at least something of those reasons in forming your opinion, because those reasons will impact on whether Cllr Hodson can effectively perform the role of councillor into the future. This is a key consideration and I would assume a key reason for the 6-month disqualification legislation being enacted in the first place.

I would further ask for clarification as to what the dispensation actually enacts. Does it “restart the clock” for a further 6 month period? The draft record of decision is not at all clear on that matter. I would be strongly opposed to such a resetting of the clock. Cllr Hodson has indicated that she wishes to continue in office, yet what would be the consequence if at the next meeting Cllr Hodson is scheduled to attend (including any held remotely under the new Regulations), she fails once more to attend?

Noting the lack of communication with Member Services from Cllr Hodson; the absence of any explanation for the sustained non-attendance; and with no clarity over the consequence of further non-attendance from Cllr Hodson, I believe there is a possibility that the decision you have indicated you are minded to take could negatively affect the reputation of the council.

Councillor Gaynar Owen

Chairman & Mayor of the Council

"I agree with the decision, that Cllr G Hodson, continue to be a member of West Lancashire Borough Council, due to the current circumstances."