

## Community Leadership Scrutiny Committee

23 Nov 2016.

At the termination of the meeting (the external guests had previously left at the end of previous agenda item) Cllr Strengiel (ES) got up and said to Cllr Lee Chair (KL) and Cllr Bushell (BB) that he would see them soon in a meeting with the Leader. KL or BB said which meeting and ES said a meeting that he intended to have to discuss the fact he is not very happy at all about KL's chairing of the meeting and the fact that she cut him off when he was talking.

KL responded along the lines of that she had made it clear given the busy agenda that members of the committee should ask the guests questions but avoid making comments or stating personal views.

[This seemed to be a clear reference to the fact that at the end of the first speaker ES had made a comment on prisons without any clear question, KL had asked him for his question and reiterated that there wasn't the time and again was there a question associated with his comment. ES finished his comment and I recall him saying that there wasn't an actual question as such.] (1)

ES made several comments in an elevated tone that he was not happy that it was okay for the chair to make political comments and not him, he referred to the committee and guests chuckling at KL's 'in it together' comment (\*), that it wasn't the first time he'd been cut off or ignored or similar and that this could well be his last meeting.

(\*) This was in reference to a comment that the Chair had made towards the end – Cllr C Burke had asked a question along the lines of whether people having less disposable income in their pockets, higher living costs lower wages etc, was a suicide risk factor. The final speaker (Keith Waters) commented that in his view it wasn't financial income per se but rather the combination of factors associated with austerity that had a greater impact and made reference to reduced disposable income at the same time as cuts to benefits, services, perhaps reduced social cohesion and value or similar. KL then made a comment "It doesn't feel like we are 'all in it together' does it!". This caused one or two chuckles from the committee.

KL said she would welcome a meeting with the Leader to discuss further and BB said he too would like to be involved. BB made comments that this was an apolitical meeting and ES responded by continuing his comments and they were talking at the same time – ES in an increasingly raised voice as he and Cllr Dyer (TD) walked towards the door. KL made a comment that ES shouldn't talk like that in front of officers and he replied that we were experienced enough to understand what was going on.

BB and ES were talking at the same time. BB made a couple of comments like 'Calm down Eddie you'll give yourself a heart attack', 'you're the one who's gone red in the face, you'll have a stroke'. ES responded with comments along the lines of 'I'm perfectly fine thank you' 'I'm strong enough thank you – I can prove it to you if you like'. I don't recall BB's final comments but it was along the lines of good god man listen to yourself. ES and TD left the room.

All of this happened in the space of a couple of minutes. I recall that most of the other councillors on CLSC were present as well as myself and Ben Culling (Dem Services) but no one else other than ES, BB and ES said anything.

Immediately after there were a few comments from other councillors - 'what happen there?!'  
KL and BB said they would speak to Carolyn Wheater and KL apologised that that had happened in front of myself and Ben, and Ben and I said that we felt we would also have to say something to CW.

- (1) As an aside - following ES's comments and KL's comments to ask him for a question, it appeared that ES and D were whispering to each other while the first speaker was talking and they appeared to laugh at one point as well, which may or may not have been in response to something the speaker was saying. KL mentioned this to me at the end and said that she thought it might have inflamed the situation with ES if she had asked him to be quiet at this point.