

COUNTY COUNCIL MEETING – 15 FEBRUARY 2018

**Question to Philip Atkins OBE
Leader of the Council**

By Susan Woodward

Question

In the light of last week's report by the cross-Party working group on sexism in Parliament, can the Leader tell me please what steps he is taking to address sexism at Staffordshire County Council?

Reply

The big issue in Parliament was that people who were subjected to inappropriate behaviour didn't have good way to bring this to light.

Staffordshire County Council is an equal opportunities employer and is committed to operating with integrity. All colleagues are expected to operate on this basis and adhere to our policies, procedures and code of conduct.

In respect of changes to policies and services, Equality Impact Assessments are prepared as a guide to help us make sure that we are having the intended effect and are not inadvertently having a negative impact on any particular groups.

I believe that it is important that our staff have the facility to raise any grievances relating to their employment and that these are dealt with promptly, fairly, consistently and without delay. Our grievance policy and procedure gives colleagues the opportunity to raise a grievance either informally or formally.

For elected members the same expectations of acting with integrity apply. In addition to informal mechanisms for resolution of issues any member of staff, member or member of the public may raise concerns with the monitoring officer under our standards regime. The issues are then investigated and considered not just by the monitoring officer but also by independent persons appointed to ensure impartiality. There are also avenues available within the Conservative Party to investigate issues and take action on and I hope there are with other Political Parties.