

Investigations – work through

Case study two

It's Monday.

Councillor Angela Cuddy visits your office to allege that:

- At the end of Friday's full council meeting, Councillor House had approached Councillor Cuddy in the council car park, grabbed her by the arm, and told her that he thought she could benefit from some sexual excitement in her life.
- Councillor Cuddy says that she immediately shouted at Councillor House that he was disgusting, and walked away out of the car park. She says that she was very frightened and that she does not know Councillor House very well, but that he has been "flirtatious" with her at council meetings in the past.
- She heard Councillor House say loudly as she walked off, that she was frigid and would get what was coming to her. Councillor Cuddy says that as she hurried away, she saw another councillor, Councillor Johnston, looking shocked and concerned. There were some other people in the car park but she did not recognise them – she thinks they were members of the public who had also just left the council meeting. She would not be surprised if they had heard Councillor House's abuse.
- Councillor Cuddy says that later that day, Councillor Johnston came up to her in a local pub and asked her if she was okay. Councillor Johnston told her that she had overheard Councillor House's remark, and encouraged her to complain about his conduct.

Councillor Foreman rings you, and says that he has been advised to speak to you about an incident on Friday. He does not want to say who advised him. He says that:

- He saw Councillor Cuddy and Councillor Johnston together outside the town hall, by the car park, immediately after the council meeting. They were laughing and whispering, and when they saw him, they turned away.
- He has heard "on the grapevine" that Councillor Cuddy is telling lies about an incident involving Councillor House, and he wanted you to know about what he saw.

You ask him if he witnessed any incident and he replies that he hears "they" were in a relationship until recently. You ask him if he means Councillor House and Councillor Cuddy and he says that he does. You tell him you will get back to him.

Councillor Johnston leaves a written statement in your in-box. It says that:

- She had left the council meeting alone, and was walking to her car, when she turned back and saw Councillor House approach Councillor Cuddy.
- She heard Councillor House say he thought Councillor Cuddy could benefit from some sexual excitement in her life. She then heard him say that Councillor Cuddy was frigid and would get what was coming to her.

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- She went looking for Councillor Cuddy once Councillor House had left. She thinks there are other councillors who witnessed this and that Councillor Cuddy will be able to tell you who they are.

Councillor House delivers a letter to you by hand. He says that:

- He has heard during the weekend that Councillor Cuddy and Councillor Johnston have organised a false allegation against him.
- Councillor Cuddy has a personal grudge against him.
- He met them both in the car park on Friday immediately after the council meeting. Councillor Cuddy called him a pig. Councillor Johnston laughed. He said nothing and walked away. He thinks there were some other councillors in the car park.

When you contact Councillor Foreman again he says:

- He forgot to say earlier that as he left after noticing Councillors Cuddy and Johnston laughing and whispering, he is sure that he saw Councillor House leave the council building too and he thinks the three of them spoke but they were quiet and he did not hear what was said.
- Councillor House told him today that Councillor Cuddy is aggrieved because Councillor House recently ended their relationship.

Your personal assistant tells you that an officer called you while you were on the phone to Councillor Foreman:

- The officer did not leave a name. They appeared to know that you would be looking for information about Friday.
- The officer told your PA that they had “witnessed Councillor House behaving appallingly on Friday at the end of the council meeting”.
- They will call again, but want assurances that at no point will their identity be revealed to Councillor House if they give you their testimony.

It is still Monday.

Questions

2.1 How would you set out to establish the facts?

2.2 Is it possible to do so?

2.3 Would it make a difference if the events had taken place in the corridor outside the council chamber during a recess in the council meeting?