

# **Minutes of a meeting of the Standards Committee on Monday 12 May 2025**

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## **Committee members present:**

Councillor Diggins (Chair)

Councillor Robinson

Councillor Waite

## **Officers present for all or part of the meeting:**

Hannah Carmody-Brown, Committee and Member Services Officer

Jonathan Malton, Committee and Member Services Manager

Emma Griffiths, Deputy Monitoring Officer

## **Also present:**

Chris Ballinger, Independent Person non-voting

Andrew Mills-Hicks, Independent Person non-voting

Simon Goacher, External Investigator

Councillor Sajjad Malik, Subject Councillor

## **Apologies:**

No apologies were received

## **29. Election of Chair**

Councillor Waite proposed Councillor Diggins as Chair; Councillor Robinson seconded.

Councillor Diggins was elected as Chair for the duration of the hearing.

## **30. Apologies for Absence**

None.

## **31. Declarations of Interest**

None.

### **32. Matters exempt or part exempt from publication and exclusion of the public**

The panel vote to exclude the press and the public from the meeting in accordance with the provisions of Section 100A(4) of the Local Government Act 1972 specifying the grounds on which their presence could involve the likely disclosure of exempt information as described in specific paragraphs of Part 1 of Schedule 12A of the Act.

The Access to Information Procedure Rules – Section 15 of the Council’s Constitution – sets out the conditions under which the public can be excluded from meetings of the Council.

### **33. Local Hearing Panel (0020062)**

The Deputy Monitoring Officer had submitted a report to provide the Local Hearing Panel with the Investigator’s Report and all associated evidence to enable them to determine the allegation that Councillor Malik had breached the Oxford City Council Code of Conduct for Members. In accordance with Section 28 of the Localism Act 2011, which provides that arrangements must be in place to deal with complaints of Councillors breaching their code of conduct, the Local Hearing Panel conducted a hearing into the complaint.

A copy of the decision notice is attached to these minutes.

**The meeting started at 6.00 pm and ended at 7.49 pm**

**Chair .....**  
**2025**

**Date: Thursday 19 June**

*When decisions take effect:*

*Cabinet: after the call-in and review period has expired*

*Planning Committees: after the call-in and review period has expired and the formal decision notice is issued*

*All other committees: immediately.*

*Details are in the Council’s Constitution.*

## Consideration of a Code of Conduct Complaint

### Decision Notice

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Complaint Nos.:	Complaints received	Independent Person:
20062 and 20122	20 March 2024 and 3 April 2024	Hearing: Andrew Mills-Hicks Complaint: Chris Ballinger
Name of complainants:	Name of Subject Councillor:	City / Parish Council:
Cllr Susan Brown and Cllr Ed Turner	Cllr Saj Malik	Oxford City Council
<b>Decision</b>	<p><b>This complaint having been upheld the Monitoring Officer has considered publication of it against the Nolan principle of Openness which states that “Holders of public office should act and take decisions in an open and transparent manner. Information should not be withheld from the public unless there are clear and lawful reasons for so doing.”</b></p> <p><b>In this matter the Monitoring Officer has considered the matter against that principle and decided to make the decision public.</b></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. That Councillor Malik has breached the Code of Conduct: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• That Councillor Malik had acted in a way that negatively impacted on the meeting of full Council on 18 March 2024 and the ability for the voices of other councillors and officers to be heard. Whilst the Panel found that Cllr Malik’s actions were intimidating, insulting, undermining and denigrating to officers and councillors, it was not agreed upon that bullying had occurred.</li> <li>• That Councillor Malik had therefore breached sections 6.1, 6.4 and 6.5 of the Code of Conduct in relation to respect, giving due regard to professional advice and bringing the Council into disrepute.</li> </ul> </li> <li>2. That, since Councillor Malik the following sanction be imposed on Councillor Malik as a result: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Councillor Malik be issued with a formal censure by full Council.</li> </ul> </li> </ol>	

## Summary of complaint

1. The complaint by Councillor Susan Brown is as follows:

*“In the full council meeting on Monday 18 March Councillor Saj Malik repeatedly interrupted Cllr Anna Railton, shouting over her in a rude and aggressive manner as she spoke, audibly emotionally about someone’s death.*

*In all honesty I thought it was some of the most disgraceful behaviour I have seen from a councillor in the council chamber.*

*It was deeply unpleasant and came across as bullying, rude, misogynistic and unpleasant.*

*There were a number of other points in the same meeting that he was also disruptive and rude but this was by far the worst”*

2. The complaint by Councillor Ed Turner is as follows:

*“Cllr. Malik repeatedly interrupted speakers. This was visible with an interruption to Cllr Railton during her speech (just after 4:51 into the meeting), then immediately following that (after 4:53), he made substantive points in the debate and did not stop talking when the Lord Mayor asked him to, also shouting “you should be ashamed of yourselves”, presumably addressed to someone other than the Lord Mayor”*

3. The relevant parts of the Code of Conduct are as follows:

- a. **6.1 Respect:**

A Councillor:

6.1.1 Shall treat everyone, including other Councillors and members of the public with respect.

6.1.2 Shall treat local authority employees, employees and representatives of partner organisations and those volunteering for the local authority with respect and respect the role they play.

- b. **6.2 Bullying, Harassment and Discrimination**

A Councillor:

6.2.1 Shall not bully any person.

6.2.2 Shall not harass any person.

6.2.3 Shall promote equalities and not discriminate against any person.

- c. **6.4. Professional advice**

A councillor:

6.4.4 When making decisions on behalf of, or as part of, the Council shall have due regard to any professional advice provided by the Council’s Officers

d. **6.5 Disrepute**

A Councillor:

6.5.1 Shall not bring their role or local authority into disrepute.

**Decision of the Hearing Panel:**

4. The Panel heard submissions from Cllr Malik that he acknowledged and accepted the conclusions of the investigation into the complaints made against him and noted his satisfaction that his actions had not been found to have breached the Code of Conduct for behaviour classified as bullying or misogynistic. Councillor Malik summarised by noting that he did not wish to dispute the findings and waste time, he respects the findings of a legal professional but noted that he had observed worse instances in the Council chamber over time which had not received complaints.
5. The Panel also heard from the appointed Investigator.
6. The Panel concluded that the actions of Councillor Malik had breached the Code of conduct as set out, and for the reasons detailed, in the decision summary on this Decision Notice. Whilst the Panel found that Cllr Malik's actions were intimidating, insulting, undermining and denigrating to officers and councillors, it was not agreed upon that bullying had occurred
7. The Panel then invited representation from Councillor Malik as to sanctions. The Panel determined to apply the sanctions as set out in the decision summary of this Decision notice.

<b>Signed</b>	Deputy Monitoring Officer for and on behalf of the Monitoring Officer
<b>Name</b>	Emma Griffiths
<b>Date</b>	24 October 2025
<b>Publication</b>	Public: to website – censure to be issued by full Council meeting via recommendation Press statement: Yes – reactive

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