

# **Minutes of a meeting of the Standards Committee on Thursday 19 June 2025**

www.oxford.gov.uk



## **Committee members present:**

Councillor Pressel (Chair)

Councillor Smowton

Councillor Max Morris

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

Jonathan Malton, Committee and Member Services Manager

Emma Griffiths, Deputy Monitoring Officer

Uswah Khan, Committee and Member Services Officer

## **Also present:**

Chris Ballinger, Independent Person non-voting

Andrew Mills-Hicks, Independent Person non-voting

Simon Goacher, External Investigator

Councillor Amar Latif, Subject Councillor

## **34. Election of Chair**

Councillor Smowton proposed Councillor Pressel as Chair; Councillor Morris seconded.

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

## **35. Apologies for Absence**

None.

## **36. Declarations of Interest**

None.

### **37. 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.

### **38. Local Hearing Panel (0020061)**

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 Latif 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 6pm and ended at 8.25pm.**

**Chair .....**

**Date: Thursday 3 July 2025**

*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

www.oxford.gov.uk



Complaint Nos.:	Complaints received	Independent Person:
20061 and 20123	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 Amar Latif	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 Latif has breached the Code of Conduct: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The Panel unanimously agreed that Councillor Latif was in breach of the Code of Conduct in relation to a lack of respect and disregard for professional advice. The Panel accepted and agreed with the findings and conclusions of the External Investigator’s report.</li> <li>• The Panel found Councillor Latif’s actions were intimidating, insulting, undermining and denigrating to officers and councillors. However, it was not agreed upon that this had exceeded the threshold to be considered as bullying.</li> <li>• The Panel agreed that Councillor Latif’s conduct brought the Council into disrepute.</li> </ul> </li> </ol>	

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• That Councillor Latif 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> <p>2. That the following sanction be imposed on Councillor Latif as a result:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Councillor Latif be issued with a formal censure by full Council. In addition, the Panel recommended that Councillor Latif undertake further Code of Conduct training, specifically around rules of attending committees, and that he issues a formal apology to the Monitoring Officer, Lord Mayor and Chief Executive.</li> </ul>
--	--

### Summary of complaint

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

*“Councillor Amar Latif repeatedly challenged the Lord Mayor, the Monitoring Officer and the Chief Executive in a bullying manner, refusing to accept the professional advice of officers, speaking over them and disrupting the meeting.*

*The behaviour was very rude and aggressive and seemed designed to try and intimidate them into agreeing with him.*

*The Lord Mayor, CEx and Monitoring Officer are all female and the behaviour appeared misogynistic as well as rude.*

*He repeatedly shouted (very loudly) over each of them, wouldn’t listen to the responses and wouldn’t accept the professional advice.”*

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

*“Initially Cllr Latif raised a perfectly reasonable point of order, but this degenerated into further, repeated attempts to speak, which came across as heckling both the Lord Mayor and the Monitoring Officer. At one point these interjections were joined by Cllr Malik.”*

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 Councillor Latif that he disagreed with the decision but acknowledged that he had learned from the process.
5. The Panel also heard from the appointed Investigator.
6. The Panel concluded that the actions of Councillor Latif 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 Latif'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 Latif 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>	31 October 2025
<b>Publication</b>	Public: to website – censure to be issued by full Council meeting via recommendation Press statement: Yes – reactive

