

## Assessment Decision Ref 2024-056

<b>Complainants:</b>	<b>Cllr John Taylor Mr Jabar Khaliq</b>
<b>Subject Member:</b>	<b>Councillor Hanifa Darwan</b>
<b>Consultees:</b>	<b>N/A</b>
<b>Decision Makers:</b>	<b>Councillor Bill Armer (Chair of Standards), Samantha Lawton (Monitoring Officer), Craig Ainsworth (Independent Person)</b>

This decision notice relates to two complaints that were made about the behaviour of Cllr Darwan at the Council meeting of the 13<sup>th</sup> of November 2024.

As Monitoring Officer, Independent Person and Chair of Standards, we have considered what action should be taken in respect of these complaints, having also consulted with the Assessment Panel.

The complaints concerned the behaviour of Cllr Darwan, with the allegation made that she had interrupted a member who was speaking, causing disruption that resulted in the Mayor adjourning the meeting and Cllr Darwan to leave the Chamber. It was further alleged that Cllr Darwan had refused to do so and that she failed to follow the directions of the Mayor.

Cllr Darwan was given the opportunity to respond to each of the complaints, in line with the standards process.

She did provide a detailed response to both complaints and these were considered by us and by the Assessment Panel.

The relevant Code of Conduct is that of Kirklees Council.

In coming to their decisions, the decision makers took account of various pieces of information including:

- the written complaints submitted
- the response to the complaints by Darwan
- further replies from the complainants
- video clip from the Council webcast
- the view of the Assessment Panel

### **Conclusion/Decision**

In respect of the complaint it was agreed by the decision makers that Cllr Darwan was acting in her capacity as a Councillor.

## Complaint

The complaints arose following November's Council meeting at which it was alleged that, during a debate on a Gaza-related motion, Cllr Darwan interrupted the meeting and behaved in such a way, by refusing to comply with the Mayor's directions, that the meeting had to be adjourned and she had to be asked to leave the Chamber by the Mayor.

The first complainant suggested that the following parts of the Kirklees Code of Conduct were breached:

### *Leadership*

*The Nolan Principle of Leadership which is defined:*

*Holders of public office should exhibit these principles in their own behaviour and treat others with respect. They should actively promote and robustly support the principles and challenge poor behaviour wherever it occurs.*

In addition, the Assessment Panel were asked to consider whether Cllr Darwan's action and behaviour had breached the following parts of the Code of Conduct:

### **1. Respect**

*As a Councillor:*

*1.1 I treat other Councillors and members of the public with respect.*

### **10. Attendance at Meetings**

*As a Councillor*

*10.1 I will comply with the rules and procedures of meetings I attend.*

*10.2 I will comply with the Council's Standing Orders and the rulings of the Chair.*

The decision makers find that the following breaches of the Code of Conduct occurred:

- breach of the Nolan principle of Leadership
- breach of part 1 of the Code of Conduct
- breach of part 10 of the Code of Conduct

With regards to sanctions, it was noted that the Monitoring Officer had spoken to Cllr Darwan shortly after the Council meeting and that no further conduct issues had arisen at any Council meetings since that conversation. To that end, it was not

considered that sanctions necessary to 'correct' Cllr Darwan's behaviour were needed and that credit should be given to Cllr Darwan for taking the Monitoring Officer's advice on board.

Having said that, there were concerns that Cllr Darwan's response had not fully acknowledged that her behaviour fell below the standards expected and that she had not felt that it was appropriate to offer an apology to either Cllr Taylor or to the Mayor.

It was also noted that Cllr Darwan is a relatively new Councillor and may not have the same levels of peer support and guidance that many other Councillors have. Although this is not going to be applied as a sanction, Cllr Darwan will be asked to raise any training issues she may have with the Monitoring Officer so that appropriate training and support can be given.

To this end, the following sanctions will be applied:

Cllr Darwan will be asked to issue a private apology in respect of her behaviour to Cllr Taylor and to the Mayor.

This decision notice will be published on the Kirklees Standards complaints page and the entry will be updated as and when Cllr Darwan complies with the sanctions.

Finally, it is important to be clear that this Decision Notice concerns Cllr Darwan's *behaviour* and not her personal views on the conflict in Gaza or her ability to express those views.

Signed: Samantha Lawton

Dated: 23<sup>rd</sup> May 2025

**Samantha Lawton**

**Monitoring Officer**