

## **COMPLAINT CONCERNING COUNCILLOR CONDUCT: COUNCILLOR TERRY BAINES OF MILTON KEYNES COUNCIL**

### **DECISION: COMPLAINT REFERRED TO THE MONITORING OFFICER FOR INFORMAL RESOLUTION**

#### **THE COMPLAINT**

Milton Keynes Council ('MKC') received two complaints stating that Councillor Terry Baines (the "Subject Member") breached the Member's Code of Conduct of Milton Keynes Council by posting a comment on Facebook stating:

*"Thank you Ben. It is time to stop the invasion of migrants and time to send a lot back."*

#### **STANDARDS ASSESSMENT SUB-COMMITTEE**

On 20 August 2020, the Standards Assessment Sub-Committee considered the issues surrounding the complaints.

The Standards Assessment Sub-Committee found that the account belonged to the Subject Member and he was acting in his capacity as a Councillor at the time the comment was made.

The Standards Assessment Sub-Committee found that the Subject Member's comments were inappropriate and offensive and if proven, could be a breach of the Code of Conduct.

However, they noted that the Subject Member had admitted to making the comment and recognised that the nature of the comment was inappropriate and therefore deleted it. Further to this, he had also referred himself to the Standards Committee and issued a public apology, in an attempt to resolve the matter.

The Sub-Committee noted that there were no powers to disqualify or suspend Councillor Baines as requested by the Complainants and in light of the steps already taken by the Subject Member and the significant media coverage that the matter had received, the Standards Assessment Sub-Committee felt there was little benefit to an investigation where the facts had been agreed and that it was not in the public interest to take the matter through a hearings process. They felt that Councillor Baines' conduct had already been made public and fully discussed by the Council.

#### **DECISION**

The Standards Assessment Sub-Committee has asked that the matter be referred to the Monitoring Officer for informal resolution for the following:

- 1) Social media training.
- 2) A full apology is to be published in such a way that it will reach groups that may have been affected by Councillor Baines' comments.

- 3) Councillor Baines is to confirm to the Monitoring Officer that he has completed the Equality and Diversity training.

**Sharon Bridglalsingh**  
**Monitoring Officer**