

COMPLAINT CONCERNING COUNCILLOR CONDUCT: COUNCILLOR KERRIE BRADBURN OF MILTON KEYNES COUNCIL

ASSESSMENT SUB-COMMITTEE DECISION: REFERRED TO THE MONITORING OFFICER FOR INVESTIGATION

FINAL DECISION: COMPLAINT REJECTED

THE COMPLAINT

The complaint makes allegations that Councillor K Bradburn (the “Subject Member”) breached the Members’ Code of Conduct of Milton Keynes Council (MKC), by creating, and posting under, a fake Facebook account (“the Account”) in the name ‘Linda Duncan’.

STANDARDS ASSESSMENT SUB-COMMITTEE (7 JULY 2020)

On 7 July 2020, the matter was referred to the Standards Assessment Sub-Committee (the “Assessment Sub-Committee”) for consideration. The Assessment Sub-Committee found that the account belonged to the Subject Member and they were an elected Councillor at the time that the comments in question were made.

The Assessment Sub-Committee referred the matter to the Monitoring Officer for Investigation for the following to be investigated:

1. Was the Subject Member acting in her capacity as a Councillor when she created and made comments on Facebook as Linda Duncan?
2. If yes, did the contents of the Facebook posts made by the Subject Member breach Milton Keynes Council Code of Conduct?

INVESTIGATION

The Investigating Officer only considered the posts made by Councillor K Bradburn while she was a Councillor and considered nothing prior to her election as a Councillor on 8 May 2019. They thoroughly reviewed all the available evidence and considered the relevant case law. The Investigating Officer concluded that:

“Councillor Kerrie Bradburn would not reasonably be seen to be acting in her capacity as a Councillor in the posting of the two items on the Facebook social media account under the pseudonym of ‘Linda Duncan’...

“It is the Investigating Officer’s opinion that none of the Facebook posts provided to support this complaint have identified the author as a Milton Keynes Councillor (or a potential candidate) - neither directly nor indirectly.”

The Investigating Officer’s recommendation is that on balance, there is not a case to answer under the Council’s Code of Conduct.

Upon receiving the Investigation Report the Monitoring Officer will decide whether to take no further action, to refer to a Sub-Committee for a hearing or to decide on other action in relation to the case.

The Monitoring Officer has consulted with the Chair and Vice-Chairs of the Standards Committee in coming to her decision. She has also consulted with the Independent Person who agrees with the Investigating Officer at the Subject Member was not acting as a Councillor at the time when using her 'Linda Duncan' account. It follows that no further action is required.

DECISION

In this case the finding is one of no breach of the Milton Keynes Council Code of Conduct for Members. The complaint is rejected and the matter closed.

Sharon Bridglalsingh
Monitoring Officer