

**MINUTES OF A MEETING OF THE  
STANDARDS HEARING COMMITTEE  
HELD AT NELSON TOWN HALL  
ON 18<sup>TH</sup> OCTOBER, 2023**

*PRESENT –*

*Mrs P. Higginbottom – Chairman (In the Chair)*

**Members of the Panel:**

*Councillor Z. Ali  
Councillor R. Anwar  
Councillor D. Lord  
Councillor K. McGladdery  
Councillor A. Sutcliffe*

**Also present:**

*Councillor N. Ahmed  
Councillor M. Stone*

**Officers present:**

<i>Howard Culshaw</i>	<i>Monitoring Officer</i>
<i>Emma Barker</i>	<i>Legal Services Manager</i>
<i>Joanne Eccles</i>	<i>Committee Administrator</i>



**1. DECLARATION OF INTERESTS**

Members were reminded of the requirements of the member Code of Conduct concerning the declaration of interests.

**2. INVESTIGATION REPORT**

The meeting of the Standards Hearing Committee had been called to consider a report of an investigation into a complaint made against Councillor Mohammad Aslam.

The complaint from a Council employee had been received by the Council's former Monitoring Officer, Philip Mousdale on 29<sup>th</sup> April 2022. He had started the investigation and following his retirement from the Council in October 2022 it had been continued by the Council's current Monitoring Officer, Howard Culshaw, who presented his report at the meeting.

It was reported that on the night of 28<sup>th</sup> April 2022, there was a confrontation between the complainant and Councillor Aslam in a public place with the Councillor behaving in a manner that resulted in the administering of a Community Resolution by the police. This meant that Councillor Aslam, whilst not convicted of any offence, had admitted that his behaviour was capable of constituting a public order offence.

Full details of the complaint received, together with details of the police investigation and Councillor Aslam's response were provided in the report along with the Monitoring Officer's conclusions and findings.

## Standards Hearing Committee (18.10.2023)

The report concluded that Councillor Aslam was in breach of the part of the Code of Conduct which states that “*You must always treat... employees of the council with respect.... Respect means politeness and courtesy in behaviour, speech and the written word*”. His finding therefore was that there was sufficient evidence of a failure to comply with the Code of Conduct.

Councillor Aslam was represented at the meeting by Solicitor David Lawson who questioned the facts contained in the report on whether a Community Resolution had indeed been issued and explained his reasoning. He said that if the Committee accepted that a Community Resolution had been issued then, just as this had resulted in words of advice being given, he suggested that any sanction the Committee imposed should also be words of advice.

The Committee carefully considered the investigation report, the representations made on Councillor Aslam’s behalf and sought clarification on a couple of points. There were no witnesses called to give evidence.

On the evidence provided the Committee found that Councillor Aslam had breached the Code of Conduct in respect of the following paragraph –

*You must always treat members of the public, other councillors, employees of the Council, employees and representatives of partner organisations, and volunteers for the Council with respect. Respect means politeness and courtesy in behaviour, speech and the written word. As a councillor you can express, challenge, criticise and disagree with views, ideas, opinions and policies in a robust but civil manner.*

The following sanction was imposed -

### **SANCTIONS**

That Councillor Mohammad Aslam be asked to submit a written apology to Full Council and a copy of his apology be given to the complainant.

CHAIRMAN \_\_\_\_\_