

Oldham Council

Weightmans reference: SIG/433873/97

Report of an investigation into allegations concerning the conduct of
Councillors Louie Hamblett, Mark Kenyon, David Murphy and Howard
Sykes

SG 3

Ref: 433837/97

Complaint about Cllrs Hamblett, Kenyon, Murphy and Sykes– Oldham Borough Council

Note of interview with Cllr Arooj Shah, 8 November 2024

- 1 The interview was conducted by Simon Goacher, Weightmans LLP ("SG").
- 2 SG explained that he had been instructed by the Monitoring Officer ("MO") of Oldham Borough Council ("the Council") to investigate the complaints which had been made about Cllrs Hamblett, Kenyon, Murphy and Sykes.
- 3 SG explained the process. He explained that the process was confidential but if the matter proceeded to a hearing then the complaint details could be published including the complaint and this note of the interview.
- 4 Cllr Arooj Shah ("AS") confirmed that she is a member of the Council. She explained that she was first elected in 2012, she then lost her seat in 2016, she was elected again in 2018 and then lost her seat again in 2022 before being elected again in 2023. She confirmed that she is the leader of the Council and has been since being re-elected in 2023. She explained that she had also been leader in 2021–22.
- 5 AS confirmed that she had submitted the complaints, that she wished them to proceed and the contents were true to the best of her knowledge and belief.
- 6 AS stated that she had never experienced an opposition as toxic as it is at the moment on the Council. She stated that usually the Liberal Democrats are quite sensible. AS referred to issues which she had faced in her personal advice where she had to involve the police which caused a lot of distress. She explained that this incident and the abuse which had followed brought aback up a lot of distress.
- 7 AS stated that this had been very unnerving. She stated that the audio of her meeting which Cllr Kenyon ("MK") had recorded was released whilst AS was still in the meeting. She stated that she looked at the independent councillors with suspicion.
- 8 AS stated that to this date the councillors had not apologised. She stated that if a member of her group had done this she would have apologised straight away.
- 9 SG stated that in her complaint AS had stated that Cllr Williamson ("DW") was also in the Liberal Democrats room when MK had made the recording but she was not included in the complaints. SG asked if this was correct. AS stated that it was. She stated that because of personal issues D had she was aware of it she had not complained about her.
- 10 SG asked AS about her comment in the complaints that she and the independent councillors had significant abuse directed at them as a result and asked if she could give some examples. AS stated that some members of the Asian community could not handle having a Muslim leader of the Council. She stated that there were also some far right people who accuse her of taking brown envelopes and of having criminal connections because her brother went to prison.
- 11 AS stated that she had received racist abuse on social media. She stated that someone had said that she needed to be "finished off".

- 12 AS stated that at one point MK had his ear at the door of her room. She stated that it was freaky.
- 13 AS stated that the national Liberal Democrat party had not been able to formalise a panel to investigate despite complaining to them about this six months ago.
- 14 SG asked AS if she had any evidence other than the contents of the video to support the contention that the other councillors knew what MK was doing. She stated that she did not. She stated that at one stage on the video Cllr Hamblett can be seen in the corridor with MK listening to his phone.

I agree that this is a true and accurate record of the interview and the contents are true to the best of my knowledge and belief.

Signed.....
Cllr Arooj Shah

Dated.....

Oldham Council

Weightmans reference: SIG/433873/97

Report of an investigation into allegations concerning the conduct of
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Sykes

SG 4

Ref: 433837/97

Complaint about Cllrs Hamblett, Kenyon, Murphy and Sykes- Oldham Borough Council

Note of interview with Cllr Marc Hince, 1 April 2025

- 1 The interview was conducted by Simon Goacher, Weightmans LLP ("SG").
- 2 SG explained that he had been instructed by the Monitoring Officer ("MO") of Oldham Borough Council ("the Council") to investigate the complaints which had been made about Cllrs Hamblett, Kenyon, Murphy and Sykes.
- 3 SG explained the process. He explained that the process was confidential but if the matter proceeded to a hearing then the complaint details could be published including the complaint and this note of the interview.
- 4 Cllr Hince ("MH") confirmed that he is a member of the Council and has been for two years.
- 5 MH explained that in May 2024, after the elections the Council fell into no overall control. He stated that where that happens the process is that the different groups try to form a majority. He state that he is the Leader of the Independent Group on the Council and he met with the other independent groups but they could not find any common ground to form a coalition.
- 6 MH stated that he was invited to meet with Cllr Shah ("AS"), the Leader of the Council, to discuss an informal arrangement. He stated that he had made an election pledge that he would not enter a coalition with the Labour Group.
- 7 MH stated that he was aware that AS had also met with the Liberal Democrat Group leader Cllr Sykes ("HS").
- 8 MH stated that he and Cllr Navesy ("LN") met with AS to discuss a working agreement.
- 9 MH stated that the meeting with AS was secretly recorded by Cllr Kenyon ("MK") and selected snippets of the recording were placed on social media to make them look bad.
- 10 MH stated that after that happened his life, "went to shit." He stated that he was subjected to horrendous vile abuse online, including death threats. He stated that his children could not go to school. He stated that abuse was left on his mother's grave.
- 11 MH stated that the Council put CCTV and other security measures in his house as a result. He stated that he lost his job because of the negative publicity.
- 12 MH stated that MK also gave him abuse when he left the meeting with AS.
- 13 MH stated that he does not do politics and he had not known what a cesspit these people operate in when he became a councillor.
- 14 MH stated that it was the worst moment of his life and has had a significant impact on him as set out in the confidential appendix.

- 15 MH stated that he was appalled by the Liberal Democrat party. He stated that he has not been told directly by the Liberal Democrat party what the outcome of their investigation had been. He stated that he had made a complaint but was told that, as the Council had already complained, it was an ongoing investigation and he could not make one.
- 16 MH stated that the behaviour was malicious and was an orchestrated load of ferocious abuse. MH confirmed that he had reported the issues to the police but they had not been very helpful. He stated that some of the comments had maybe not crossed the criminal threshold.
- 17 MH stated that it was a private conversation. He stated that they had gone to discuss a working relationship for the benefit of they represent. He stated that they have achieved things as a result, for example the CSE inquiry and standing against the development of the Green Belt has happened as a result of their involvement.
- 18 SG asked MH why he had not submitted a complaint himself. He stated that he had been told by the Chief Executive of the Council that the Council would handle the complaint and also make complaints to the police and the Liberal Democrat party. He stated that he was not of a mind to make a complaint himself because of that state of mind he was in. He stated that he does intend to take his own private legal action once this complaint is finished.
- 19 MH stated that he was perplexed about the time taken for the investigation and had been chasing the outcome. He stated that he had not been kept up to date. He stated that he had not raised the complaint but he was a victim and believed he was owed a duty of care to include him in the investigation.
- 20 MH stated that there may be no direct connection between MK and the death threats but people sharing the recording was what led to the threats and MK is responsible for that. He stated that he did not think that MK could claim the consequences were not his responsibility. MH stated that it only would have taken one person to take the matter further and put a knife in him. He stated that someone had found out where his mother was buried so they could find out where he lived. He stated that there had been no remorse for what happened.,
- 21 MH stated that MK's actions beggared belief. He stated that MK had been campaigning in his ward. He stated that he is disappointed by the way the Liberal Democrat party had dealt with things. He stated that there had been no decency to reach out and apologise. He stated that he is still waiting for the Council to tell him what the outcome of the complaint to the Liberal Democrat party was.

I agree that this is a true and accurate record of the interview and the contents are true to the best of my knowledge and belief.

Signed.....
Cllr Marc Hince

Dated.....

Oldham Council

Weightmans reference: SIG/433873/97

Report of an investigation into allegations concerning the conduct of
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Sykes

SG 5

Ref: 433837/97

Complaint about Cllrs Hamblett, Kenyon, Murphy and Sykes– Oldham Borough Council

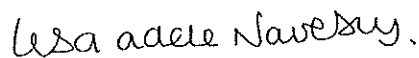
Note of interview with Cllr Lisa Navesey, 4 April 2025

- 1 The interview was conducted by Simon Goacher, Weightmans LLP ("SG").
- 2 SG explained that he had been instructed by the Monitoring Officer ("MO") of Oldham Borough Council ("the Council") to investigate the complaints which had been made about Cllrs Hamblett, Kenyon, Murphy and Sykes.
- 3 SG explained the process. He explained that the process was confidential but if the matter proceeded to a hearing then the complaint details could be published including the complaint and this note of the interview.
- 4 Cllr Navesey ("LN") confirmed that she is a member of the Council and has been since May 2024. She explained that she had been elected at the start of May and they had not known that the Labour administration would lose its majority on the Council in the elections. She stated that for the next three weeks after that as the Council was now in no overall control, it was difficult to say who would be the administration after Annual Council.
- 5 LN stated that she started getting messages from residents in Shaw, saying that she should not prop up Labour.
- 6 She stated that she and Cllr Hince ("MH") were invited to meet with other Councillors to see if they wanted to join up with them. She stated that they were invited to meet Cllr Shah ("AS"), the Leader of the Council. She stated that there had been two meetings with AS and she had not attended the first one but had attended the second one.
- 7 LN stated that she was worried as a new councillor and just sat and listened. She stated that when she and MH left and were walking down the corridor Cllr Kenyon ("MK") had appeared from a room and approached them holding a mobile phone videoing them. She stated that MK said, "this is going everywhere." She stated that MK laughed.
- 8 LN explained that she is a member of the Shaw Independents group but on the ballot paper it said that she was an independent. She stated that MH, who is the leader of the group, had already been a member of the Council for 12 months before she was elected and she, MH and other members of Shaw Independents had been members of the Town Council for a while.
- 9 LN stated that the recording of the meeting had been shared on social media and a woman she had known well commented calling her a traitor and scum. She stated that the recording had been posted all over social media.
- 10 She stated that they had agreed to have a working agreement with Labour and then she had gone away on holiday. She stated that it had been a holiday from hell because of the abuse she had received over social media and in texts. She stated that she did not think that she had done anything wrong. She stated that the recording had incited hatred against her and she was still receiving abuse now.

- 11 SG asked LN why she had not made a complaint herself. She stated that immediately after it happened she went on holiday. She stated that she had been appalled. She stated that she could not do anything when she was away. She stated that she thought that the Council would deal with it itself as it happened in a Council building. She stated that she had not had any discussion with Council officers about the process for dealing with complaints.
- 12 SG asked LN how she was aware of the investigation. She stated that she had been liaising with MH about it.
- 13 LN stated that she just wanted to explain how MK's actions had affected her and her family. She explained that her children are in their 20s and 30s and had been subjected to vile comments about her and her family. She stated that there was a man on a blog who kept making comments, including accusing her of reporting her nephew to the police for murder which is not true. She stated that she is seeing someone in the Council about getting extra security because of all of this. She stated that she should not have to live in fear because of someone's silly actions.

I agree that this is a true and accurate record of the interview and the contents are true to the best of my knowledge and belief.

Signed



Cllr Lisa Navesey

Dated 19/05/2025

Oldham Council

Weightmans reference: SIG/433873/97

Report of an investigation into allegations concerning the conduct of
Councillors Louie Hamblett, Mark Kenyon, David Murphy and Howard
Sykes

SG 6

Ref: 433837/97

Complaint about Cllrs Hamblett, Kenyon, Murphy and Sykes– Oldham Borough Council

Note of interview with Louie Hamblett, 22 January 2025 (Cllr Hamblett was accompanied by Cllr Sam Al-Hamdani)

- 1 The interview was conducted by Simon Goacher, Weightmans LLP ("SG").
- 2 SG explained that he had been instructed by the Monitoring Officer ("MO") of Oldham Borough Council ("the Council") to investigate the complaints which had been made about Cllrs Hamblett, Kenyon, Murphy and Sykes.
- 3 SG explained the process. He explained that the process was confidential but if the matter proceeded to a hearing then the complaint details could be published including the complaint and this note of the interview.
- 4 Cllr Hamblett ("LH") confirmed that he had been a member of the Council since 2019 and had become a parish councillor in 2015. He confirmed that he had received training on the code of conduct three times. He confirmed that he was aware of the need to comply with the code when acting as a councillor.
- 5 LH confirmed that he had been in the Council's offices when Cllr Kenyon ("MK") had recorded a meeting taking place between Cllr Shah ("AS"), two independent councillors and the then Chief Executive.
- 6 LH stated that he was not aware what MK was doing. He stated that he only became aware of it a few hours later when the recording appeared on Facebook.
- 7 SG asked LH what he discussed with MK when he is seen on the CCTV recording talking to him. LH stated that he had been heading towards the kitchen as he was going to wash his cup and make a cup of tea. He stated that he offered MK a brew, he stated that he said that he was going to boil a kettle and asked MK if he wanted a brew. He stated that MK had said no, so he replied fine and went and made himself a drink.
- 8 LH stated that he did not think to ask MK what he was doing. He stated that the corridor can be quite a busy place and people come and go. He stated that he had no knowledge whatsoever of what MK was doing. He stated that he did not see or hear anything outside of AS's room. He stated that he can be quite oblivious sometimes. He stated that with the kettle boiling and the dishwasher going it was quite loud so couldn't hear anything.
- 9 LH stated that he left with Cllrs Murphy and Williamson. He explained that he does not drive and one of them probably gave him a lift.
- 10 LH explained that the Liberal Democrat room is just one large room with a big table and several desks in it. He stated that he went in just to do some case work, print some documents and do some notes and things.
- 11 LH stated that he wasn't aware of MK's recording until later when it appeared on social media. He stated that he was quite shocked at first. He stated that he was more amazed that he was not aware about what had taken place.

- 12 SG asked LH why, when the MO asked him if was aware of the recording at the time, he did not answer. LH stated that he was surprised that a complaint had been made about him. He stated that he had not taken any part in the recording. He stated that it was quite a strong allegation against him and his character. He stated that he and AS had a relationship of trust. He stated that he felt that he had nothing to answer for. He stated that he felt that he had not done anything to offend or upset AS and cause this complaint from her.
- 13 LH stated that he had not done anything to cause this. He stated that he was quite saddened by the whole thing. He stated that there had been a segregation of nearly half the councillors away from officers as a result of this. He stated that he felt it had been dealt with in an undue manner by AS.

I agree that this is a true and accurate record of the interview and the contents are true to the best of my knowledge and belief.

Signed 
Cllr Louie Hamblett

Dated 03/02/2025

Oldham Council

Weightmans reference: SIG/433873/97

Report of an investigation into allegations concerning the conduct of
Councillors Louie Hamblett, Mark Kenyon, David Murphy and Howard
Sykes

SG 7

Complaint about Cllrs Hamblett, Kenyon, Murphy and Sykes– Oldham Borough Council

Note of interview with Cllr Mark Kenyon, 9 January 2025 (Cllr Kenyon was accompanied by Cllr Sam Al-Hamdani)

- 1 The interview was conducted by Simon Goacher, Weightmans LLP ("SG").
- 2 SG explained that he had been instructed by the Monitoring Officer ("MO") of Oldham Borough Council ("the Council") to investigate the complaints which had been made about Cllrs Hamblett, Kenyon, Murphy and Sykes.
- 3 SG explained the process. He explained that the process was confidential but if the matter proceeded to a hearing then the complaint details could be published including the complaint and this note of the interview.
- 4 Cllr Kenyon ("MK") confirmed that he is a member of the Council and has been since 2021. He confirmed that he had received training on the Code of Conduct and that he was aware of the requirement to comply with the Code when acting as a councillor.
- 5 MK confirmed that he did record a meeting which had taken place between Cllr Shah ("AS"), two independent councillors and the then Chief Executive and Deputy Chief Executive of the Council. He stated that he took exception to the use of the word "covert" to describe it. He stated that he could clearly hear what was happening in the meeting in the corridor outside. He stated that he did not use any covert listening equipment. He stated that he simply used the standard voice recording memo app on his phone. MK stated that the recording took place outside the room and no device was placed in the room. SG asked MK if he had the consent of the people in the room to record their meeting. He stated that he did not. SG asked if they were aware that he was recording at the time. Mk stated that they were not.
- 6 SG asked MK what he did with the recording. He stated that he listened to it to check the quality and then he shared it. MK stated that he made the recording in the public interest. He stated that he could not believe that the parties were in the room together despite the comments that they had made about each other in the past.
- 7 MK stated that he knew what he was doing was wrong but he considered that he was doing it for the right reason; people deserved to know what was happening; not only were the Shaw independents and labour considering sharing power but that the chief executive was brokering the deal. MK stated that Oldham is a grim place to operate as a politician and a lot of things happen which people do not believe. He stated that it is a morass of lies and untruths and in that split second he made the decision to record the meeting. He explained that he did this because he did not believe what he was hearing and he knew that if he reported it his word would not be sufficient because it would be denied.
- 8 MK stated that you only need to look back at Council meetings over the last two years to see vitriol and disbelief that there is in Oldham. He stated that a councillor's word means not very much. He stated that he made the decision not to go to the bathroom but stop and record the meeting. He explained that he had been on his way to the toilet, which is opposite AS's office when he heard the meeting.

- 9 SG asked MK who he shared the recording with. MK stated that he did not believe that it was relevant who he had shared it with. MK explained that he did not share it publicly himself because he did not want it to be tainted with a political bent. He stated that he wanted people to hear it without the taint of political bias. He stated that he shared it with someone who would not be tainted by this bias. He stated that he knew it was going to be shared by the person he shared it with.
- 10 SG asked MK what he was doing in the Council's offices at the time. He stated that he is allowed to be.
- 11 SG stated that the complaint also cited Cllr Hamblett ("LH"), Murphy and Sykes, who the complainant alleges were in the Liberal Democrat office at the time. MK stated that it is fairly clear from the video who was in the office. SG asked if those councillors were aware what he was doing. MK stated that they were not aware.
- 12 SG stated that MK could be seen on the video talking to LH. SG asked MK if they discussed what MK was doing. MK stated that they did not. MK stated that if SG knew LH he would understand that LH MK stated that he could not remember exactly what LH had said. He stated that he prepared a note of what had happened a few days after the events, so it was nearly contemporaneous. He stated that the note said the LH had said something like, "do you want a brew? I'm going to the kitchen" He stated that this was consistent with what he remembered. SG asked MK if he could provide him with a copy of the note. MK said that he would not, saying that they were private notes.
- 13 MK stated that there had been no discussion with any of the other councillors about what he was doing. SG said it seemed surprising given the nature of the meeting and MK's thoughts about it that he would go in and out of the group room over the course of around an hour and not mention what he had heard. MK stated that he had not and none of the members in the room had been aware what he was doing. He stated that the first time those members had become aware of what he had done was when the recording was made public.
- 14 SG stated that in his response to the MO MK had apologised for what he did and ask the MO to pass on his apology. MK confirmed that he had done so. SG asked if he had apologised directly to those in the meeting. MK stated that he had not. He stated that the code of conduct process had started fairly soon after the incident had happened and he did not want to circumvent the process. He stated that he would apologise directly to Cllr Shah. He stated that he had defended Cllr Shah in the past.

MK stated that, apart from the flights of fancy in Labour press releases about spies and covert devices, for him the facts are largely not in dispute. He stated that it was about his state of mind at the time. He stated that he accepted that what he had done was wrong but he had absolutely done it in the public interest. He stated that the people in the room had called each other out in the past and said horrendous things about each other. He stated that he was appalled that the then Chief Executive had been persuading the participants in the room and campaigning for Labour and the Shaw Independents to come together to form an administration. MK stated that the then Chief Executive's conduct was clearly a political act and he believed that the then Chief Executive had acted improperly. He stated that the independent councillors had campaigned and been elected as being anti-Labour and Cllr Shah had long complained about bullying and abuse online which the Shaw Independent councillors have taken part in and benefitted from. MK stated that because of all this, he believed that it had been in the public interest for people to know what was happening.

I agree that this is a true and accurate record of the interview and the contents are true to the best of my knowledge and belief.

Signed.....

Cllr Mark Kenyon

Dated.....

Oldham Council

Weightmans reference: SIG/433873/97

Report of an investigation into allegations concerning the conduct of
Councillors Louie Hamblett, Mark Kenyon, David Murphy and Howard
Sykes

SG 8

Complaint about Cllrs Hamblett, Kenyon, Murphy and Sykes– Oldham Borough Council

Note of interview with Cllr Dave Murphy, 20 January 2025

- 1 The interview was conducted by Simon Goacher, Weightmans LLP ("SG").
- 2 SG explained that he had been instructed by the Monitoring Officer ("MO") of Oldham Borough Council ("the Council") to investigate the complaints which had been made about Cllrs Hamblett, Kenyon, Murphy and Sykes.
- 3 SG explained the process. He explained that the process was confidential but if the matter proceeded to a hearing then the complaint details could be published including the complaint and this note of the interview.
- 4 Cllr Murphy ("DM") was accompanied by Chris Gloster. DM confirmed that he had been a member of the Council for 12 years. He confirmed that he had received training on the code of conduct and was aware of the requirement to comply with the code when acting as a councillor and that was something he always tried to do.
- 5 DM stated that he accepted that he was present in the Council's offices in the Liberal Democrat room when Cllr Kenyon ("MK") had recorded a meeting between Cllr Shah ("AS"), two independent councillors and the Chief Executive. He stated that he was in a room which he was entitled to be in. He stated that the Liberal Democrat councillors conduct a lot of their business in that room.
- 6 SG asked DM if as well as him and MK, Cllrs Hamblett, Sykes ("HS") and Williamson ("DW") were also there. DM stated that accorded with his recollection of who had been there. DM stated that he now knows that MK was recording the meeting but he was not aware at the time that MK was doing it.
- 7 DM stated that he was surprised when the MO said that the complaint was moving forward. He stated that he was just in a room. He explained that he was supporting DW, who had just got out of hospital. He stated that because he happened to be in the same room he was being tarred with something he had absolutely nothing to do with.
- 8 He stated that it feels like AS just wants heads to roll and he is being accused of guilt by association. He stated that this has made him fall out of love with being a councillor. He stated that the only evidence against him is a video of him going down a corridor.
- 9 DM stated that he knew nothing about the recording> He stated that he had no discussions with MK about what was taking place.
- 10 DM stated that there was a discussion about independent councillors being in AS's office. He stated that they were quite loud and could be heard in the corridor. He stated that he could not remember who said it but someone said something like, "I wonder if they are doing a deal." He stated that there was no discussion about recording the conversation or documenting it; it was just a discussion. He stated that it was just a discussing like you would have in the street. He stated that other than that they had just been talking in general and that was it.

- 11 DM stated that he did not know exactly who had been in AS's office. He stated that all he knew was that the independent councillors were in there. He stated that he did not know the Chief Executive was in there until MK said that he had done the recording.
- 12 DM stated that MK told them that he had made the recording when they were in the room. He stated that they were all in shock that the Chief Executive had been in the room. DM stated that MK played a snippet of his recording to them in the room. He stated that they were all in shock that the Chief Executive had been brokering a deal.
- 13 DM stated that at that point HS asked everyone to leave except for him and MK. He stated that they then all left to leave HS and MK in the room; DM stated that he was unaware as to what they discussed after he left but he was aware they were due to have a meeting with opposition councillors from another party imminently.
- 14 DM stated that he did not have any other discussions about the recording after that with anyone. He stated that he was shocked as everyone else when he heard it on social media.
- 15 SG asked DM if he thought what MK did was wrong. DM stated that at the time he was more in shock that the Chief Executive could be heard brokering a deal.
- 16 DM stated that there was a suspicion that the then Chief Executive was too friendly with the Labour administration and his actions were too top heavy and not politically neutral and heavy handed. He stated that he was more shocked by that; it was horrendous.
- 17 DM stated that he did not say to MK that he had been out of order. He stated that it had happened so quickly. He stated that MK had only played a snippet of the conversation. He stated that the whole thing was only a couple of minutes which was not long enough to call out any alleged inappropriate behaviour.
- 18 SG asked DM what MK used to record the conversation. DM stated that he thought MK had used his phone.
- 19 DM stated that within seconds of hearing the part of the recording HS asked them to leave.
- 20 DM stated that he and the other councillors have not spoken about the complaint. He stated that they have been deliberately quiet about it. He stated that DW said that she had been cleared. He stated that they had no discussions about what they would say.
- 21 SG asked DM why when the MO had asked him if he knew of the recording at the time he had not answered him. DM stated that he wished he had now. He stated that he wished the MO had rung him rather than sent him a formal email. He stated that he wished he had told the MO that he had no knowledge at the time. He stated that he felt that he had already responded to the MO, so that was why he had replied as he did.
- 22 DM stated that by the time the MO wrote to him the recording had been very well circulated on social media and AS had brought it up at full council in May. He stated that everyone was aware of it by then.

- 23 DM stated that a leaflet and the CCTV video had been circulated on social media containing confidential information about the investigation. He stated that the leaflet with stills from the video had been circulated to a number of houses in Shaw and Crompton.
- 24 DM stated that it felt like because he was being quiet and not making public statements his guilt had already been decided.
- 25 DM stated that he had been in the wrong place at the wrong time. He stated that he felt that the complaint was politically motivated and named anyone who happened to be in the room. He stated that he understood the complaint about MK but he could not understand how just being in the room could be evidence. He stated that he genuinely feels that he had done nothing wrong.

I agree that this is a true and accurate record of the interview and the contents are true to the best of my knowledge and belief.

Signed.....Dave Murphy.....
Cllr Dave Murphy

Dated.....12/02/2025.....

Oldham Council

Weightmans reference: SIG/433873/97

Report of an investigation into allegations concerning the conduct of
Councillors Louie Hamblett, Mark Kenyon, David Murphy and Howard
Sykes

SG 9

Complaint about Cllrs Hamblett, Kenyon, Murphy and Sykes- Oldham Borough Council

Note of interview with Cllr Howard Sykes, 21 January 2025 (Cllr Sykes was accompanied by Cllr Sam Al-Hamdani)

- 1 The interview was conducted by Simon Goacher, Weightmans LLP ("SG").
- 2 SG explained that he had been instructed by the Monitoring Officer ("MO") of Oldham Borough Council ("the Council") to investigate the complaints which had been made about Cllrs Hamblett, Kenyon, Murphy and Sykes.
- 3 SG explained the process. He explained that the process was confidential but if the matter proceeded to a hearing then the complaint details could be published including the complaint and this note of the interview.
- 4 Cllr Sykes ("HS") confirmed that he had been a member of the Council for over 30 years. He confirmed that he had received training on the code of conduct and knew that he was required to comply with the code when acting as a councillor.
- 5 HS confirmed that he was in the Council's offices in the Liberal Democrat room at the time when Cllr Kenyon ("MK") recorded a meeting which was taking place between Cllr Shah ("AS"), two independent councillors and the then Chief Executive.
- 6 HS stated that he was in the Council's offices to have a meeting with colleagues in other groups about the potential for an administration at the annual council meeting. He explained that this was one or two days later.
- 7 HS stated that he did not know that AS was in her office with the others. He stated that he did not know that MK was recording the meeting.
- 8 HS stated that when MK came back into the group room he mentioned that he had heard a meeting. He stated that MK waved his phone around and said that he had managed to record part of it. HS stated that there had been a lot going on but his recollection was that MK had said this but he could not remember if that was the first, second or third time he came back into the room.
- 9 HS stated that he said that everyone else needed to leave apart from him and MK as they needed to prepare for the meeting they were having. He stated that the others were talking and he and MK needed to prepare for the meeting. He stated that there was no discussion with MK about the recording, they talked about the meeting they were there to have.
- 10 He stated that he was not paying much attention to the recording as he was focussed on the negotiations they were there to have. He stated that MK did not discuss with him what he intended to do with the recording. He stated that, if MK had told him what he was doing, he would have told him to stop. He stated that he did not do anything afterwards about what MK had done; he stated that there was no point as MK had done it. After the interview HS stated that when he realised what MK had done, he asked him to report himself to the standards committee (which he did). He stated that he was also reported to the party. He stated that by the time that the Council had responded to MK's report to say he could not report himself, the complaints process

was already in process, so they did not put in a second standards complaint against him.

- 11 HS stated that he only found out that MK intended to put the recording in the public domain after he had done it. He stated that from memory that was the first time he had heard the recording in its entirety. He stated that he was shocked and surprised.
- 12 HS stated that he was focussed on the meeting he was there for. He stated that it did not cross his mind that he could or should do something about what MK had done. He stated that they had discussed the recording at a group meeting but it had been a brief discussion.
- 13 SG asked HS why, when the MO asked him if he knew at the time that MK was recording the meeting, he did not answer the question. HS stated that he was not having trial by email. He stated that he had made it clear to the MO formally and informally that there was no merit in the complaint.
- 14 HS stated that he was being accused of something because he happened to be in a room at the same time. He stated that another colleague who had been in the room as well had the complaint against her dismissed.
- 15 HS stated that AS was wanting to get media publicity about him. He stated that she and other councillors had referred to this in the Annual Council meeting and at other subsequent council meetings, despite clear advice that she should not refer to this matter as it was subject to an investigation. He stated that people should not do that. He stated that the CCTV coverage had been shared with political opponents. He stated that this included a still from the video which had been printed and distributed in the area.
- 16 HS stated that if he had known what MK was doing he would have told him to stop.
- 17 HS stated that the officers' involvement in the meeting with AS was quite shocking and that encouraged MK to record it because he could not believe it. He stated that he would have told MK not to record it but he could understand why he did, as he would not have believed MK if he had told him what had happened without the recording.

I agree that this is a true and accurate record of the interview and the contents are true to the best of my knowledge and belief.

Signed: *Howard Sykes*
Cllr Howard Sykes

Dated: 13/02/25