

C O N F I D E N T I A L

R e p o r t o f I n v e s t i g a t i o n

F i n a l

**Report of an investigation by Tim Darsley,
appointed by the Monitoring Officer of BCP Council
into allegations concerning
Councillor Beverley Dunlop of BCP Council**

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1. Introduction

- 1.1 BCP Council is a unitary authority, formed in April 2019 from the former Bournemouth, Christchurch and Poole Councils. Serving a population of some 400,000, the Council comprises 76 councillors.
- 1.2 Councillor Beverley Dunlop was elected to the new Council on 2 May 2019. She serves the Moordown Ward.
- 1.3 Prior to the reorganisation, Councillor Dunlop was a member of Bournemouth Borough Council.
- 1.4 In around 2016, Councillor Dunlop participated in a Facebook group for Conservative supporters. She contributed posts to a number of discussion topics.
- 1.5 On 12 November 2019, The Guardian newspaper published an article concerning a dossier of comments made on social media by current and former Conservative councillors. The comments were said to be of an Islamophobic or racist nature.
- 1.6 The Guardian article gave a number of examples of comments from the dossier, two of which were made by Councillor Dunlop.
- 1.7 Following the publication of the Guardian article, [Redacted] submitted a complaint to BCP Council. He was concerned that Councillor Dunlop had made comments in public which were Islamophobic and asked for her conduct to be reviewed. [Redacted] complaint is shown below.

The complaint:

I write to you regarding the recent report from the Guardian newspaper published on Tuesday 12th November 2019:

<https://www.theguardian.com/politics/2019/nov/12/revealed-conservative-councillors-islamophobic-social-media>

As is clearly stated, on two occasions a member of the BCP Council made comments on a public forum which are Islamophobic and completely unacceptable. This conduct is appalling and not appropriate of an elected official, who is supposed to represent ALL members of the community.

I am Poole born and bred, and have been a regular attendee of the Redacted Islamic Centre for almost 30 years. I have worked at Redacted for over 5 years, and currently am employed at Redacted. I have spent significant amounts of time undertaking interfaith activities both in the UK and internationally to promote understanding and tolerance, and comments from council members such as those highlighted in the above report serve to stoke further tension in what is already a very difficult time to be a Muslim in the UK. Statistics throughout this year have shown that Islamophobia on the UK is on the rise (<https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-47280082>), and therefore comments such as those made by Cllr Dunlop need to be taken extremely seriously.

I have spoken to many Muslim friends and family in the local area who are all shocked and appalled by the Guardian report. Tellingly, many of my non-Muslim friends and family have also reached out to me and are equally upset as to these comments being made. The very lukewarm reply I received on Twitter by BCP on the 13th November 2019 (that these were "*historical comments made by an individually elected Member which do not reflect the views of the Council as an organisation*") is an extremely neutral stance to take, and is certainly not in keeping with the magnitude of the act.

I am particularly keen to highlight that the quotes made by Cllr Dunlop are indeed "current" as they have just come to light, and that comments of this nature bring the council into disrepute. Religion is a protected characteristic under the Equality Act 2010, and expressing disrespectful, ignorant, and frankly hateful views such as these is wholly incompatible with a Councillor holding public office.

For the majority of people in paid employment, making inflammatory and racist comments such as those made by Cllr Dunlop would result in severe disciplinary action taken by any employer. Posting comments such as these on public social media platforms is a clear sign of a person with evident deeper-seated hateful views, and our opinion is that this councillor should be removed from her position.

I wish for this to be reviewed by the standards board at BCP, and look forward to a formal reply in due course.

Yours sincerely,
Redacted

- 1.8 Although Councillor Dunlop's comments were made when she was a member of Bournemouth Borough Council, the functions, property, rights and liabilities of the preceding councils were transferred to BCP Council on reorganisation.
- 1.9 On being notified of the complaint, Councillor Dunlop submitted an initial response on 20 November 2019 (document 1).
- 1.10 **Redacted** complaint was assessed by a panel of the BCP Standards Committee. The Panel has the discretion to dismiss a complaint if the matter being complained about happened more than 12 months before the complaint was received. However, the Panel considered that the allegations were of such a serious nature that this discretion should not be exercised. It was decided that the complaint should be referred for independent investigation.
- 1.11 The Monitoring Officer appointed me to carry out an investigation into the complaint on 22 May 2020.

2. Councillor Dunlop's official details

- 2.1 Councillor Dunlop was elected to BCP Council on 2 May 2019. She is a member of the Conservative Group.
- 2.2 She is one of two members representing the Moordown Ward.
- 2.3 Councillor Dunlop is a member of the Audit and Governance, Licensing and Planning Committees. She is also a member of the Charter Trustees of Bournemouth.
- 2.4 Councillor Dunlop had previously been a member of Bournemouth Borough Council, serving there between 2007 and 2019.
- 2.5 Councillor Dunlop had received training on the Code of Conduct in her time at Bournemouth Borough Council.

3. The relevant legislation and protocols

The Localism Act 2011

- 3.1 Section 27(1) of the Localism Act 2011 places a relevant authority under a statutory duty to 'promote and maintain high standards of conduct by members and co-opted members of the authority'.
- 3.2 Under section 27(2) of the Act, a relevant authority 'must, in particular, adopt a code dealing with the conduct that is expected of members and co-opted members of the authority when they are acting in that capacity'.
- 3.3 BCP Council is a relevant authority. Its Code of Conduct is published in the Council's Constitution, last updated on 16 April 2020.
- 3.4 This investigation is carried out in relation to the Council's Code of Conduct and under the provisions of the Council's arrangements for considering complaints.

The Code of Conduct of BCP Council

3.5 The following paragraphs of the Code of Conduct are relevant:

This Code of Conduct sets out the conduct that is expected of councillors and co-opted members when acting in that capacity.

General obligations

2.1 A Councillor must -

- (b) treat others with respect.

2.2 A Councillor must not -

- (a) do anything which may cause the Council to breach any of its duties under the equalities legislation.
- (g) behave in a way which could reasonably be regarded as bringing their role or the Council into disrepute.

4. The evidence gathered

Documentary and on-line evidence

4.1 I have taken account of the following information:

- An article published in the Guardian on 12 November 2019.
- Three posts made by Councillor Dunlop on a Facebook group in 2016 or later.

Oral evidence

4.2 I have taken account of oral evidence through interviews with;

- Redacted, the complainant, and
- Councillor Beverley Dunlop, the subject member.

4.3 The interviews were recorded. The written records of the interviews were sent to the interviewees for the confirmation of accuracy. The dates of sending the record, and of the confirmation that the record is accurate, are shown at the end of the record.

4.4 The records of interviews are shown at documents 6 and 7.

5. Findings of fact

- 5.1 [Redacted] complaint is that Councillor Dunlop made comments on a public forum which were Islamophobic. He believes the comments were unacceptable and not appropriate for an elected representative to make.
- 5.2 Although referring to the Guardian article, [Redacted] obtained the dossier of comments that the article was reporting on. He confirmed at interview that the dossier contains three Facebook posts of Councillor Dunlop which are the subject of his complaint.
- 5.3 The three posts concern; the burqa and banning mosques, an inquiry into Islamic rape gangs, and fundamentalists hiding in plain sight.
- 5.4 [Redacted] believes that by posting her comments, Councillor Dunlop has breached a number of the requirements of the Council's Code of Conduct.
- 5.5 Members are required to follow the Council's Code of Conduct when they are acting in their role as a councillor. This is known as their official capacity. The Code does not apply in a member's private life.
- 5.6 It is therefore necessary to establish whether Councillor Dunlop was acting as a councillor when she made her posts. In order to do this, I have set out below the undisputed facts about the matter.

Undisputed facts

- 5.7 In 2016, and until May 2019, Councillor Dunlop was a member of Bournemouth Borough Council.
- 5.8 Councillor Dunlop maintained a Facebook page titled 'Councillor Beverley Dunlop' which she used to provide updates for residents about Bournemouth Council activities.
- 5.9 She also maintained a Facebook page titled 'Beverley Dunlop'.
- 5.10 Councillor Dunlop participated in a Facebook group for supporters of the Conservative Party.
- 5.11 During 2016 or later, Councillor Dunlop contributed to various discussion topics on the Facebook group. Three of her posts to the Facebook group are the subject of [Redacted] complaint. The posts are in the name of 'Beverley Dunlop'. The exact dates of the posts are not known.

5.12 The first post reads:

The Burqa is a symbol of the subjugation of women, something that British women died in protest against a hundred years ago. In our equal and diverse society we are allowing an ideology to continue to exercise its male dominance of women. It is a blatant display of gender inequality that we turn a blind eye in the name of religious freedom. Well this is religious privilege and flies in the face of everything we do to ensure gender equality. I hate to ban anything really but I'd suggest we start with Mosques!

(document 2).

5.13 The second post reads:

How about them calling for an inquiry into Islamist rape gangs grooming underage, underprivileged white girls?

(document 3).

5.14 The third post reads:

This fundamentalists are hiding in plain sight in the Muslim community just like the IRA 'hid' in plain sight amongst Catholics. They are either too terrified to give them up or they are in support. Somebody knows who it is or somebody knows somebody who knows who it is. Muslims now have to step forward and stop this themselves. Until they are more frightened of the British government (because they and their families might get deported) than they are Isis nothing will change. The French raided Mosques and they found RPGs, AK-47s and bomb making equipment. It's now time for us to do the same.

(document 4).

5.15 On 12 November 2019, the Guardian newspaper published an article under the headline; *Revealed: Tory councillors posted Islamophobic content on social media* (document 5).

5.16 The article was reporting on a dossier of alleged Islamophobic and racist material posted on social media by twenty five sitting and former Conservative councillors. The dossier had been compiled by an anonymous Twitter user identified as @matesjacob.

5.17 The Guardian article gave examples of the posts made by some of the twenty five councillors. It provided extracts from two of the posts made by Councillor Dunlop. It accompanied these extracts with a photograph of Councillor Dunlop, captioned, *Councillor Beverley Dunlop*.

- 5.18 [Redacted] saw the article in the Guardian. He was concerned at the report and wanted to see the full wording and the context of Councillor Dunlop's posts. He obtained a copy of the dossier from @matesjacob.
- 5.19 [Redacted] submitted his complaint about the conduct of Councillor Dunlop in November 2019.

Official capacity

- 5.20 A member is acting in their official capacity when they are conducting the business of their authority. The Code of Conduct does not apply in a member's private life.
- 5.21 [Redacted] recognised that Councillor Dunlop wasn't a BCP councillor when she made her posts. She was, however, a Bournemouth councillor. He thought that when someone in a position of office said such things, it was very hard to distinguish between official and private comments.
- 5.22 Councillor Dunlop told me she had made the posts in question from her private Facebook account. The account had been titled 'Beverley Dunlop' at the time. There was no additional description of occupation or interests listed on the account. Furthermore, content on the home page of the account was not publicly accessible. Most of the material there could only be seen by Facebook friends.
- 5.23 Councillor Dunlop said that the only posts she made on that account were private. She hadn't posted anything on it about the Council or Council work. She had never identified herself as being a councillor on the account.
- 5.24 Councillor Dunlop told me that the account from which the posts were made was still current and was still her private Facebook account. She had however felt it necessary to change the title of it to [name name]. Councillor Dunlop told me the new name of her account but wished it to remain private.
- 5.25 The posts shown in the matesjacob dossier are identified as 'Beverley Dunlop' and show the same profile picture as on the current [name name] Facebook page. This is consistent with Councillor Dunlop having made the posts from what she calls her private Facebook account.
- 5.26 Councillor Dunlop's current Facebook page gives no information about her role as a councillor. There is no information about BCP Council or its activities. There are a limited number of posts from other users but no status posts from Councillor Dunlop are visible. This is consistent with what she told me about her page being restricted to Facebook friends.

6. Reasoning as to whether there has been a failure to comply with the Code of Conduct

- 6.1 From the images obtained by Redacted from the dossier, and from what Councillor Dunlop has told me, I am satisfied that the posts in question were made from the Facebook account titled 'Beverley Dunlop' at the time and [name name] now.
- 6.2 Councillor Dunlop's position is that this account is private and that her posts were made as a private individual and not as a councillor. The Code of Conduct was therefore not applicable to those actions.
- 6.3 The key test of whether Councillor Dunlop was acting in her official capacity is whether she was conducting the business of her authority.
- 6.4 The Facebook account is not identified as that of Councillor Beverley Dunlop and she does not use it to discuss or deal with Council business.
- 6.5 The posts on the Facebook group were identified only as Beverley Dunlop and any reader would have no knowledge that it had been made by a councillor.
- 6.6 The subject matters of the posts were not the business of BCP Council.
- 6.7 In these circumstances, I find that;
- Councillor Dunlop made the posts in question from her private Facebook account.
 - She made the posts to the Facebook group as a private individual and not in her official capacity.

7. Summary of Findings

7.1 In summary, I have found that;

- **Councillor Dunlop was not acting in her official capacity when she made her posts to the Facebook group. The Code of Conduct was therefore not applicable to those actions.**

7.2 The reasoning for my findings is set out in section 6 above.

7.3 **Redacted** and Councillor Dunlop were sent draft copies of this report on 17 June 2020.

7.4 **Redacted** was disappointed with the findings of the report. He questioned the dividing line between private and official capacity, saying that the comments were made by the same person. He felt that, with the widespread national and local exposure of the comments, it was inevitable that Councillor Dunlop had brought her role and the Council into disrepute. **Redacted** full response is included at document 8.

7.5 I have carefully considered this response but I have not changed my conclusion about the capacity in which Councillor Dunlop was acting.

7.6 Councillor Dunlop was satisfied with the report.

7.7 This is my final report. It will be forwarded to the Monitoring Officer who will complete the remaining stages of the Council's complaints procedure.

8. Schedule of evidence appended

| Document no. | Description |
|--------------|---|
| 1 | Councillor Dunlop's initial response to the complaint dated 20 November 2019. |
| 2 | Post by Beverley Dunlop on Facebook group and contained in matesjacob dossier |
| 3 | Post by Beverley Dunlop on Facebook group and contained in matesjacob dossier |
| 4 | Post by Beverley Dunlop on Facebook group and contained in matesjacob dossier |
| 5 | Article in Guardian newspaper of 12 November 2019 |
| 6 | Record of interview with Redacted |
| 7 | Record of interview with Councillor Beverley Dunlop |
| 8 | Response of Redacted to the Draft Report of Investigation |

Document 1: Councillor Dunlop's initial response to the complaint, dated 20 November 2019.

The seven principles of public life apply to Councillors when acting in an official capacity. [Redacted] is (unknowingly) wrong when he refers to comments made on public platforms by a member of BCP Council and made by Cllr Dunlop. I have no social media accounts as Cllr Dunlop other than a basic page for resident updates.

My personal Facebook page isn't public, has no identifying photograph and makes no mention of my public life. It is very much a private and personal account and unless an individual was on my selected friends list it is impossible to gain access to it because of the privacy settings.

I have been a member of private political groups and had wide ranging discussions. Someone has clearly recognized my name and spent a very long time looking for 'incriminating' sentences (even those written in jest) that when removed from the surrounding discussion could be used to fuel their political agenda. The way they have achieved this is by using a Guardian journalist to 'out' me in the public domain as an Islamophobic Conservative Councillor. This is a blatant lie that I am now forced to rebut.

The fact remains, however, that even if these allegations had the slightest bit of merit those discussions from where these sentences were extracted were totally outside of my public life.

Having said that I completely understand how disappointed and upset [Redacted] would feel reading that report and I would be more than happy to meet with him on a personal level. I met [Redacted] at the Islamic Centre only recently, I am sure he would facilitate if I asked him.

Please note I am copying this response to a personal email account as I do not consider it a council matter. I am only responding as Cllr Dunlop for the purpose of formality and to comply with the standards process.

Regards

Beverley Dunlop

Document 2: Post by Beverley Dunlop on Facebook group and contained in matesjacob dossier



Beverley Dunlop The Burqa is a symbol of the subjugation of women, something that British women died in protest against a hundred years ago. In our equal and diverse society we are allowing an ideology to continue to exercise its male dominance of women. It is a blatant display of gender inequality that we turn a blind eye in the name of religious freedom. Well this is religious privilege and flies in the face of everything we do to ensure gender equality. I hate to ban anything really but I'd suggest we start with Mosques!

Like · Reply · 2y · Edited



Document 3: Post by Beverley Dunlop on Facebook group and contained in matesjacob dossier



Beverley Dunlop How about them calling for an inquiry into Islamist rape gangs grooming underage, underprivileged white girls?

Like · Reply · 1y



Document 4: Post by Beverley Dunlop on Facebook group and contained in matesjacob dossier



Beverley Dunlop This fundamentalists are hiding in plain sight in the Muslim community just like the IRA "hid" in plain sight amongst Catholics. They are either too terrified to give them up or they are in support. Somebody knows who it is or somebody knows somebody who knows who it is. Muslims now have to step forward and stop this themselves. Until they are more frightened of the British government (because they and their families might get deported) than they are Isis nothing will change. The French raided Mosques and they found RPG's, AK-47s and bomb-making equipment. It's now time for us to do the same.

Like · Reply · 2y · Edited

Document 5: Article in Guardian newspaper of 12 November 2019

Revealed: Tory councillors posted Islamophobic content on social media

Exclusive: dossier on 25 current and former councillors adds to pressure on Boris Johnson to launch independent inquiry

Simon Murphy

@murphy_simon

Tue 12 Nov 2019 18.04 GMT Last modified on Wed 13 Nov 2019 09.06 GMT

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Walsall councillor Vera Waters with Boris Johnson. She said that starvation in Africa was ‘nature’s way of depopulation’. Photograph: Facebook

Twenty-five sitting and former Conservative councillors have been exposed for posting Islamophobic and racist material on social media, according to a dossier obtained by the Guardian that intensifies the row over anti-Muslim sentiment in the party.

The disclosure that 15 current and 10 former Tory councillors have posted, shared or endorsed Islamophobic or other racist content on Facebook or Twitter will increase pressure on Boris Johnson after he [backtracked on a pledge to hold an independent inquiry into the issue.](#)

Inflammatory posts recorded in the dossier, which has been sent to the party’s headquarters, include calls for mosques to be banned, claims the faith wants to “turn the world Muslim”, referring to its followers as “barbarians” and “the enemy within”.

In 2017, one councillor, who has been pictured with Johnson, endorsed a suggestion that all aid to Africa helping feed starving people should stop, allowing “mother nature take her course”. She replied: “It’s nature’s way of depopulation.”

The dossier was compiled by [@matesjacob](#), an anonymous Twitter user who campaigns against racism. After being presented with the posts by the Guardian the Conservative party suspended all those who are still members pending an investigation.

The news come days after Johnson made a U-turn on a pledge for the Conservative party to hold an independent inquiry into [Islamophobia](#), instead saying the party would have “general investigation into prejudice of all kinds”.

The cabinet minister Michael Gove had previously said the party would “absolutely” hold an “independent inquiry into Islamophobia ... before the end of the year”. It follows repeated warnings about prejudice against Muslims being perpetrated in the party’s ranks and [investigations by the Guardian](#) shedding light on Islamophobia in the Conservatives.

Among the series of instances in the dossier verified by the Guardian were posts from:



Councillor Beverley Dunlop. Photograph: Democracy.bcpccouncil.gov.uk

- Beverley Dunlop, a councillor in Bournemouth, Christchurch and Poole, who posted messages in two Facebook groups with more than 11,000 members between them. In one posted in 2016 she railed against the burqa, adding: “I hate to ban anything really but I’d suggest we start with Mosques!” In another post, she responded to a call for an inquiry into Islamophobia in the Conservative party by hitting back last year: “How about them calling for an inquiry into Islamist rape gangs grooming underage, underprivileged white girls [sic]?”

- The Walsall councillor Vera Waters who endorsed a suggestion that impoverished Africans should be left to starve, saying that famine is “nature’s way of depopulation”.
- Trevor Hales, a parish councillor in Sandiacre, near Nottingham, who complained on Twitter about Muslims in a stream of tweets last year in which he referred to them as “the enemy within”, claimed “spineless” governments had sold “us to slavery of Muslims”, and warned Sajid Javid: “How long are you going to allow this Muslim takeover.”
- Malcolm Griffiths, a councillor in Redcar and Cleveland, North Yorkshire, who is also chairman of South Tees Conservative Association, and liked Facebook comments in 2017 urging migrants to “go back to where they came from” and to “get the fuck out and go home”. In a separate post, Griffiths suggested Muslims were inbred.
- A Conservative councillor in Kettering, Paul Marks, who referred to London’s Muslim mayor, Sadiq Khan, as a “vile creature” and liked a post ranting about the politician, which claimed he “will always lobby against anybody or anything which finds itself in direct conflict with Islam”.

The post added: “No doubt he will be voted in again by the exploding Muslim hordes that now dominate London and suppress any counter votes from the more white conservative outer London boroughs.” In reply, Marks wrote: “That this vile creature was a elected mayor of London tells me all I need to know about that anti-British city.”

Marks, the Kettering Conservative Association chairman, told the Guardian he regretted liking the post, saying the use of the word “white” was “completely irrelevant”. He added: “After all, Muhammad was probably paler than I am ... I certainly don’t agree with [the use of the word] white and I don’t agree with hordes and I never wrote the post.” He said that he likes posts to draw attention to them but does not agree with everything in them.



Councillor Paul Marks. Photograph: Kettering.gov.uk

Dunlop said the messages she had posted were private.

Sayeeda Warsi, who has been calling for the party to hold an independent inquiry into Islamophobia, said she was appalled by the comments in the dossier. “These further divisive and racist comments by elected Conservative councillors are a further indication of the issue of Islamophobia in the party,” she said.

“The constant argument made by the party [is] that there isn’t the evidence, yet dossier after dossier has been presented to the party. Now this one exposes a sizeable number of sitting Conservative councillors. These individuals seek to represent the party, and if the party truly believes in rooting out racism it should start from rooting out those with racist views from the party.

“Sadly, the party has been trying to downgrade, dilute and deflect the issue of Islamophobia.”

Sajjad Karim, a former Conservative MEP who has spoken out about facing Islamophobia in the party including from a serving minister, said: “The fact that the prime minister has now backtracked on his pledge to hold an inquiry is something that further cements my view that there is no real desire or intent in the party to deal with this issue.”

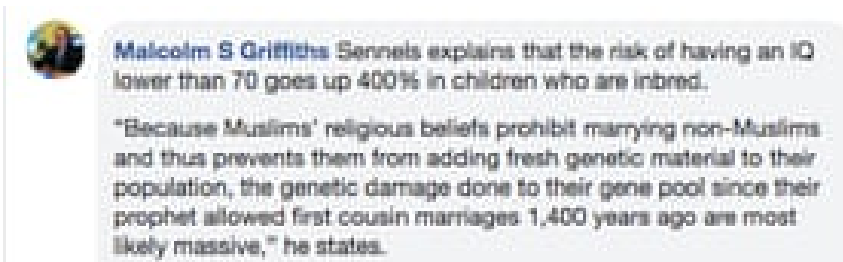
Waters, the Walsall councillor, whose Facebook profile picture shows her posing with Johnson, endorsed a suggestion that aid to Africa should stop and “mother nature” should “take her course”. In response to an article about UK aid helping fund voluntary family planning in developing countries, a woman wrote on Facebook in 2017: “I suggest ALL aid to Africa stops, ALL immigration from Africa stops – and let mother nature take her course – may seem harsh but it will never end no matter what we do.” In response, Waters liked the post, adding: “I totally agree with you. It’s nature’s way of depopulation.”

Griffiths, the councillor in Redcar and Cleveland, posted an article on Facebook in 2017 that claimed Muslims in Germany had started a petition to end the drinking festival, Oktoberfest, because it was “un-Islamic”. Underneath, a friend of Griffiths wrote: “They can go back to where they came from. Try going to a Muslim country and ask them to stop Muslim traditions because it offends incoming Christians How outrageous is sharia behaviour.” Griffiths liked the post.



Malcolm Griffiths. Photograph: Redcar-Cleveland.gov.uk

In another post in 2017, he quoted Nicolai Sennels, an organiser of the Danish branch of the anti-Islam group Pegida, saying: “The genetic damage done to [the Muslim] gene pool since their prophet allowed first cousin marriages 1,400 years ago is most likely massive.”



A Facebook post by Malcolm Griffiths on the ‘genetic damage’ done to Muslims. Photograph: Facebook

Among the other councillors and former councillors whose racist or Islamophobic messages were seen by the Guardian, the councillor Roger Taylor from Calderdale, West Yorkshire, questioned why prominent British Muslim columnist Yasmin Alibhai-Brown was in the UK. In response to a post about the journalist hitting back at claims she is anti-British, Taylor wrote last October: “Why is she even in the country?”

When approached for comment, Taylor said he would be binning the Guardian’s email. “We are in an election and you are raising this to deflect from the antisemites in the Labour party,” he said.

A Conservative party spokesperson said: “All those found to be party members have been suspended immediately, pending investigation. The swift action we take on not just anti-Muslim discrimination, but discrimination of any kind is testament to the seriousness with which we take such issues.

“The Conservative party will never stand by when it comes to prejudice and discrimination of any kind. That’s why we are already establishing the terms of an investigation to make sure that such instances are isolated and robust processes are in place to stamp them out as and when they occur.”

Document 6: Record of interview with Redacted, 1 June 2020

1. I introduced myself and explained my appointment and role. I advised you that I would be recording the interview and you consented to this.
2. You told me that you were a resident of Bournemouth. You had no direct connection with BCP Council.
3. You confirmed that your complaint arose from an article in the Guardian of 12 November by Simon Murphy. The article reported on a dossier compiled by Matesjacob and referred to on this person's Twitter account. You said you had gone back to this source and downloaded the dossier. You wanted to see the context and check the exact words that had been used.
4. You confirmed that there were three posts in question. These concerned;
 - The burqa as a symbol of the subjugation of women and suggesting a ban on mosques.
 - Suggesting an inquiry into Islamist rape gangs grooming underage, underprivileged white girls.
 - Fundamentalists hiding in plain sight and Muslims having to step forward to stop this.

I confirmed that I had obtained copies of these posts.

5. We considered the three posts in turn.

The burqa and a ban on mosques

6. You felt this was a horrific thing to say. The comment could be considered with different subjects and objects. So, if it was a Muslim person blaming all white supremacist attacks on Christians and calling for all churches to be shut down, that would be similarly horrendous.
7. You knew how important for community harmony it was to engage with others. This flew directly in the face of that. It was islamophobic because it characterised all people who used a mosque in the same negative way and was threatening to shut down the places of worship of a whole faith.

An inquiry into Islamist rape gangs

8. You said that whoever these criminals committing rape were, they were not doing it in the name of Islam. Using that label was completely misleading. The crimes were done by rapists, not by people of a particular denomination.

Fundamentalists hiding in plain sight

9. This post included; *Muslims now have to step forward and stop this themselves. Until they are more frightened of the British government (because they and their families might get deported) than they are of Isis, nothing will change.*
10. You felt that was awful to say. It was saying that British people would be deported to where their grandparents had come from. Of course communities had to report terrorism or any other crimes but that applied to all communities across the board. It was a horrendous way for anyone to speak, let alone a councillor.
11. The posts were reported as being made in 2016, before Councillor Dunlop was a BCP councillor. You didn't believe this was of significance. You thought that people in that office needed to be held accountable for high standards. Pointing to the time when the posts were made was not good enough. Other people had been held responsible for historical comments made on social media and this shouldn't be an exception.
12. You hadn't been happy with the Council's initial response to you on Twitter. You had complained in November and chased the matter up in December. You thought that seven months to investigate the complaint was not satisfactory.
13. You said you didn't know if the original posts were available to the public at large. If they were made to a group, it seemed to be a large group that was easy to access.
14. We considered Councillor Dunlop's actions in relation to the Code of Conduct. You considered that the requirement to treat others with respect was relevant. Her comments did not treat Muslim people with respect.
15. The Council's duty under equalities legislation was also relevant.
16. You also felt that Councillor Dunlop's actions had brought the Council into disrepute. They had formed part of a major news story in a leading UK newspaper.

17. I asked you how you thought Councillor Dunlop was presenting herself when she made the posts. You recognised that she wasn't a BCP councillor at the time, although she was a Bournemouth councillor. You thought that when someone in a position of office made comments like that, it was very hard to distinguish between official and private comments.
18. In conclusion, you said that there was a lot of division in the country already and such inflammatory comments did not help.

| | |
|---|-------------|
| Sent to witness for confirmation | 4 June 2020 |
| Agreed by witness as an accurate record | 4 June 2020 |

**Document 7: Record of interview with Councillor Beverley Dunlop
2 June 2020**

1. I introduced myself and explained my appointment and role. I advised you that I would be recording the interview and you consented to this.
2. You confirmed that you had previously been a councillor with Bournemouth Borough Council. You had been first elected to that Council in 2007. This continued until you were elected to BCP Council in May 2019.
3. **Redacted** complaint arose from an article in the Guardian of 12 November 2019. The article reported on a dossier compiled by Twitter user @matesjacob. The dossier contained three Facebook posts made by you. These concerned:
 - The burqa and banning mosques.
 - An inquiry into Islamic rape gangs.
 - Fundamentalists hiding in plain sight.
4. You recognised these as your posts but pointed out that they were selected items from wider discussions.
5. You thought the posts had been made between 18 months and three years ago. You thought they had been made quite closely together.
6. You told me that the Conservative party had conducted an investigation into your posts and you had provided an explanation to that. Your response had been accepted and your suspension lifted.
7. I asked you about your Facebook account at the time the posts were made. You said the account was entitled 'Beverley Dunlop'. There was no additional description of occupation or interests. It was a private account. Furthermore, it was not publicly accessible. You would have to be a 'friend' to see your posts on it.
8. The account was still current. You believed you had been set up by the dossier and your words twisted to suit an agenda. You had therefore felt it necessary to change the name on the account to *[name name]*.¹
9. You said you deliberately did not have social media accounts that related to your position as a councillor.
10. You confirmed that, at the time, the only posts you made on and through the account were private. You hadn't posted anything about the Council or Council work. You had never identified yourself as being a councillor on social media.

11. You told me the posts in question had been made to an informal Conservative chat group. You didn't know how many were in the group but it was nationwide. You weren't aware that there were two groups.
12. The posts as they appeared were identified by a small circular profile picture and the words 'Beverley Dunlop'. The profile picture was the same as now, namely a picture of you, with your face obscured by your hair, holding your cat. You could not be identified by the picture.
13. You said that you had later gone back into the chat group, found the posts in question and deleted them. You had then removed yourself from the group.
14. You said you used to have a 'Councillor Beverley Dunlop' page when you were at Bournemouth Borough Council. You use to use this for basic residents' updates. You hadn't used any such page since becoming a BCP councillor.
15. We considered the three posts in turn:

The burqa and banning mosques

16. You said the discussion had been about banning the burqa. You had been arguing for gender equality and commented that the burqa was a symbol of the subjugation of women. You didn't think the burqa should be banned, however, because that would subjugate the women concerned even more. You said the final sentence, about banning mosques, was made tongue in cheek, at the tail end of a long conversation.
17. You didn't accept that your comments had been Islamophobic. You believed you were entitled to criticise a religion, whatever it be.

An inquiry into Islamist rape gangs

18. There had been a wider national discussion of this matter. You believed that not enough had been done to investigate how these crimes had been allowed to happen.
19. You hadn't been generalising about Islamic people or anyone following the Islamic faith. You had used the word Islamist, meaning an advocate or supporter of fundamentalism and militancy, because you felt the behaviour demonstrated by these men was no different from Islamist fighters.

20. You thought that the wording of that particular post was ill-judged. It might have given the impression that you were targeting Muslims, which was not the case.

Fundamentalists hiding in plain sight

21. You said that the discussion was about Islamic people being blamed for the actions of fundamentalists. You said you had lived through IRA bombings in Birmingham and you knew that communities were fearful when there were terrorists in their midst. You had been pointing out the impossible position that many Muslims found themselves in. You didn't accept that you had been advocating a particular course of action for all Muslims.
22. You told me about your meeting with **Redacted** at the Islamic Centre recently. He had contacted you a couple of days after the article in the Guardian. He said he had been dismayed at the report and he invited you to meet him at the mosque. You had gone down and talked with him.
23. You said you didn't accept the allegations in the complaint. It was easy to draw conclusions about something when you didn't know the context. You had been defending the right of Muslim women to wear the burqa and defending people who found themselves under threat. You thought the allegation of Islamophobia was not justified because you were actually doing the opposite. You recognised that the post about Islamic rape gangs sent a message that you weren't happy with.
24. Regarding the Code of Conduct, you didn't believe your comments about the burqa and fundamentalists were disrespectful because they were defending the position of Muslim people. In the comment about rape gangs, it certainly hadn't been your intention to be disrespectful to Muslim people.
25. You didn't believe you had caused the Council to breach any duties under equalities legislation because you hadn't been commenting as a councillor.
26. For the same reason, you hadn't brought the Council, or your position as a councillor, into disrepute.
27. In summary, your response to the complaint was that the posts were made as a private individual and not as a councillor. The Code of Conduct was therefore not applicable to those actions.

28. You thought the posts had been carefully selected, deliberately to misrepresent you. If the whole conversations had been shown, it would have been difficult to make the claim of Islamophobia.

¹ Councillor Dunlop disclosed the current title of her personal Facebook account to me but wishes this to remain private.

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| Sent to witness for confirmation | 4 June 2020 |
| Agreed by witness as an accurate record | 7 June 2020 |

**Document 8: Response of [Redacted] to the Draft Report of Investigation,
22 June 2020**

Dear Tim,

Many thanks for your email dated 17th June 2020. I did receive the email on the same day, but I wanted to take a few days to read the report and to reflect on your findings. Firstly, I wanted to thank you for compiling the draft report. From the outset you have been timely, communicative, and thorough, and for that I am very grateful.

It probably won't surprise you however that I am extremely disappointed with the final decision of your draft report. Although I appreciate the steps that you have taken to reach that decision, I cannot agree with it. Your final decision that these comments were not made "*in an official capacity*" does not reverse the fact that they were made by that person. This is especially the case for general obligation 2.2 (g). I am very confused how a Counsellor being named by a both large national newspaper (The Guardian- readership of 24 million per month as per www.newsworks.org.uk) and our largest regional/local newspaper (The Daily Echo) due to inflammatory comments she made in a Facebook group with hundreds of members of the public in this group reading these comments is not:

"behaving in a way which could reasonably be regarded as bringing their role or the Council into disrepute"

Where exactly is the dividing line between a personal life and an official capacity when making inflammatory comments? The seriousness of the allegations and the very fact that the Council saw fit to launch an independent investigation surely means that this has brought the Council into disrepute. It also leads me to question what else a counsellor could do when they are not "*in an official capacity*" that would also be acceptable. Would shouting Islamophobic statements loudly on the street be acceptable if Cllr Dunlop was not there "*in an official capacity*"? The answer is clearly no, and that is the source of my frustration with the findings of your draft report.

Unfortunately, the finding of your draft report are fully consistent with the current state of affairs in the UK. Two days after you sent your draft report to me, a Conservative activist was suspended for Islamophobic remarks (<https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-politics-53106605>). I would particularly like to draw your attention to the comments from the Muslim Council of Britain following this, who stated:

"The (Conservative) party must reflect and consider why it chooses to ignore widespread concerns about its institutional Islamophobia"

The incident involving Cllr Dunlop which led to your draft report sadly is yet another example of this institutional Islamophobia, and the highlights the wider difficulties that ethnic minorities face in modern-day Britain. Subject to abuse/condemnation, yet shut down in their attempts to make people accountable for their comments. My issue with the finding of your draft report is partly with the judgement you have provided, but more so with the framework which means that this behaviour is deemed acceptable (i.e. the "in an official capacity" disclaimer). It is clear that this framework for independent investigations does not allow for issues of a racial/ethnic nature to be addressed in a fair and competent manner. Most notably, I worry for the message that your draft report findings will give out to the wider community- that ultimately there is nothing wrong with making Islamophobic comments. These findings from the draft report will clearly both discredit minorities from speaking out against hateful comments in future, and also embolden others to say even more divisive and inflammatory comments in the future.

To close, I know we have not met in person but from speaking on the phone I assume that you are white and from a non-ethnic minority (please forgive me if this is incorrect). Following this investigation, I am sure that your day-to-day life will continue unaffected whatever the finding of this report, and that the findings of this report will not affect you and your life at all. Unfortunately for minorities such as myself, these findings **ARE** a big deal. These findings do impact on us as minority communities (both locally and nationally), and serve to remind us that that we are marginalised (as per the original comments made by Cllr Dunlop), that we are not supposed to speak up (as per the fact it took 7 months and much prompting from me for the council to conduct this investigation), and that there will always be loopholes and reasons to excuse the inexcusable (as per the findings of this report). Essentially, your draft report is a microcosm of the issues that minorities in the UK face, and its findings serve to perpetuate the status quo.

Many thanks for your again for your time and I await your final report once it has been compiled.

Best wishes,

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