



Tasteless Tweeting Councillor loses Tory whip

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A Horley councillor has lost the Tory whip after posting what his party called “wholly unacceptable and grossly offensive” posts from a now-deleted Twitter account. **Surrey County Councillor Andy Lynch** was investigated by the Conservatives for posts made last month from an account with the handle @TheLandlorduk.

Surrey County Councillor Andy Lynch now sits as an Independent.

On Tuesday (November 1), the chairman of the Surrey County Council Conservative group, **Cllr John O'Reilly**, said the investigation on behalf of the party into the account had concluded. He said: “Having spoken to senior members of the Conservative group, we have unanimously agreed that Mr Lynch's various comments under 'The Landlord' twitter handle are wholly unacceptable and grossly offensive, and, accordingly, the Conservative whip has been withdrawn from him.”

Screenshots taken before the Twitter account was deleted show one post sent in response to a tweet about asylum seekers which said: “When are [politicians] going to recognise the human rights of the indigenous people to have a quiet and peaceful life?” Separately, a county council spokesperson confirmed two complaints have been received about the @TheLandlorduk account, and were being considered in line with the authority's process for complaints against councillors.

In May this year Cllr Lynch was found to be in breach of the county council's code of conduct for separate posts sent in February from a different Twitter account, now also deleted, with the handle @cllrAndyLynch. Tweets posted from the @TheLandlorduk account included calling the “police force an absolute disgrace these days”, and responding to a picture of a Muslim woman and child standing at a halal fridge saying: “Throw a packet of bacon in there”.

Posts also called London Mayor Sadiq Khan an “absolute knob” and London a “third world s and the murder capital of Western Europe”. A county council spokesperson said the authority's code of conduct had no specific guidelines regarding previous conduct of the same nature but the council's member conduct panel may take it into account when considering a complaint made against a councillor.

Cllr Lynch had not responded to LDRS requests for comment at the time of publication. In May, the Horley West, Salfords & Sidlow councillor was found to have breached Surrey County Council's code of conduct for posts from the @cllrAndyLynch account.

He sent a written apology to the county council's chief executive, its chairman and its leader. At the time, Cllr Lynch was removed from a select committee by the Conservative group, and received a statement of censure from the county council. Minutes from the conduct panel said: “The panel noted that Andy Lynch had fully co-operated with the investigation and had voluntarily admitted and apologised for his conduct.”

At the time of the first account being deleted, from which Cllr Lynch called journalist Yasmin Alibhai-Brown “a racist b***”, he was also a Reigate and Banstead borough councillor but did not stand again in May's local elections. A borough council spokesperson said he was suspended by his council political group as part of its disciplinary process, and remained suspended until the end of his electoral term in May.

The investigation by the borough council's monitoring officer did not conclude because the complaints were withdrawn. Cllr Lynch was elected to the county council in May 2021.

“The Landlord” account repeated comments about Ms Alibhai-Brown including calling her an “evil, racist loon”.