

I am issuing this statement to formally apologise for some behaviour which has been perceived to be unacceptable in my role as a councillor within this authority.

The issue in question concerns a post or Meme which I shared on my personal Facebook account which depicted several members of an opposition political party or who are perceived to hold “left wing” views in a negative light (those features included Diane Abbott, David Lammy and Sadiq Khan), specifically, the people portrayed in the post were all people of colour and the post indicated that they were hypocrites in the field of race relations. The post called for these individuals to be kicked out of politics.

I initially posted this Meme as a way of calling out some of the alleged derogatory comments that some of the individuals featured in the post have made about white people in the past which may themselves be construed as having been racist against white people.

I accept now that this was the wrong way to go about this, especially without referencing it to the alleged comments that the individuals featured in the Meme have made and I also accept that it may have given the appearance of accepting and approving of racist overtones.

The post also given the impression that I may well have wanted all ethnic minorities to be kicked out of politics. This is simply not the case. I have always tried to encourage diversity within my political party by encouraging good quality women and people of colour to put their names forward as candidates at all levels of politics – whether to seek election to political office or to run for election for officers within the party – and hopefully get themselves selected, on merit, to then contest and win any such elections. In my role as a branch chairman of my local Conservative Association I have also encouraged people with learning difficulties and other disabilities to engage in politics.

I am proud of the fact that the first two female and first Jewish Prime Ministers and, indeed, the first Asian Home Secretary (in Sajid Javid) all came from my political party. I am also proud of the fact that my political party has a person of colour (Shaun Bailey) standing as our candidate in the London Mayoral election in 2020, have given him my support and have called out acts of racism which have been committed against him via my social media accounts.

Finally, I would like to conclude by saying that I wholly accept that my actions were wrong, that they were likely to cause offence to some people and that it was unacceptable to share such a post on my Facebook account. I also accept that sharing such a post was likely to cause embarrassment to the local authority on which I serve. I will be more careful in future about any content I share on my Social Media accounts and if I do want to share something which may be as controversial in future will seek advice before doing so to ensure that this state of affairs does not occur again.

I would like to take this opportunity to apologise unreservedly for any unintentional offence or embarrassment that sharing this post may have caused and have agreed to attend any suitable diversity training with which the monitoring officer may wish to direct me to give me a greater level of understanding of the issues involved.

County Councillor Karl Arthur

Selby Barlby Division