



## Scarborough Council opposition leader considers taking legal action against Mayor

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**The leader of Scarborough Council’s opposition group has not ruled out taking the authority to court over a battle about the exclusion of a councillor.**

Cllr Steve Siddons, who heads the Labour group, was speaking after 10 Labour and Independent Group councillors stormed out of Monday’s full council meeting in a dispute with the Conservative Mayor, Cllr Joe Plant.

The row blew up with Labour’s deputy leader, Cllr Tony Randerson, tried to raise a point of order at the start of the meeting.

After the Mayor interjected and asked him to sit down Cllr Randerson left the meeting, with the other councillors following.

The point of order was about the Mayor not calling an extraordinary meeting of the authority after nine councillors from Labour, the Green Party and the Independent group signed a letter of intent.

The dispute concerned the exclusion of former Conservative councillor Michelle Donohue-Moncrieff from meetings on the orders of the chief executive Jim Dillon.

The nine councillors have asked the council to produce the legal advice it took which proves the chief executive had the power to exclude the councillor.



He said: “On the day when Councillors stood in silence to commemorate those people who gave their lives fighting for democracy in WW1, it is ironic and disgraceful that the Mayor chose to silence those voices trying to stand up for democracy in our own borough.

“There is a fundamental right for councillors to speak in the council chamber and debate current issues.

“That right is being slowly eroded particularly when the subject for discussion is controversial to the ruling party.

“The matter came to a head [on Monday] when one of our group demanded to know why a meeting to discuss one of those controversial issues was refused by the Mayor on grounds which were neither fair nor, in our opinion, legal.

“We had no choice but to walk out of the meeting in protest whilst we take further legal advice.”

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Cllr Donohue-Moncrieff, who now sits as an independent, did take her place in the council chamber for Monday’s Full Council meeting after her ban was lifted.

Previously, Scarborough Council said it had taken legal advice that supported its action in barring the councillor from the Town Hall.

Speaking in September a spokesman said: “The council has previously taken specialist external legal advice on the matter, which fully supports the chief executive’s actions. Earlier this year all councillors were informed that this advice had been taken.

“Since that time the external advice was reviewed in the light of a relevant legal case elsewhere in the UK. This did not change the council’s legal position, which continues to support the chief executive’s actions.”

The council has not revealed what prompted the change in position for the full council meeting on Monday.

[Councillors storm out of Borough Council meeting over row](#)