Gurdwaras can send the following letter to local Independent, Liberal Democrat or SNP MPs covered by their Sangat

Dear

**Appalling treatment of Dabinderjit Singh by the Cabinet Office and Labour Party over the last two years since Keir Starmer nominated Dabinderjit for a peerage in November 2020**

Attached is a timeline setting out the way Dabinderjit Singh, a leading and well respected British Sikh who has dedicated his life to public service has been appallingly treated by the Cabinet Office and Labour Party over the last two years.

In the last few weeks Dabinderjit has appeared on Sikh TV channels and eloquently explained in Panjabi and English the way he has been treated.

Many of your constituents attend our Gurdwara and have been horrified at the discrimination, racism, foreign government pressure and hate directed towards Dabinderjit after Keir Starmer nominated him for a peerage on 9 November 2020 and HM Queen gave her approval for his peerage.

**Please make enquiries with the Cabinet Office as we would like a written explanation from you** that we can share with our congregation and your constituents on the following:

1. Who the Cabinet Office believes leaked Dabinderjit’s name to Robert Peston on the morning of 22 December 2020 following the conclusion of their detailed investigation of the leak in June 2021;
2. on what basis Cabinet Office officials pulled Dabinderjit’s name from the public announcement of life peerages on 22 December 2020 minutes before the public announcement at 2pm ignoring the PMs recommendation of his name and the approval of his peerage by HM Queen; and
3. as the timeline indicates (see item 5) Cabinet Office officials knew Dabinderjit would be asked to step down from his senior role at the National Audit Office once the peerage was confirmed therefore having confirmed the public announcement of his name on the morning on 22 December 2020 (item 8) did officials consider the impact on Dabinderjit’s career of pulling his name a few hours later.

**Please make enquiries with the Labour Leader as we would like a written explanation from you** that we can share with our congregation and your constituents on the following:

1. why the Labour Leader’s office prevented Dabinderjit’s name being included in the public announcement of 17 life peerages on 22 December 2020 when he had been successfully vetted by the House of Lords Appointments Commission (HOLAC), recommended by the PM and his name approved by HM Queen;
2. why the Labour Leader in the House of Lords told Dabinderjit to resign from his high profile job at the National Audit Office (NAO) hours before the expected public announcement of his peerage and earlier this year forced him to resign and end his 33+ year career at the NAO;
3. why Dabinderjit after his name was leaked and a hate campaign commenced was unacceptably put through a distasteful additional internal vetting process by the Labour Leader’s Chief of Staff that came up with nothing new and was concluded in mid-January 2021;
4. why Dabinderjit was repeatedly assured in writing on around a dozen occasions by the Labour Leader’s office since mid-January 2021 until mid-October 2022 that they were simply waiting for the Cabinet Office for the next public announcement of political peerages; and
5. why Morgan McSweeney when he eventually contacted Dabinderjit just before the public announcement on 14 October 2022 refused in a 30-minute call to provide any explanation or clarification on the U-turn by Keir Starmer given the way Dabinderjit had been treated by the Labour Leader’s office in terms of the peerage being put on hold and the undermining of his career.

The Labour Party has made much of the appointment of Evgeny Lebedev and Peter Cruddas to the House of Lords, but the Labour Leader’s office has in Dabinderjit’s case been allowed by Cabinet Office officials to bring the peerage process into total disrepute.

Keir Starmer has stated he wants to restore public trust in politics and often talked about the need for better representation of minorities and promoting talent in the House of Lords. Please urgently raise this matter directly with Keir Starmer. In our view Keir must honour his nomination of Dabinderjit for a peerage without further delay as he has successfully been through the entire process.

The Cabinet Office are duty bound to act upon the approval of peerages by the monarch. If Cabinet Office officials acted improperly on 22 December 2020 following a request from a former colleague working for the Labour Leader to pull Dabinderjit’s name they should now be prepared to honour HM Queen’s instruction and make a public announcement of Dabinderjit’s peerage without further delay.

Please urgently raise this matter with Cabinet Office Ministers as possible legal action could have serious constitutional implications if the Cabinet Office is found to have undermined the monarch’s decision. There would also be unnecessary negative publicity for the Cabinet Office and the Government for a serious error of judgement by the Labour Leader.

**Please provide a written response on how the Cabinet Office, Ministers and Labour Leader will put this right as far as Dabinderjit’s peerage is concerned.**

Yours sincerely,

**Timeline**

1. 9 November 2020 - Morgan McSweeney (Keir Starmer’s Chief of Staff) calls Dabinderjit to congratulate him and tell him Kier is nominating him for a life peerage and they have heard good things about him from Preet Kaur Gill MP, Tanmanjeet Singh Dhesi MP and other Labour politicians.

2. 9 November 2020 – Helen Reardon-Bond (Keir Starmer’s Deputy Chief of Staff) writes to Dabinderjit to congratulate him and asks him to complete the consent form to begin the peerage approval process.

3. 11 November 2020 – Baroness Angela Smith, the Labour Leader of the House of Lords calls Dabinderjit to congratulate him and that he will be a major asset for Labour in the Lords given the combination of his professional background and knowledge gained at the National Audit Office (NAO) and respect within the British Sikh community. She explains the process, the title he could use, maiden speech etc.

4. 11 November 2020 - Helen Reardon-Bond confirms the Cabinet Office has received Dabinderjit’s consent form and the party chair’s certificate (Angela Rayner was the Chair at that time). Helen stated she would finalise Dabinderjit’s profile as a nominee by the end of the week.

5. 27 November 2020 – Cabinet Office clarify with Helen Reardon-Bond in writing the name Dabinderjit uses at the NAO and confirms that he would resign from his senior role at the NAO before the peerage is made public.

6. 3 December 2020 - Helen Reardon-Bond writes to confirm the House of Lords Appointments Commission (HOLAC) has successfully completed its vetting and Dabinderjit’s name has gone to the PM for his recommendation to HM Queen. She confirms Angela Smith would be in contact with Dabinderjit about the public announcement when the Cabinet Office confirms.

7. 15 December 2020 – Angela Smith writes to Dabinderjit to confirm everything is in hand and now it is just a waiting game.

8. 22 December 2020 – Angela Smith calls at 11am to inform Dabinderjit that the Cabinet Office has just confirmed it will be making a public announcement at 2pm of 17 life peerages and that his name would be included and he should resign from his senior politically restricted role at the NAO.

9. 22 December 2020 – Helen Reardon-Bond clarifies at 11.10am Dabinderjit does not reside in London as it helps to state the Labour nominees are not London centric.

10. 22 December 2020 – Dabinderjit gives notice to his employer before 12 noon he is resigning because the peerage will be made public at 2pm and he is congratulated by the head of NAO who accepts his resignation.

11. 22 December 2020 - Helen Reardon-Bond informs Dabinderjit at 1pm that his name has been leaked and shares a WhatsApp message being circulated about him being sent to the “Indian community” spreading untruths and hate. Dabinderjit immediately recognises the offensive language being used and suggests the message has come from the Indian High Commission in London.

12. 22 December 2020 – Angela Smith reassures Dabinderjit at 1.30pm as names do get leaked and asks him to liaise with the Labour Press Office on lines to take regarding the hate campaign when his name is made public at 2pm.

13. 22 December 2020 - Helen Reardon-Bond informs Dabinderjit just after 2pm his name is missing from the public announcement. She requested former colleagues at the Cabinet Office to delay the public announcement by 24 hours (to protect him from the hate campaign). The Cabinet Office refuse but agree to hold Labour 6th peerage slot for Dabinderjit for a possible public announcement in January 2021.

14. 22 December 2020 – Robert Peston tweets at 7.18pm that Dabinderjit’s name was on the list in the morning. He states he contacted a leading figure in the Hindu community in the UK who told him that Dabinderjit’s appointment would outrage the government of India.

15. 22 December 2020 – In the afternoon Dabinderjit became aware of possible malicious communications from some within the Labour Party making threats, raising concerns etc. The Metropolitan Police are currently investigating the hate campaign and malicious communications.

16. 23 December 2020 – Dabinderjit had an hour long conversation with Angela Smith at 7am who expressed her disappointment that his name was pulled from the public announcement against her advice.

17. 22-24 December 2020 – Dozens of Labour MPs, including a number of Shadow Cabinet members contact the Labour Leader’s office to express their dismay that Dabinderjit’s name was pulled from the public announcement following the leaking of his name, a hate campaign and malicious communications.

18. Week commencing 28 December 2020 – Dabinderjit is informed the Chief of Staff has given anyone in the Labour Party who raised concerns to provide specific evidence about Dabinderjit by 11 January 2021. This was a distasteful internal vetting process possibly to justify the controversial decision by the Chief of Staff to pull Dabinderjit’s name.

19. 10 January 2021 – The Mail on Sunday run an article a day before the deadline with the journalist believed to have been fed by certain Labour sources as they struggled to find any evidence against Dabinderjit.

20. 12 January 2021 – Morgan McSweeney discusses three almost laughable minor matters with Dabinderjit who addressed them straight away.

21. From mid-January 2021 until mid-October 2022 - Labour Leader’s office have on around a dozen occasions confirmed in writing with Dabinderjit that they were simply waiting for the Cabinet Office for the next public announcement of political peerages.

22. Just prior to 14 October 2022 - Morgan McSweeney contacts Dabinderjit before the public announcement on 14 October 2022, but in a 30-minute call refuses to provide any explanation or clarification on the U-turn by Keir Starmer given Dabinderjit’s treatment in terms of the peerage being put on hold and the undermining his career.