

**Cllr Edward Pearson – Standards Hearing Statement  
Hearing on Friday 2<sup>nd</sup> September 2022 at 2PM**

*With regret I am unable to attend the hearing due to work commitments. I have no annual leave allowance remaining this year, and with urgent deadlines on a contract worth circa £2 billion, I cannot afford to take unpaid time off to defend myself against this malicious and politically motivated complaint.*

*I must convey to the Panel my concern that the Investigator's report is not satisfactory. It is lacking crucial details regarding the context and circumstances of the complaint, and it does not convey the correct chronology and sequence of events in sufficient detail. Therefore, the findings of the report are misinformed and factually incorrect.*

*I would refer the panel to my pre-hearing checklist; in which I have taken great care to outline the context and sequence of events which have led to this malicious and politically motivated complaint from Cllr Guilford.*

*Also in my pre-hearing checklist, I have outlined my concern that, despite a number of additional and key witnesses being suggested by myself and the other subjects of the original complaint, for reasons best known only to the Investigator, these have not been followed up.*

*It would be unreasonable for me to expect witnesses to defend my position in my absence. However, I must inform the panel that the investigation was not exhaustive and lacks sufficient corroborating and supporting evidence to uphold the findings.*

*I maintain my position that I have neither been disrespectful, nor have I sought an advantage for another individual. These are heinous, libellous accusations and a defamation of my good character.*

*As I have outlined in my pre-hearing checklist, the motivations for this complaint must be seen in the context of the Haxby Town Council by-election campaign. The additional, later complaint regarding seeking an advantage for another person should also be considered in this light, alongside the situation surrounding the Town Council's Committee structures at this time. Namely, that the Town Council was outrageously excluding the newly elected Councillor Ruth Pearson from partaking in Town Council meetings between her election victory in late November 2021 until the Annual Council in May 2022.*

*The complainant is a Conservative Party member, and it should be noted that he has made multiple complaints about every single Lib Dem Councillor in Haxby and Wigginton (City Cllrs Cuthbertson, Hollyer, and Pearson (myself), and Town Cllr Ruth Pearson). This complaint should have been disregarded as politically motivated and should never have got to this hearing stage.*

*I would remind the Panel that there have been 8 or 9 subsequent standards complaints regarding Haxby Town Council members between October 2021 and August 2022; while this complaint investigation has been ongoing. The Joint Standards Committee Assessment Sub-Committee has considered these subsequent complaints together and decided to deal with them informally through an action plan of training and development, including conflict resolution. In this assessment, the Sub Committee noted that the number of issues arising from Haxby Town Council indicated a “level of dysfunction”. Again, this context must be considered as part of this hearing, and I would hope that this complaint is handled by the Panel with the same degree of sensitivity.*

*When asked by the Investigator if I would be willing to engage in mediation, my answer has always been, and remains, yes.*

*This is the first complaint that has ever been made about my conduct. I have good, cordial, friendly and professional relationships with most Councillors from across the political spectrum, on both the City and Town Councils. I have never made a complaint about anyone else. Whatever the Panel decide, I will continue to place the needs of my residents at the top of my agenda, and I look forward to being able to concentrate on working in their best interests, as I am elected so to do.*

*I got into local politics to make a positive difference to my community; and this complaint against me has cast a long shadow over my Council activities. The complaints process has been demoralising, demotivating, disruptive, distressing and ultimately deeply saddening. This is especially as it has been ongoing for 10 months (when the process is not supposed to take longer than 3 months). I am so sorry that the Joint Standards Committee and Assessment sub-Committee have had to spend so much time dealing with this complaint; and that so much taxpayer money and resources have been spent on its investigation.*



*Cllr Edward Pearson  
22/08/2022*