

**Written submissions for consideration by Audit and Governance Committee on 7 March 2019 in relation to Report AG 01/19, received from Councillor Gillard on 6 March 2019**

I would like to thank the District Council and the Monitoring officer for the very thorough and fair investigation that they have conducted into this set of complaints.

I am very glad to see that the vast majority of the complaints against me have been rejected. These seemed intended to challenge my right to conduct my work as a councillor by preventing me asking questions about what we as Town Council have done. I am very glad that the independent solicitors concluded in the final section (7.77) of the Draft report:

*We consider the Council needs to recognise that Councillors have a right to legitimately challenge decisions. If necessary appropriate procedures should be adopted and followed to facilitate legitimate questioning.*

I think this is the crux of the matter. One of the complainants against me - when asked what result she would like to see from her complaint - said that she would like to see me 'toe the line'. That does not seem to me to be what councillors are supposed to do.

I am equally glad to see that the spurious but upsetting allegation of bullying has been correctly judged to be untrue. The statement from one ex member of staff was revealing in this matter (section 7.44):

*"I can confirm that although the in-fighting, accusations and general toxic atmosphere of the Council during the last 1-2 years of my employment were very unpleasant and did hasten my letter of resignation, I cannot put this down to two councillors, therefore I do not believe I can assist you in this matter."*

I have to add that I have recently attended a Planning Committee meeting of the District Council for the first time and I was very pleased to see that you can conduct business with strong differences of opinion and with a majority group from one party but still work effectively. This is in contrast with what I have found on Woodbridge Town Council, and I think we still have some way to go until we are working effectively.

The only complaint that has been upheld in the investigation is that I revealed confidential information (about a problem with signage) by contacting a local newspaper. I felt - and still feel - that had I not revealed this information the people of Woodbridge would have been kept in the dark about serious mistakes that had been made with the spending of their own Council Tax, but it is for your committee to decide what if any sanction this deserves. If you feel that my actions were in fact those of a whistle-blower, it would be within your powers to make a decision that recognized this.

Thank you for your consideration of this matter.

Regards,  
Patrick Gillard  
Woodbridge Town Councillor, Kyson ward.