

**To:**  
**All members of the**  
**Council**

*Please reply to:*  
Contact: Karen Wyeth  
Service: Committee Services  
Direct line: 01784 446240  
E-mail: [k.wyeth@spelthorne.gov.uk](mailto:k.wyeth@spelthorne.gov.uk)  
Date: 9 April 2025

Supplementary Agenda

**Council - Thursday, 24 April 2025**

Dear Councillor

I enclose the following items which were marked 'to follow' on the agenda for the Council meeting to be held on Thursday, 24 April 2025:

**12. Motion to Censure**

**3 - 46**

Council is recommended to:

Censure Councillor Denise Saliagopoulos for her conduct in respect of the matters detailed by the Independent Investigator in their reports to the Standards Sub-Committee meeting of 10 April 2025 relating to a breach of the Council's Code of Conduct.

Report to follow.

Yours sincerely

Karen Wyeth  
Committee Services

To the members of the Council

Councillors:

**Spelthorne Borough Council, Council Offices, Knowle Green**

**Staines-upon-Thames TW18 1XB**

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M. Buck (Mayor)  
J.T.F. Doran  
M. Arnold  
M.M. Attewell  
C. Bateson  
S.N. Beatty  
M. Beecher  
S. Bhadye  
M. Bing Dong  
H.S. Boparai  
L.H. Brennan  
T. Burrell  
J.R. Boughtflower

J. Button  
J.P. Caplin  
R. Chandler  
D.C. Clarke  
S.M. Doran  
S.A. Dunn  
R.V. Geach  
D.L. Geraci  
A. Gale  
M. Gibson  
K.M. Grant  
S. Gyawali  
K. Howkins

N. Islam  
M.J. Lee  
A. Mathur  
S.C. Mooney  
L. E. Nichols  
K.E. Rutherford  
O. Rybinski  
D. Saliagopoulos  
J.R. Sexton  
J.A. Turner  
B. Weerasinghe  
H.R.D. Williams  
P.N. Woodward

# Council

24 April 2025



<b>Title</b>	Standards Hearing Sub-Committee determination
<b>Purpose of the report</b>	To make a decision
<b>Report Author</b>	Linda Heron, Monitoring Officer
<b>Ward(s) Affected</b>	All Wards
<b>Exempt</b>	No
<b>Exemption Reason</b>	Not Applicable
<b>Corporate Priority</b>	All priorities
<b>Recommendations</b>	<p><b>Council is asked to:</b></p> <p><b>Censure Councillor Denise Saliagopoulos for her conduct in respect of the matters detailed by the Investigator in her reports to the Standards Hearing Sub-Committee meeting of 10 April 2025.</b></p>
<b>Reason for Recommendation</b>	The Standards Hearing Sub-Committee has considered two complaints made against Councillor Denise Saliagopoulos and recommended that Council censures her having found that there had been several breaches of the Members Code of Conduct.

## 1. Summary of the report

What is the situation	Why we want to do something
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>At its meeting on 10 April Standards Hearing Sub-Committee considered two reports by the Investigator.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The Council has agreed a procedure for considering complaints.</li> </ul>
This is what we want to do about it	These are the next steps
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>To advise the Council of the Standards Hearing Sub-Committee determination.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The Council is invited to pass a formal motion of censure.</li> </ul>

- 1.1 This report seeks to advise the Council of the recommendation made by the Standards Hearing Sub-Committee at its meeting on 10 April 2025.
- 1.2 The report to the Standards Hearing Sub-Committee (including the Investigator's reports) is attached in Appendix 1 and will be reported at the next Standards Committee meeting in the usual way.
- 2. Key issues**
  - 2.1 The Standards Hearing Sub-Committee considered reports by the Investigator into two separate complaints submitted against Councillor Denise Saliagopoulos
  - 2.2 The complaints were considered in accordance with the agreed complaints procedure.
  - 2.3 An Investigator was appointed to carry out an investigation. Following the investigation, the Investigator concluded that, in all the circumstances of the cases, there have been failures to comply with the Members Code of Conduct:
    - (a) Para 1.1 – treat other councillors and members of the public with respect
    - (b) Para 2.3 – promote equalities and do not discriminate unlawfully against any person
    - (c) Para 5.1 – do not bring role of a councillor or local authority into disrepute
    - (d) Para 8.2 – cooperate with any Code of Conduct investigation and / or determination
  - 2.4 The Sub-Committee agreed that there had been breaches of the Member Code of Conduct as set out in para 2.3.
  - 2.5 The Sub-Committee considered the following actions:
    - Request an apology by the Member;
    - Formal censure by motion
    - Press release or other appropriate publicity
    - Recommendation to the Member's Group Leader to remove the Member from the Committee(s)
  - 2.6 The Sub-Committee resolved as follows:
    - Council be invited to pass a formal motion of censure against Cllr Denise Saliagopoulos, and
    - the Group Leader of the Council's Conservative Group be requested to remove Cllr Denise Saliagopoulos from the seat on the Investigating and Disciplinary Committee
- 3. Options analysis and proposal**
  - 3.1 The Council has the following options:
  - 3.2 To censure Cllr Saliagopoulos; or
  - 3.3 Not to censure Cllr Saliagopoulos.
- 4. Financial management comments**

There are no financial implications arising directly from this report.

**5. Risk management comments**

There are no risk management implications arising directly from this report.

**6. Procurement comments**

There are no procurement implications arising directly from this report.

**7. Legal comments**

7.1 The Localism Act 2011 imposes a statutory duty on the Council to promote and maintain high standards of conduct by members and co-opted members of the Council.

7.2 The Council has in place procedures for the investigations of potential breaches of the Code of Conduct [Making a complaint against a councillor - Spelthorne Borough Council](#).

**8. Other considerations**

There may be reputational considerations.

**9. Equality and Diversity**

As set out in the Investigator's reports.

**10. Sustainability/Climate Change Implications**

There are none arising directly from this report.

**11. Timetable for implementation**

To be confirmed by the Council.

**12. Contact**

12.1 Linda Heron, Group Head Corporate Governance and Monitoring Officer  
[l.heron@spelthorne.gov.uk](mailto:l.heron@spelthorne.gov.uk)

**Background papers:**

None

**Appendices:**

**Appendix 1**

Standards Hearing Sub-Committee 10 April 2025 – Determination of the complaints against a Councillor

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# Standards Hearing Sub-Committee

10 April 2025



<b>Title</b>	Determination of the complaints against a Councillor
<b>Purpose of the report</b>	To make a decision
<b>Report Author</b>	Linda Heron, Monitoring Officer
<b>Ward(s) Affected</b>	All wards
<b>Exempt</b>	Report – No Appendices A and B – Yes
<b>Exemption Reason</b>	Appendices A and B contain exempt information within the meaning of Part 1 of Schedule 12A to the Local Government Act 1972, as amended by the Local Government (Access to Information) Act 1985 and by the Local Government (Access to information) (Variation) Order 2006 Paragraph 1 and 2 – Information relating to any individual or any information which is likely to reveal the identity of an individual.
<b>Corporate Priority</b>	This item is not in the current list of Corporate Priorities but still requires a decision.
<b>Recommendations</b>	<b>Committee is asked to:</b> Make a determination of the complaints
<b>Reason for Recommendation</b>	In accordance with the Council's Arrangements for dealing with allegations of misconduct, this Sub-Committee is required to make a determination of the complaint.

## 1. Summary of the report

What is the situation	Why we want to do something
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Following two complaints, the Assessment Sub-Committee directed the Monitoring Officer to instigate a formal investigation. The investigation has taken place, and the Hearing Sub-Committee needs to consider whether or not they agree with the findings and if so, consider any further action in relation to the complaints.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>To uphold the Nolan Principles and follow the Council's Arrangements for dealing with allegations of misconduct as published.</li> </ul>

This is what we want to do about it	These are the next steps
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>To make a finding in relation to the investigation of the complaints.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>To consider the Investigator's Reports.</li> </ul>

1.1 The Sub-Committee is required to consider the Investigator's Reports and determine the complaints against Cllr Saliagopoulos that she has failed to comply with the Members' Code of Conduct.

1.2 The Sub-Committee is asked to review the report in order to determine whether Cllr Saliagopoulos has breached the Code of Conduct.

## **2. Complaint**

2.1 The two complaints made by Cllr Button and Cllr Williams respectively relate to the social media communications from Cllr Saliagopoulos and whether or not by posting those communications on social media Cllr Saliagopoulos breached the Council's Code of Conduct.

2.2 On receipt of each of the complaint, the Deputy Monitoring Officer consulted with the Independent Person in accordance with the Council's published Arrangements for dealing with allegations of misconduct.

2.3 An Assessment Sub-Committee was held on 8 August 2024, and a sanction had been imposed (an apology to each of the complainants). The Sub-Committee also directed the Monitoring Officer to instigate formal investigation in the event the sanction had not been complied with.

2.4 Cllr Saliagopoulos supplied a form of apology to the Monitoring Officer for onward transmission to the complainants. The Monitoring Officer explained that the apology should be made to the complainants. To date the apology had not been made to either of the complainants.

2.5 Ms Claire Storey was appointed as the external investigator to consider and report on the complaints. The Final Confidential Report in respect of each complaint is attached at exempt Appendices A and B.

## **3. Hearings process**

3.1 The purpose of the hearing is to consider the Report, hear any representations and make a determination on the basis of that evidence, and (if appropriate) decide on any action to be taken. The Independent Chair may direct the manner in which the hearing is to be conducted but otherwise the following general principles will apply:

- (a) The Investigator will present his report and explain her conclusions
- (b) The Investigator will call witnesses (if any) to support her conclusions
- (c) Committee Members and the councillor concerned will have the opportunity to question the Investigator
- (d) The Independent Person who was initially consulted on the two complaints may be asked to comment
- (e) The Councillor concerned will make representations to the Sub-Committee and give evidence

- (f) The Sub-Committee (after private deliberation if necessary) will inform the Councillor of its decision and any action to be taken
- (g) A written notice will be published after the hearing

#### **4. Possible Outcomes**

- 4.1 If the Sub-Committee finds that the Councillor did not fail to comply with the Code of Conduct, it may dismiss the complaints.
- 4.2 If the Sub-Committee finds that the Councillor did fail to comply with the Code of Conduct, it may decide on any or a combination of the following actions:
  - (a) Require the Councillor to publish an apology either privately or in public
  - (b) Require the Councillor to attend training
  - (c) Censure the Councillor
  - (d) Report to the Council to censure the Councillor
  - (e) Require the Monitoring Officer to publish a report in the newspaper or on the Council's website about the Councillor's conduct
  - (f) Withdraw privileges provided by the Council such as computer equipment, internet or email access
  - (g) Recommend to the Councillor's group leader that the councillor be removed from a committee or an outside body (as appropriate): or
  - (h) A combination of any of the above.
- 4.3 The Sub-Committee may set the time frame for the actions required to be taken.
- 4.4 The Sub-Committee has no power to suspend or disqualify a councillor or withdraw allowances.

#### **5. Contact**

- 5.1 Linda Heron, Group Head Corporate Governance and Monitoring Officer.

#### **Background papers:**

Assessment Sub-Committee reports and minutes from 8 August 2024

#### **Appendices:**

Appendix A: Investigation Report of Claire Storey – Complaint by Cllr Button

Appendix B: Investigation Report of Claire Storey – Complaint by Cllr Williams

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Investigation Report into a Complaint brought by  
Councillor Jon Button against Councillor Denise  
Saliagopoulos of Spelthorne Borough Council

**PRIVATE AND CONFIDENTIAL**

**FINAL VERSION**

**5 FEBRUARY 2025**

**Investigator: Claire Storey MA (Cantab.)**

**Subject Member:** Councillor Denise Saliagopoulos

**Complainant:** Councillor Jon Button

## **1 Introduction**

- 1.1. I was commissioned by Karen Limmer, Interim Monitoring Officer at Spelthorne Borough Council to investigate a complaint brought by Councillor Button in relation to the conduct of Councillor Denise Saliagopoulos.
- 1.2. Writing to the former Head of Corporate Governance, Farida Hussain, the Complainant alleged a breach of the Member's Code of Conduct by the Subject Member relating to the Subject Member's posts on X (formerly Twitter). In particular, the Complainant alleged that:
  - (a) Councillor Saliagopoulos reposted hateful far-right Tweets and in doing so breached the Members Code of Conduct, specifically:
  - (b) paragraph 1.1 (I treat other councillors and members of the public with respect);
  - (c) paragraph 2.3 (I promote equalities and do not discriminate unlawfully against any person); and
  - (d) paragraph 5.1 (I do not bring my role or local authority into disrepute).
- 1.3. A copy of the complaint is appended as Appendix 1 to this report.

## **2 Summary of Findings**

- 2.1. I have concluded that there has been:
  - (a) **A breach of Paragraph 1.1 of the Code of Conduct**
  - (b) **A breach of Paragraph 2.3 of the Code of Conduct**
  - (c) **A breach of Paragraph 5.1 of the Code of Conduct.**

## **3 Terms of Reference**

- 3.1. I conducted my investigation in accordance with Spelthorne Borough Council's arrangements for dealing with standards complaints under the Localism Act 2011 and have based my findings on the Council's Members' Code of Conduct.
- 3.2. The Council has adopted the Model Councillor Code of Conduct as provided by the Local Government Association.
- 3.3. All Council Members sign up to the Code of Conduct upon taking office. A copy of Cllr. Saliagopoulos' Declaration of acceptance of office is attached at Appendix 2.

## **4 Documents Reviewed**

- 4.1. In the course of my investigation, I have referred to the following documents:
  - (i) The complaint from Cllr. Button together with the attachments provided (reproduced at Appendix 1)

- (ii) The Standards Assessment Sub-Committee report date 8 August 2024 (which also attached documents (i) above)
- (iii) Trail of email correspondence between Cllr. Saliagopoulos and council officers in connection with the complaint
- (iv) The Council's Code of Conduct (the LGA Model Code of Conduct 2020)
- (v) The Council's Arrangements for dealing with complaints against members under the Localism Act 2011

## **5 Process so far**

- 5.1. Following submission of the Complaint the Council's Independent Person was consulted by the Deputy Monitoring Officer, Linda Heron. The Independent Person concluded that there was a case to answer.
- 5.2. Informal Resolution was offered to the Subject Member but I understand she refused to engage. The Monitoring officer therefore referred the matter to the Standards Assessment Sub-Committee.
- 5.3. The committee considered the complaint and directed the Monitoring Officer to take other appropriate action, namely to secure apologies to the Complainant and, via the Monitoring Officer, to the Sub-Committee, from the Subject Member. The Subject Member was to remove the social media posts referred to in the Complaint. Both actions were to take place within two weeks of the Sub-Committee Meeting minutes being published. If the apologies were not forthcoming the Monitoring Officer was to instigate an investigation under the Council's Member Misconduct Complaints Procedure.
- 5.4. Apologies, acceptable to the Independent Chair of the Standards Committee were received by the Monitoring Officer from the Subject Member, however, the Subject Member was not prepared to give these to the Complainant. The matter was therefore passed for formal investigation under the Council's Member Misconduct Complaints Procedure. It is unclear whether the social media posts were removed.

## **6 Evidence Gathering**

- 6.1. I contacted the Complainant by email on 9 December 2024 and received a response to that email on 12 December 2024.
- 6.2. As the complaint was self-contained it was not considered necessary to formally interview the Complainant, but it was confirmed that the Subject Member had blocked the Complainant on Twitter.
- 6.3. The Complainant did refer to the draft apology that had been provided by the Subject Member to the Monitoring Officer. The Complainant asserted that the apology missed the point of the complaint which had been brought on the basis that the Complainant considered the re-tweets brought the Council into disrepute. The Complainant acknowledged the differing political viewpoints and stated that *"If she had posted pro-Conservative, or anti-Labour posts, I would not have had an issue as this is part of the political process. It was the far right, nasty content of the re-tweets that my complaint was based on"*

- 6.4. I contacted the Subject Member by email on 17 December 2024, 6 January 2025 and again on 13 January 2025. No responses to those emails were received prior to the draft reports being published.

## **7 Comments on the Draft Report**

- 7.1. A draft report was sent to the Complainant and to the Subject Member on 26 January 2025 with a deadline for responses set at 5pm on Monday 3 February 2025.
- 7.2. The Complainant responded on 27 January 2025 acknowledging receipt and confirming that he had no comments.
- 7.3. The Subject Member contacted me by email on 28 January 2025. She responded not to my email sending out the draft report, but to an email of 13 January 2025 where I confirmed that, having had no response to my earlier emails requesting contact, my reports would be completed without the benefit of her input. In her response the Subject Member stated, *“That’s a shame because had you read my previous emails you would see that I had indeed already sent responses some many months back.”* For the sake of good order, I confirm that I have seen and read the email trails provided to me as set out in paragraph 4, above.

The Subject Member contacted me again on 3 February 2025 responding in the email thread that attached the draft report. She stated, *“Thank you for your email. I really am going against my principles here of responding to this ridiculous complaint. I have far too much other important things to see to in my life. I sent a response to Karen Limmer, with an apology for both of the councillors you mention. If that has not been included in any paperwork sent to you then I am not sure what more can be done.”*

I have made a change, shown in red italics, to paragraph 10.3 as a result of the responses from the Subject Member.

- 7.4. No specific comments on the draft report were received from the Subject Member.
- 7.5. Other than the completion of this paragraph 7, and the changes noted above, there are no other substantive changes to the draft provided to each of the Subject Member and the Complainant. A few minor typographical changes have been made from the draft provided.

## **8 Application of the Code of Conduct**

- 8.1. The Members’ Code of Conduct applies when a Member:
- (i) is acting in their capacity as a Councillor or representative of the Council
  - (ii) is claiming to act as a Councillor and/or a representative of the Council
  - (iii) gives the impression that they are acting as a Councillor and/or a representative of the Council
  - (iv) refers publicly to their role as a Councillor or uses knowledge that they could only obtain in their role as a Councillor.
- 8.2. It does not appear to be in dispute that the “retweets” were made and posted by the Subject Member on X (formerly Twitter). Screenshots of the posts were appended to the complaint. Although the Subject Member chose not to engage in this investigation, there was no

attempt to deny that the retweets were made by the Subject Member in any of her correspondence with officers and the email apology given to the Monitoring officer in relation to this complaint did not seek to deny the publication of the tweets in question. I think it reasonable to conclude that the retweets were made and posted by the Subject Member.

- 8.3. The Subject Member's social media account clearly references their role as a Councillor. The Local Government Association's guidance on the Model Councillor Code makes it clear, however, that simply describing yourself as a councillor in your profile is not sufficient to render every posting subject to the Code. There must be a link to the role as a councillor or to local authority business.
- 8.4. The Subject Member's social media account in question is now and appears to have been at the time of the complaint, a private account. That is to say, it is not available for general public view. The account was, however, accessible to almost 600 "followers" and that, coupled with the clear statement that the Subject Member is an elected Councillor, is, in my view, sufficient to conclude this is more than personal use and that there is a case to answer that the tweets were made in her capacity as a Member.

## **9 Assessment of the Complaint**

- 9.1. I have assessed the Complainant's complaint against the Code of Conduct and, specifically paragraphs 1.1, 2.3 and 5.1 of the Code as adopted by the Council.
- 9.2. The tweets which are the subject of this complaint are "retweets", that is to say, they were statements posted by a third party and then reposted, or promoted, by the Subject Member. In each case, the retweets were done without amendment or additional comment by the Subject Member. Whilst it is true to say that a "retweet" does not necessarily indicate support for the original tweet, there is no evidence to suggest that the Subject Member was distancing themselves from the original tweet in either case.
- 9.3. The Subject Member's Twitter name (that is to say, the name that is displayed on the account, as opposed to the "handle" which is the username that appears at the end of the unique Twitter URL) was, at the time of the complaint and is at the time of report writing "*Denise (promoted by me)*". As the Subject Member did not engage in this investigation, I was unable to clarify what was meant by the addition of the words in brackets. I suspect that it is likely to be a reference to the fact that she is an Independent Councillor, rather than being promoted by a particular political party but I am not convinced that that would be obvious to members of the public with less knowledge of local politics. Whatever the reason behind the words, the effect, in my view, is to lend weight to any reposted material as the words "promoted by me" appear above the reposted material.
- 9.4. The two tweets which are the subject of the complaint come from two different sources. One is a repost of a tweet made by Britain First, a registered political party (the "First Tweet"), and the second is a repost of a tweet by Tommy Robinson, a far-right activist (the "Second Tweet") (together the "Tweets").
- 9.5. I consider that there is a case to answer that the Tweets are not behaviour consistent with the following principles set out in the Code of Conduct:
- (a) Paragraph 1.1 – I treat other councillors and members of the public with respect

- (b) Paragraph 2.3 - I promote equalities and do not discriminate unlawfully against any person
  - (c) Paragraph 5.1 - I do not bring my role or local authority into disrepute.
- 9.6. **Regarding paragraph 1.1 of the code**, it is acknowledged specifically in the code that a councillor is free to express views, ideas and opinions in a robust but civil manner. However, individuals, groups of people or organisations should not be subject to personal attack. Rude and offensive behaviour lowers the public's expectations and confidence in councillors. I think that there is a case to answer that the Tweets breached this provision of the code in that they could be viewed as discriminatory and/or biased against immigrants and/or Islam amongst others. They do not show the kind of respect that is expected of those holding public office.
- 9.7. **Regarding paragraph 2.3 of the code**, public authorities have specific duties placed on them by the Equalities Act 2010 (part 11) to ensure that there is a public commitment to equality across the public sector. Councillors are elected to represent all their constituents, regardless of whether they voted for them or whether they share the same views. I consider it arguable that the Tweets could be considered derogatory or offensive to a group's characteristics which would be protected characteristics under the Equalities Act. The reposting of the Tweets could therefore be argued to be a failure to promote equalities in breach of the Code of Conduct.
- 9.8. **Regarding paragraph 5.1 of the code**, disrepute can be defined as a lack of good reputation or respectability. Elected councillors will be subject to greater scrutiny than ordinary members of the public and actions of a councillor that lack respect might have the effect of adversely impacting the public's confidence in that councillor's or their local authority's ability to discharge their functions. I consider that there is a case to answer that, in reposting material that could reasonably be considered to be discriminatory, the Subject Member might be considered to be in breach of this paragraph of the Code of Conduct. It would, in my opinion, be reasonable to conclude that residents from the referenced communities might not feel confident approaching the Council as a result of the views that were published. This brings both the role and the authority into disrepute.
- 9.9. I considered the application of a member's right to freedom of expression under Article 10 of the European Convention on Human Rights. The free expression of views is a key part of democracy, but I think that there is a distinction between the expression of views and insulting language and swearing. Whilst it might be argued that the First Tweet is an expression of a political view, I find it harder to say the same of the Second Tweet where the language and the subject matter could be seen as highly offensive to many people.
- 9.10. For the sake of completeness I have considered whether my opinion would have differed if the Tweets had been removed as it has not been possible to ascertain whether they remain. It does not. The case to answer on all limbs remains as the Tweets should not have been made in the first place.

## 10 Conclusion

- 10.1. I have concluded that there is evidence to support the contention that the Tweets were made by the Subject Member in her capacity as a Member such that the Code of Conduct applies.

- 10.2. I have further concluded that there is evidence to support a failure by the Subject Member to comply with the Code of Conduct and in particular with paragraphs, 1.1, 2.3 and 5.1 of the Code.
- 10.3. It is extremely disappointing that the Subject Member chose not to fully engage in earlier attempts to resolve this matter nor engage in this investigation (in turn, arguably breaching paragraph 8.2 of the Code – I cooperate with any Code of Conduct investigation and/or determination). This report has not had the benefit of the Subject Member's input as a result. *I do not consider that the Subject Member can be regarded as having responded to this investigation by dint of the email exchanges which happened between the Subject Member and Council officers prior to the date of this investigation as suggested by the Subject Member in her email responses to me on 28 January 2025 and 3 February 2025. Failure to cooperate in an investigation risks undermining the process of good governance. The response sent on 3 February 2025 shows, in my opinion, a disregard for the Complaints Procedure which has been adopted by the Council.*

## **Appendix 1 – Complaint by Cllr. Button**

### **Complaint by Cllr Button**

Dear Farida

I wish to register a formal complaint against Cllr Saliagopoulos regarding her social media activity. See the attached email I sent to Cllr Boughtflower – I have yet to receive a response so am escalating to a formal complaint. I am told by the leader that Cllr Saliagopoulos has been asked to but refused to take down the attached re-tweets.

The re-distribution of hateful far right views is harmful to the reputation of the council. I do not bring this complaint to score political points, but to uphold the reputation of the council.

I believe this behaviour is against the member's code of conduct, specifically

1.1 I treat other councillors and members of the public with respect. 2.3 I promote equalities and do not discriminate unlawfully against any person. 5.1 I do not bring my role or local authority into disrepute.

**Cllr Jon Button**

Stanwell North

Leader of the Labour Group

**From:** Button, Jon (Councillor)

**Sent:** Wednesday, May 29, 2024 11:09 PM

**To:** Boughtflower, John (Councillor)

<[cllr.boughtflower@spelthorne.gov.uk](mailto:cllr.boughtflower@spelthorne.gov.uk)> **Subject:** Cllr Saliagopolous on Twitter

Dear John

I would normally approach a councillor's group leader about such an issue, but as Cllr Saliagopolous is an independent affiliated to the Conservative Party you are the best placed person.

Are you aware that Cllr Saliagopolous is retweeting far right offensive material to her followers (see screenshots)? Not a great look for an elected councillor to be promoting such material. May I suggest you have a word with her about it? Much better if it is handled this way rather than more formal channels.

Happy to discuss further.

Thanks

Jon





**Appendix 2 – Declaration of Acceptance of Office by Cllr. Saliagopoulos**

148.

## Declaration of Acceptance of Office

I<sup>(1)</sup> DENISE SALIAGPOULOS  
having been elected to the office of<sup>(2)</sup> Councillor  
of<sup>(3)</sup> Spelthorne Borough Council

DECLARE that I take that office upon myself, and will duly and faithfully fulfil the duties of it according to the best of my judgment and ability.

Signed D. Saliagopoulos  
Date 5th May 2023

This declaration was made and signed before me,

Signed [Signature]  
Proper Officer of the Council<sup>(4)</sup>  
Date 5th May 2023

(1) Insert the name of the person making the declaration.  
(2) Insert "member" or "Mayor" as appropriate.  
(3) Insert the name of the authority of which the person making the declaration is a member or mayor.  
(4) Where the declaration is made before another person authorised by section 83(3) of the Local Government Act 1972, state instead the capacity in which that person takes the declaration.<sup>(5)</sup>

<sup>(5)</sup> Under section 83(3) of the Local Government Act 1972, a declaration for members or elected mayors of a county, district or London borough council shall be made before two members of the council, its elected mayor, its proper officer, a justice of the peace or magistrate in the United Kingdom, the Channel Isles or the Isle of Man, or a commissioner appointed to administer oaths in the Supreme Court. A declaration for members of a parish council shall be made before a member or the proper officer of the council.

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Investigation Report into a Complaint brought by  
Councillor Howard Williams against Councillor Denise  
Saliagopoulos of Spelthorne Borough Council

**PRIVATE AND CONFIDENTIAL**

**FINAL VERSION**

**05 FEBRUARY 2025**

**Investigator: Claire Storey MA (Cantab.)**

**Subject Member:** Councillor Denise Saliagopoulos

**Complainant:** Councillor Howard Williams

## **1 Introduction**

- 1.1. I was commissioned by Karen Limmer, Interim Monitoring Officer at Spelthorne Borough Council to investigate a complaint brought by Councillor Williams in relation to the conduct of Councillor Denise Saliagopoulos.
- 1.2. Writing to the former Head of Corporate Governance, Farida Hussain, the Complainant alleged a breach of the Member's Code of Conduct by the Subject Member relating to the Subject Member's posts on social media. In particular, the Complainant alleged that:
  - (a) Cllr. Saliagopoulos was dishonest with members of the public when posting on social media in the Staines & Ashford Talk group on Facebook; and
  - (b) Cllr. Saliagopoulos was discussing a Part II item.
- 1.3. A copy of the complaint (together with additional screenshots provided) is appended as Appendix 1 to this report.

## **2 Summary of Findings**

- 2.1. I have concluded that there has been:
  - (a) **A breach of Paragraph 1.1 of the Code of Conduct**
  - (b) **A breach of Paragraph 5.1 of the Code of Conduct.**
- 2.2. I have concluded that there has probably not been a breach of Paragraph 4.1 of the Code of Conduct, but this conclusion is marginal for the reasons set out below in paragraphs 9.16 and 9.17.

## **3 Terms of Reference**

- 3.1. I conducted my investigation in accordance with Spelthorne Borough Council's arrangements for dealing with standards complaints under the Localism Act 2011 and have based my findings on the Council's Members' Code of Conduct.
- 3.2. The Council has adopted the Model Councillor Code of Conduct as provided by the Local Government Association.
- 3.3. All Council Members sign up to the Code of Conduct upon taking office. A copy of Cllr. Saliagopoulos' Declaration of acceptance of office is attached at Appendix 2.

## **4 Documents Reviewed**

- 4.1. In the course of my investigation, I have referred to the following documents:
  - (i) The complaint from Cllr. Williams together with the attachments provided

- (ii) The Standards Assessment Sub-Committee report date 8 August 2024 (which also attached documents (i) above)
- (iii) Trail of email correspondence between Cllr. Saliagopoulos and council officers in connection with the complaint
- (iv) Trail of email correspondence between Cllr. Williams and council officers in connection with the complaint
- (v) Trail of email correspondence between Cllr. Saliagopoulos and council officers in connection with a request to speak at the Development Sub-Committee meeting held on 20 May 2024 (attached as Appendix 3)
- (vi) Trail of email correspondence between Cllr. Williams and council officers in connection with requests to speak at the Development Sub-Committee meeting held on 20 May 2024 (attached as Appendix 4)
- (vii) Additional screenshots provided by the Complainant (attached as part of Appendix 1)
- (viii) The Council's Code of Conduct (the LGA Model Code of Conduct 2020)
- (ix) The Council's Arrangements for dealing with complaints against members under the Localism Act 2011

## **5 Process so far**

- 5.1. Following submission of the Complaint the Council's Independent Person was consulted by the Deputy Monitoring Officer, Linda Heron. The Independent Person concluded that there was a case to answer.
- 5.2. Informal Resolution was offered to the Subject Member, but I understand she refused to engage. The Monitoring officer therefore referred the matter to the Standards Assessment Sub-Committee.
- 5.3. The committee considered the complaint and directed the Monitoring Officer to take other appropriate action, namely to secure apologies to the Complainant and, via the Monitoring Officer, to the Sub-Committee, from the Subject Member. The Subject Member was to remove the social media posts referred to in the Complaint. Both actions were to take place within two weeks of the Sub-Committee Meeting minutes being published. If the apologies were not forthcoming the Monitoring Officer was to instigate an investigation under the Council's Member Misconduct Complaints Procedure.
- 5.4. Apologies, acceptable to the Independent Chair of the Standards Committee were received by the Monitoring Officer from the Subject Member, however, the Subject Member was not prepared to give these to the Complainant. The matter was therefore passed for formal investigation under the Council's Member Misconduct Complaints Procedure.

## **6 Evidence Gathering**

- 6.1. I contacted the Complainant by email on 9 December 2024 and received a response on the same day. I interviewed Councillor Williams by telephone on 10 December 2024. The

Complainant also provided me with various screenshots of the forum thread together with an email thread relating to the Development sub-committee.

- 6.2. I contacted the Subject Member by email on 17 December 2024, 6 January 2025 and again on 13 January 2025. No responses to those emails were received prior to the draft reports being published.
- 6.3. I contacted Matthew Williams, Committee Manager for the Council by email on 17 January and received a response on the same day.

## **7 Comments on the Draft Report**

- 7.1. A draft report was sent to the Complainant and to the Subject Member on 26 January 2025 with a deadline for responses set at 5pm on Monday 3 February 2025.
- 7.2. The Complainant responded on 30 January 2025. One error was picked up in the introduction resulting in a correction to the name of the Complainant. The Complainant also expressed his disappointment at the effect of the Subject Member's failure to engage in this investigation: *"I have studied your report carefully and consider it a reasonable examination and interpretation of events, although it is disappointing that a councillor can escape the consequences of their actions simply by refusing to cooperate with the investigator."* I have made one change to the report as a result of this comment, shown in red italics where made. The change is to paragraph 9.17 and has been made to highlight a link to paragraph 9.23.
- 7.3. The Subject Member contacted me by email on 28 January 2025. She responded not to my email sending out the draft report, but to an email of 13 January 2025 where I confirmed that, having had no response to my earlier emails requesting contact, my reports would be completed without the benefit of her input. In her response the Subject Member stated, *"That's a shame because had you read my previous emails you would see that I had indeed already sent responses some many months back."* For the sake of good order, I confirm that I have seen and read the email trails provided to me as set out in paragraph 4, above.
- 7.4. The Subject Member contacted me again on 3 February 2025 responding in the email thread that attached the draft report. She stated, *"Thank you for your email. I really am going against my principles here of responding to this ridiculous complaint. I have far too much other important things to see to in my life. I sent a response to Karen Limmer, with an apology for both of the councillors you mention. If that has not been included in any paperwork sent to you then I am not sure what more can be done."*

I have made a change, shown in red italics, to paragraph 10.4 as a result of the response from the Subject Member.

- 7.5. No specific comments on the draft report were received from the Subject Member.
- 7.6. Other than the completion of this paragraph 7, and the changes noted above, there are no other substantive changes to the draft provided to each of the Subject Member and the Complainant. A few minor typographical and referencing changes have been made from the draft provided.

## **8 Application of the Code of Conduct**

### **8.1. The Members' Code of Conduct applies when a Member:**

- (i) is acting in their capacity as a Councillor or representative of the Council
- (ii) is claiming to act as a Councillor and/or a representative of the Council
- (iii) gives the impression that they are acting as a Councillor and/or a representative of the Council
- (iv) refers publicly to their role as a Councillor or uses knowledge that they could only obtain in their role as a Councillor.

8.2. It does not appear to be in dispute that the posts were made and posted by the Subject Member on Facebook. Screenshots of the posts were appended to the complaint. Although the Subject Member chose not to engage in this investigation, there was no attempt to deny that the posts were made by the Subject Member in any of her correspondence with officers and the email apology given to the Monitoring officer in relation to this complaint did not seek to deny the publication of the posts in question. I think it reasonable to conclude that the posts were made and posted by the Subject Member.

8.3. The Subject Member's Facebook account name clearly references their role as a Councillor. The profile picture that appears to have been in place at the time the posts were made shows the Subject Member in Mayoral robes. The Local Government Association's guidance on the Model Councillor Code makes it clear, however, that simply describing yourself as a councillor in your profile is not sufficient to render every posting subject to the Code. There must be a link to the role as a councillor or to local authority business. In this case the Subject Member is posting on a local forum on a thread that is specifically about the Borough Council.

8.4. The online group in question on Facebook on which the posts were made is now and appears to have been at the time of the complaint, a private group. Posts made on the account are not available for general public view although the group itself is visible to all. However, the group is free to join, subject to the answering of a couple of basic questions and has some 26,000 members and appears to receive active posts each day. The large membership, coupled with the clear indication in the Subject Member's name and profile picture that she is an elected Councillor, and the fact that the thread was discussing matters related to the Council, is, in my view, sufficient to conclude that the posts were made in, or could reasonably be perceived by the public as being made in, her capacity as a Member. Furthermore, within the thread that is the subject of this complaint, a resident specifically calls for Councillor responses (*"Can the Councillors on this group kindly facilitate this information or how to consult this information"*). I am content that the Code of Conduct applies.

## **9 Assessment of the Complaint**

9.1. I have assessed the Complainant's complaint against the Code of Conduct as adopted by the Council. I am asked, in particular, to consider the following paragraphs of the Code of Conduct:

- (a) Paragraph 1.1 – I treat other councillors and members of the public with respect
  - (b) Paragraph 4.1 – I do not disclose confidential information (paraphrased for brevity)
  - (c) Paragraph 5.1- I do not bring my role or local authority into disrepute
- 9.2. The posts which are the subject of this complaint are comments on a thread started by a third party. The originating post refers to a Freedom of Information request relating to a planning application brought by the Council for flats at the White House in Ashford which was determined in August 2023. The post is clearly related to business of the Council. A copy of the post is provided at Appendix 1.
- 9.3. The Subject Member made several comments on the thread that followed the original post. Copies of the comments reviewed are provided at Appendix 1. Each of the reviewed comments bears the Subject Member's name as the poster with a clear reference to her position as a Councillor.
- 9.4. I consider that there is a case to answer that the posts are not behaviour consistent with paragraphs 1.1 and 5.1 of the Code of Conduct. Whether there has been a breach of paragraph 4.1 is less clear, as detailed below.
- 9.5. **Regarding paragraph 1.1 of the code**, it is acknowledged specifically in the code that a councillor is free to express views, ideas and opinions in a robust but civil manner. However, individuals, groups of people or organisations should not be subject to personal attack. I think that, on balance, there is a case to answer that the posts made by the Subject Member breached this provision of the code.
- 9.6. The comments made specifically name several Councillors, including the Complainant, and suggest that they should be "*watched...cautiously and closely*". Councillors are described as "*unreliable*" and the Complainant as "*Playing Russian Roulette with taxpayers' money*". It is stated that the Complainant, together with another Councillor is responsible for "*secret borrowings [of] more millions*" and that the Complainant has been "*refused access to papers*" relating to such borrowings.
- 9.7. Whilst it is acknowledged that the screenshots of the comments provided do not show the entirety of the conversation thread, it seems reasonable to me that a member of the public might conclude that the allegations contained in the posts would, if substantiated, constitute a failure by the named Councillors to comply with the seven principles of public life which frame the Code of Conduct and that it could be reasonably argued that this could bring their office or authority into disrepute. For this reason, such allegations are a serious matter. I consider that they go beyond robust political debate and cross into personal attack as the challenge is not on ideas or policies but on the personalities and characteristics of those individuals.
- 9.8. Article 10 of the European Convention on Human Rights protects an individual's right to hold their own opinions and express them freely. However, this right is not absolute but qualified and must be balanced against the interests of society. Gratuitous personal comments do not fall within the definition of political expression. Whilst far from clear-cut, on the balance of probabilities, I do not consider that the enhanced protection afforded under Article 10 applies.

- 9.9. **Regarding paragraph 4.1 of the code**, it is suggested by the Complainant that the Subject Member was publicly discussing a Part 2 item.
- 9.10. The Part 2 item which is alleged to have been referred to was contained in a meeting of the Development Sub-Committee meeting on 20 May 2024, some 6 days before the Facebook thread. It was considered to be Part 2, or Exempt Business, on the basis of paragraph 3 of part 1 of Schedule 12A of the Local Government Act 1972 in that disclosure of the item to the public would prejudice the financial position of the Authority in being able to undertake even-handed negotiations.
- 9.11. In support of the complaint, reference was made by the Complainant to the following: *"...secret borrowings more millions that even I as an elected member have been refused access to papers"* (sic.) and the fact that the Subject Member was encouraging members of the public to submit Freedom of Information requests.
- 9.12. In interview the Complainant explained the purpose for acquiring the properties which were the subject of the report and expressed concern that, were the content of the Part 2 item to be made public, the location of these properties and the safety of members of the public would be compromised. The Complainant stated that he had no doubt that the Subject Member was referring to the property acquisitions and the Part 2 material.
- 9.13. I have considered all of the comments that I have seen and made by the Subject Member contained in the comment thread and appended at Annex 1 and taken them as a whole. As access to the entire thread has not been possible, I can only comment on those messages that have been seen. The originating post relates to the outcome of a Freedom of Information request relating to the amount spent by the authority on a failed planning application in 2023.
- 9.14. Whilst there is no direct reference to any Part 2 item the Subject Member does encourage the public to ask questions and submit Freedom of Information requests. Such encouragement occurs in two places, the first within a comment about borrowing in general and the second in what appears to be a final comment where she encourages urgent questions *"...in particular about secret borrowings for more properties as recent as last month"*. This latter comment would appear to be more specific.
- 9.15. I have reviewed the meeting agenda for the Development Sub-Committee and the item in question appears as: "Local Authority Housing Fund Acquisitions – to consider a report on Local Authority Housing Fund Property Acquisitions". It would, therefore, have been public knowledge that the committee were considering a report relating to property acquisitions but nothing more than that.
- 9.16. The duty of confidentiality is an important one and items categorised as Part 2 are, by definition, confidential. The question is, has the Subject Member breached that duty of confidentiality? I consider this far from clear. Reading the comments without the benefit of the background provided by the Complainant (which background has not been commented on by the Subject Member due to her refusal to engage) I do not think that a member of the public would consider the posts in general to be referring to the Part 2 item, rather to the borrowings of the Authority, both now and in the past. However, the specific reference in the final comment to *"secret borrowings for more properties as recent as last month"* would, I think point enquiring minds in the direction of the Part 2 item (more so when coupled with the comment about secret borrowings earlier in the thread). Whether

this is sufficient to demonstrate a breach of paragraph 4.1 of the Code of Conduct is open to debate; on balance I think it is not. It is certainly not good practice, however. At best it shows a careless and cavalier attitude to items designated as Part 2 whether or not specific reference was intended. Further, reference to “*secret borrowings*” may, of itself, contribute to an impression that impacts the public perception of the authority bringing it into disrepute.

- 9.17. It should be noted that, had I been able to confirm that the Subject Member was indeed referring to, or highlighting the Development Sub-Committee Part 2 item relating to the LAHF property acquisition, my findings contained in paragraph 9.16 would have differed and I would have likely considered the threshold for a breach of paragraph 4.1 to have been reached. In this regard, the Subject Member’s failure to engage has impacted the ability to reach a conclusion. *In particular, I was unable to question the Subject Member about that item and the email exchange between the Subject Member and Committee Services referenced at paragraph 9.23 below.* The Hearings Sub-Committee may wish to bear this in mind when considering this element.
- 9.18. **Regarding paragraph 5.1 of the code**, disrepute can be defined as a lack of good reputation or respectability. Elected councillors will be subject to greater scrutiny than ordinary members of the public and actions of a councillor that lack respect might have the effect of adversely impacting the public’s confidence in that councillor’s or their local authority’s ability to discharge their functions.
- 9.19. There are two areas that I have considered in relation to this element. The first relates to honesty and the second to general conduct.
- 9.20. Behaviour that is dishonest can bring the authority into disrepute. Honesty is one of the Seven Principles of Public Life. The Complainant alleges that the Subject Member was dishonest in her comments on Facebook and, in particular, by stating that she had “*been refused access to papers*”.
- 9.21. As the Subject Member has not responded to me during the course of this investigation it has been impossible to ascertain from her what papers she is referring to in her comments.
- 9.22. The Complainant has suggested that the Subject Member is referring throughout to the Part 2, Local Authority Housing Fund Acquisition agenda item. I am aware that the Subject Member requested, via Committee Services, to attend and speak at the Development Sub-Committee meeting on 20 May 2024. The request was passed to the Complainant as chair of that committee, and he responded to Committee Services that “*All councillors and members of the public may attend but only members of the Development Sub-Committee may speak. This is a packed agenda and everyone will have something to say about some of the items on it. I regret I cannot agree to this request.*” Around 30 minutes after that response was sent, the Complainant sent a further email to Committee Services asking that the same response be given to any other Councillors who are not members of the committee as well as any members of the public who enquire. The minutes of the committee meeting indicate that the Subject Member did not attend.
- 9.23. The Subject Member, on 16 May 2024, in an email thread between the Subject Member and Committee Services relating to this denied request to speak at the meeting states “*...I will be informing the public that he [Cllr. Williams] has disallowed another councillor, elected by the people, to ask a simple question.*” It is reasonable to infer, therefore, that the Subject

Member was displeased with the response to her request. There is nothing to indicate that the Subject Member was seeking sight of any additional papers and the Committee Manager has confirmed that he is not aware of any request prior to 27 May 2024 (being at or around the date on which the comments were made on Facebook). The Committee Manager has confirmed that the Subject Member would have had access to all of the papers for the meeting of the Development Sub-Committee, including any Part 2 papers.

- 9.24. If it is accepted that the Subject Member is referring to the Development Sub-Committee in her comments then, in the absence of comment from the Subject Member I would consider it reasonable to conclude that the statement that she had been refused access to papers is likely to be untrue. Indeed, it could be inferred from the fact that she wished to raise a question at that meeting that she had access to the papers that were to be discussed. However, the fact that the Subject Member has refused to engage makes it almost impossible to determine this with any degree of certainty. If the Subject Member is considered to be lying then that would bring the role of elected member into disrepute as honesty and the importance of public trust is key.
- 9.25. The second area of consideration relates to general conduct. In general terms, disrepute can be defined as a lack of good reputation or respectability. Failure to treat others with respect could result in the role being brought into disrepute; where public confidence in the Council is reduced, the authority itself could be brought into disrepute.
- 9.26. I note, when reviewing the posts that formed the basis of this complaint, that a member of the public posted the following in the comments thread: *"Getting fed up with the lot of you.... Sort yourselves out!! You're supposed to represent us residents!"* This should not be taken here as being aimed at any one participant on the online exchange as it is a statement taken in isolation from the thread and without reference to the person who made it. It does, however, show the effect that online behaviour can have on the public's perception of councillors and the authorities they represent.
- 9.27. I think that, on balance, there is a case to answer that the posts made by the Subject Member breached paragraph 5.1 of the code due to the lack of respect that was shown and the resultant effect on public confidence.

## **10 Conclusion**

- 10.1. I have concluded that there is evidence to support the contention that the comments posted on Facebook were made by the Subject Member in her capacity as a Member such that the Code of Conduct applies.
- 10.2. I have further concluded that there is evidence to support a failure by the Subject Member to comply with the Code of Conduct and in particular with paragraphs 1.1, and 5.1 of the Code. It is my view that the comments posted by the Subject Member of Facebook amount to conduct that a reasonable person would regard as disrespectful of the Complainant, *inter alia*, and which could reasonably be regarded as bringing the Subject Member's office of councillor and the authority itself into disrepute
- 10.3. In relation to a potential breach of paragraph 4.1 of the Code of Conduct by the Subject Member I have concluded, marginally, that there is no breach although do consider the Subject Member's posts to be extremely ill-advised in this regard. It should be noted that this conclusion has been impacted greatly by the Subject Member refusing to engage

resulting an inability to establish precisely what the comments relate to. As set out at 9.17 above, my conclusion may have been different had I been able to confirm that the references were, indeed, to the LAHF papers.

- 10.4. It is extremely disappointing that the Subject Member chose not to fully engage in earlier attempts to resolve this matter nor to engage in this investigation in turn, arguably breaching paragraph 8.2 of the Code – I cooperate with any Code of Conduct investigation and/or determination. This report has not had the benefit of the Subject Member's input as a result. *I do not consider that the Subject Member can be regarded as having responded to this investigation by dint of the email exchanges which happened between the Subject Member and Council officers prior to the date of this investigation as suggested by the Subject Member in her email response to me on 28 January 2025 and again on 3 February 2025. The inability to hear from the Subject Member has directly impacted the findings in this report, in particular the ability to draw a firm conclusion in respect of the alleged breach of paragraph 4.1 of the Code of Conduct. It does not, in my opinion, demonstrate on the part of the Subject Member, the high standards required of public office, and it undermines the process of good governance. The response sent on 3 February 2025 shows, in my opinion, a disregard for the Complaints Procedure which has been adopted by the Council.*

**Appendix 1 – Complaint by Cllr. Williams together with additional screenshots provided**

**Complaint by Cllr Williams**

**From:** Williams, Howard (Councillor)  
<[Cllr.Williams@spelthorne.gov.uk](mailto:Cllr.Williams@spelthorne.gov.uk)> **Sent:** Monday, May 27, 2024 2:33 PM  
**To:** Mouawad, Daniel <[DCM.CEX@spelthorne.gov.uk](mailto:DCM.CEX@spelthorne.gov.uk)>; Hussain, Farida <[F.Hussain@spelthorne.gov.uk](mailto:F.Hussain@spelthorne.gov.uk)>  
**Cc:** Sexton, Joanne (Councillor) <[cllr.sexton@spelthorne.gov.uk](mailto:cllr.sexton@spelthorne.gov.uk)>  
**Subject:** Complaint about Cllr. Saliagopoulos/risk of disclosure of confidential

information Dear Daniel and Farida,

Could someone please have a word with Cllr. Saliagopoulos about her conduct on social media?

As you can see from these screenshots of posts on the Staines & Ashford Talk group on Facebook, not only is Cllr. Saliagopoulos being dishonest with members of the public (in breach of one of the Nolan Principles that holders of public office should be truthful) but **she is publicly discussing a “Part 2” item** (item 12 of the last Development Subcommittee meeting about the LAHF on 20<sup>th</sup> May).

To be precise:

Cllr. Saliagopoulos refers to me and Cllr. Sexton as “both responsible for billions of borrowings and lately secret borrowings more millions that even I as an elected member have been refused access to papers.” (sic) She is writing about the agenda item referred to above.

- Cllr Saliagopoulos was denied the opportunity to raise a question at the meeting on Part 2 item 12 (recommending to Council that Council spend approx. £14m as part of the LAHF program), as were all councillors who were not committee members, simply in the interests of ensuring we got through the agenda (at least 4 agenda items were likely to cause hours of debate if opened up to all councillors and the meeting notes ran to 700 pages). The reason was relayed to her by Committee Services.
  - Cllr Saliagopoulos was not denied access to the papers
- Cllr Saliagopoulos, as an experienced councillor, must know that she was entitled to attend the meeting and hear the debate
- The fact that Cllr Saliagopoulos wanted to ask a question about the LAHF shows she clearly had had access to the papers
- Cllr Saliagopoulos could have asked a committee member to raise the question on her behalf
- Cllr Saliagopoulos must know that only the full council has authority to borrow or spend more than £1m
- **But most importantly:** Cllr Saliagopoulos should not be making comments about a Part 2 item on social media in this way.

Especially dangerous is her other comment inviting the public to raise Freedom of Information requests on the matter:

**Cllr Denise Saliagopoulos**

**Lynda Fuller**Linda residents must not forget that Sexton and Williams are still being allowed to borrow money whilst ignoring any questions as to their definite involvement in the previous council's borrowings!! Send in foi's people let's get to the truth!

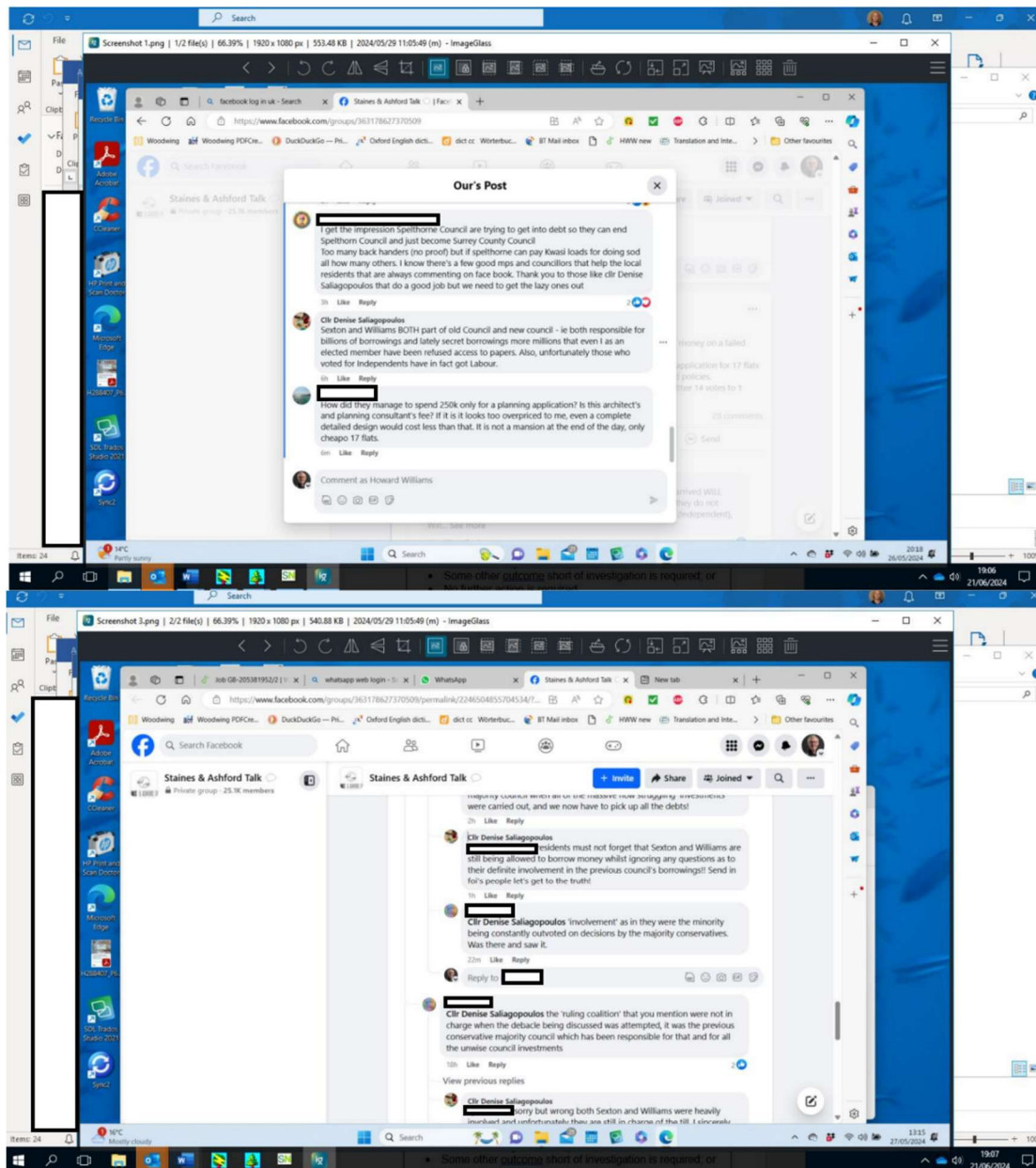
The dishonesty and personal attacks are one thing but to encourage public disclosure of Part 2 confidential material is a serious matter that should not go unchallenged. For the record: I have not replied to any of these posts or comments on Facebook.

Regards,

Howard.

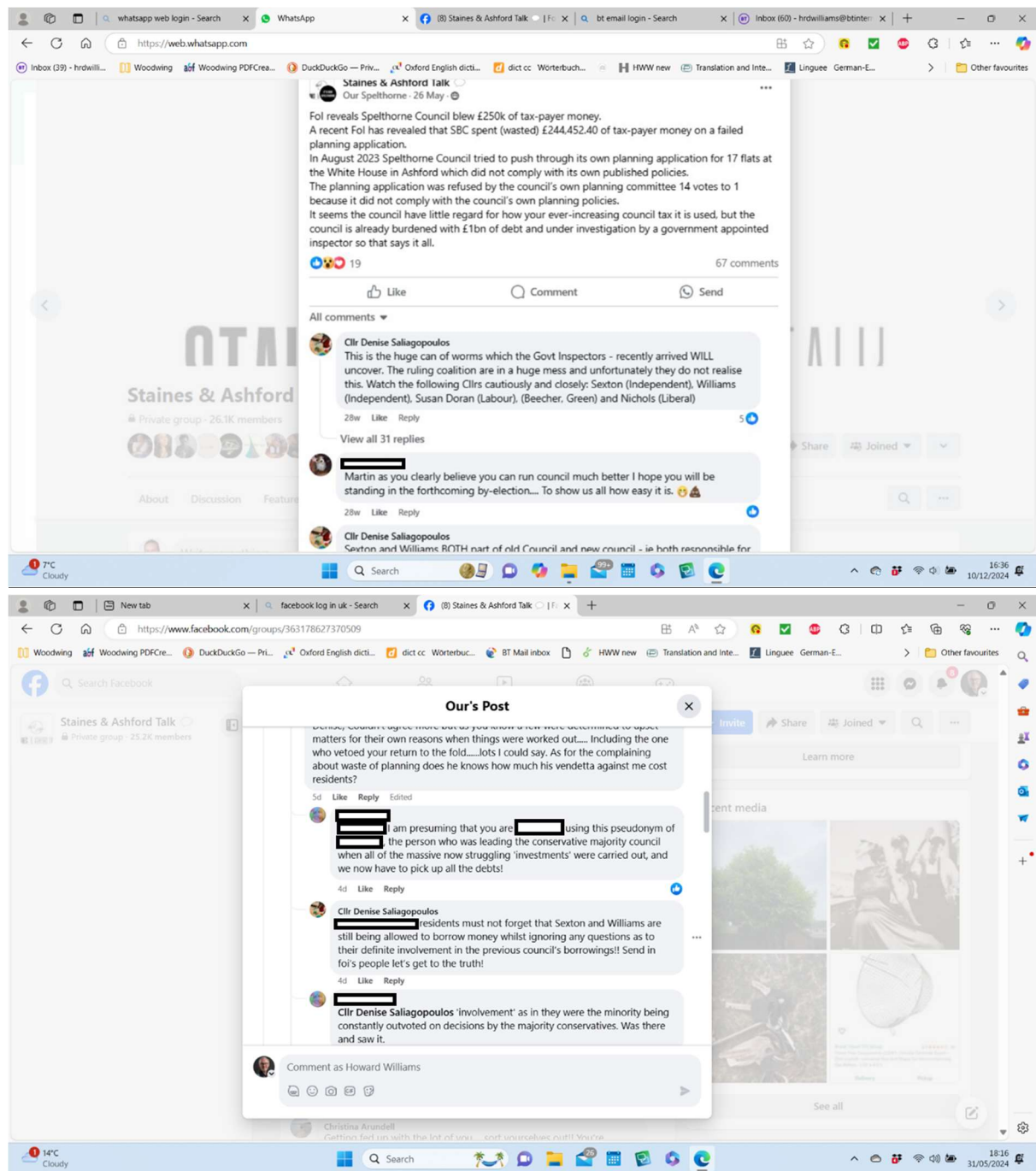
**Cllr Howard Williams BA (Hons.) AITI MCIL FRSA**  
**Staines ward**

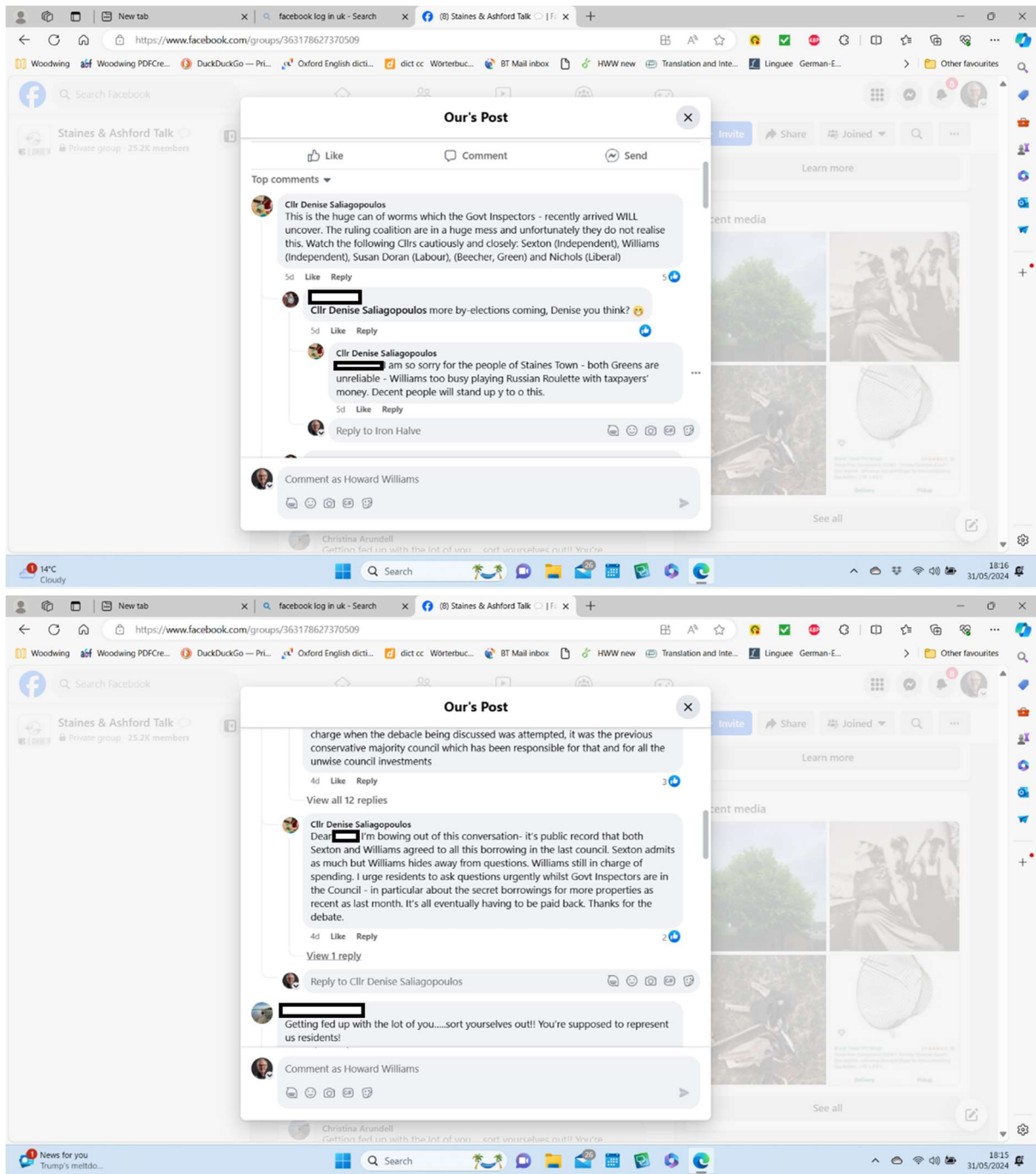
**Spelthorne Borough Council,**  
Council Offices, Knowle Green, Staines-upon-Thames, TW18 1XB  
Tel: 01784 446463  
[cllr.williams@spelthorne.gov.uk](mailto:cllr.williams@spelthorne.gov.uk)

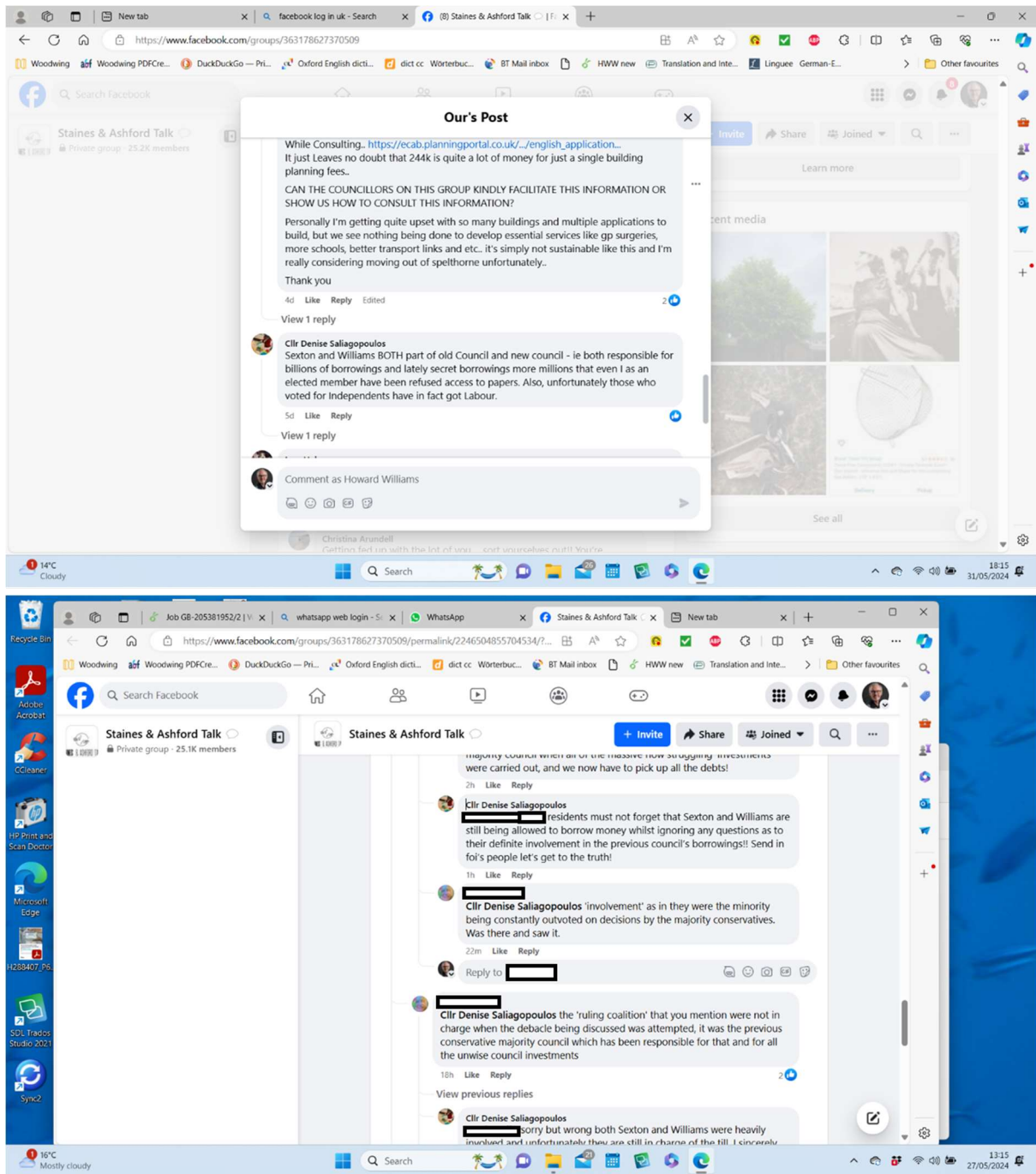


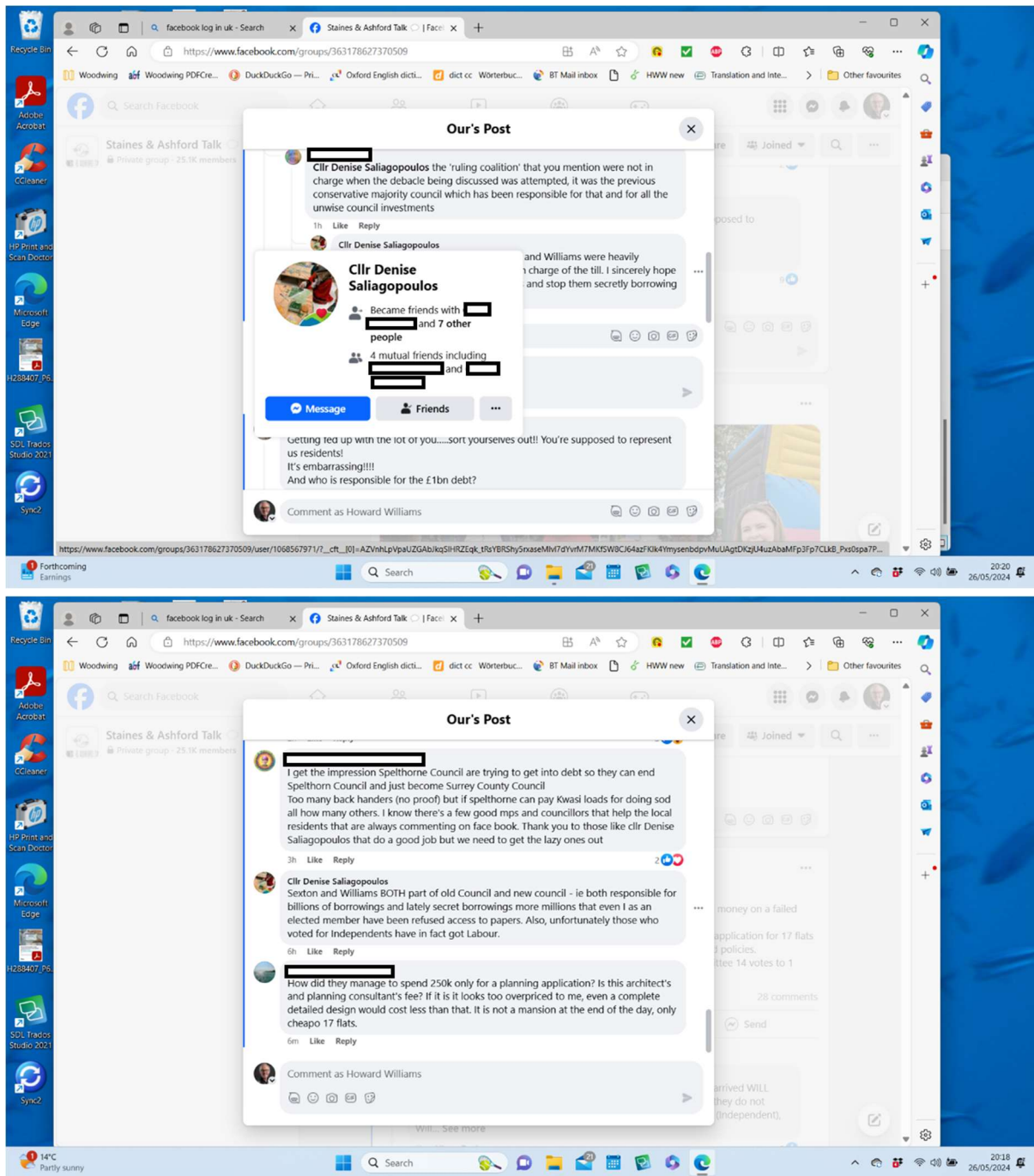
# **ADDITIONAL SCREENSHOTS PROVIDED BY THE COMPLAINANT:**

Names of persons not connected to this complaint or the Council have been redacted









**Appendix 2 – Declaration of Acceptance of Office by Cllr. Saliagopoulos**

148.

## Declaration of Acceptance of Office

I<sup>(1)</sup> DENISE SALIAGPOULOS  
having been elected to the office of<sup>(2)</sup> Councillor  
of<sup>(3)</sup> Spelthorne Borough Council

DECLARE that I take that office upon myself, and will duly and faithfully fulfil the duties of it according to the best of my judgment and ability.

Signed D. Saliagopoulos  
Date 5th May 2023

This declaration was made and signed before me,

Signed [Signature]  
Proper Officer of the Council<sup>(4)</sup>  
Date 5th May 2023

(1) Insert the name of the person making the declaration.  
(2) Insert "member" or "Mayor" as appropriate.  
(3) Insert the name of the authority of which the person making the declaration is a member or mayor.  
(4) Where the declaration is made before another person authorised by section 83(3) of the Local Government Act 1972, state instead the capacity in which that person takes the declaration.<sup>(5)</sup>

<sup>(5)</sup> Under section 83(3) of the Local Government Act 1972, a declaration for members or elected mayors of a county, district or London borough council shall be made before two members of the council, its elected mayor, its proper officer, a justice of the peace or magistrate in the United Kingdom, the Channel Isles or the Isle of Man, or a commissioner appointed to administer oaths in the Supreme Court. A declaration for members of parish councils shall be made before a member or the proper officer of the council.

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**Appendix 3 - Trail of email correspondence between Cllr. Saliagopoulos and council officers in connection with a request to speak at the Development Sub-Committee meeting held on 20 May 2024**

Hi Councillor Saliagopoulos,

Councillor Williams' concern is purely over the length of the agenda, which at present sits at over 700 pages in length.

Councillor Williams has used his discretion, in line with the Constitution, to not allow any external speakers in order to ensure that all the essential business is covered. This will be the last meeting of Development Sub-Committee so there will not be an option to carry items over.

35.1 Any Councillor may attend a Committee or Sub-Committee of which they are not one of the appointed members, with the exception of the committees described in paragraph 35.3 below. A councillor who is 'in attendance' is not entitled to vote on any item and cannot participate in the meeting apart from in the following circumstances:

- a) during the consideration of any motion of which notice has been given which they have moved at a meeting of the Council and which has been referred to that Committee, or
- b) with the **permission of the Chair of the meeting of the Committee or Sub-Committee**, they may speak once on each item they request to speak on. The relevant Committee or Sub-Committee must agree for the Councillor to speak more than once on any particular item.

35.2 Any Councillor wishing to speak at a meeting under the provisions of Standing Order 35.1b) must give Committee Services at least 24 hours' notice of their request to do so.

Could I suggest raising your concern with a councillor who sits on Development Sub-Committee who could perhaps ask the question on your behalf?

Best wishes,

Matthew

Matthew Williams  
Committee Manager

**Spelthorne Borough Council**

Council Offices, Knowle Green, Staines-upon-Thames, TW18 1XB

Tel: 01784 448 576



**From:** Saliagopoulos, Denise (Councillor)

**Sent:** Thursday, May 16, 2024 12:00 PM

**To:** Williams, Matthew

**Cc:** Boughtflower, John (Councillor)

**Subject:** Re: Supplement: Development Sub-Committee, 20 May 2024, Supplement Agenda - Item 12 to the agenda for Development Sub-Committee, Monday, 20 May 2024, 7.00 pm

Thank you very much. Well can you please tell Cllr Williams that I will be informing the public that he has disallowed another councillor, elected by the people, to ask a simple question. What has he got to hide? Outrageous. I challenge this and I wish to refer to the Monitoring Officer urgently please?

Many thanks

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**From:** Williams, Matthew <[M.Williams@spelthorne.gov.uk](mailto:M.Williams@spelthorne.gov.uk)>  
**Sent:** 16 May 2024 11:57  
**To:** Saliagopoulos, Denise (Councillor) <[Cllr.Saliagopoulos@spelthorne.gov.uk](mailto:Cllr.Saliagopoulos@spelthorne.gov.uk)>  
**Cc:** Boughtflower, John (Councillor) <[cllr.boughtflower@spelthorne.gov.uk](mailto:cllr.boughtflower@spelthorne.gov.uk)>  
**Subject:** RE: Supplement: Development Sub-Committee, 20 May 2024, Supplement Agenda - Item 12 to the agenda for Development Sub-Committee, Monday, 20 May 2024, 7.00 pm

Hi Councillor Saliagopoulos,

Of course, the Chair is Councillor Howard Williams.

Best wishes,

Matthew

Matthew Williams  
Committee Manager

**Spelthorne Borough Council**  
Council Offices, Knowle Green, Staines-upon-Thames, TW18 1XB  
Tel: 01784 448 576



**From:** Saliagopoulos, Denise (Councillor) <[Cllr.Saliagopoulos@spelthorne.gov.uk](mailto:Cllr.Saliagopoulos@spelthorne.gov.uk)>  
**Sent:** Thursday, May 16, 2024 11:57 AM  
**To:** Williams, Matthew <[M.Williams@spelthorne.gov.uk](mailto:M.Williams@spelthorne.gov.uk)>  
**Cc:** Boughtflower, John (Councillor) <[cllr.boughtflower@spelthorne.gov.uk](mailto:cllr.boughtflower@spelthorne.gov.uk)>  
**Subject:** Re: Supplement: Development Sub-Committee, 20 May 2024, Supplement Agenda - Item 12 to the agenda for Development Sub-Committee, Monday, 20 May 2024, 7.00 pm

Thank you for your response Matthew, May I ask who is the Chairman please?

Many thanks

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**From:** Williams, Matthew <[M.Williams@spelthorne.gov.uk](mailto:M.Williams@spelthorne.gov.uk)>  
**Sent:** 15 May 2024 12:02  
**To:** Saliagopoulos, Denise (Councillor) <[Cllr.Saliagopoulos@spelthorne.gov.uk](mailto:Cllr.Saliagopoulos@spelthorne.gov.uk)>  
**Subject:** RE: Supplement: Development Sub-Committee, 20 May 2024, Supplement Agenda - Item 12 to the agenda for Development Sub-Committee, Monday, 20 May 2024, 7.00 pm

Private & Confidential

Hi Councillor Saliagopoulos,

As an update to your enquiry, I have spoken to the Chair of Development Sub-Committee who has advised that due to the size of the agenda, he will not be taking any comments/questions from anyone other than members of the Sub-Committee. You are, of course, still welcome to attend the meeting and observe.

Best wishes,

Matthew

Matthew Williams  
Committee Manager

**Spelthorne Borough Council**

Council Offices, Knowle Green, Staines-upon-Thames, TW18 1XB

Tel: 01784 448 576



**From:** Williams, Matthew

**Sent:** Wednesday, May 15, 2024 9:05 AM

**To:** Saliagopoulos, Denise (Councillor) <[Clr.Saliagopoulos@spelthorne.gov.uk](mailto:Clr.Saliagopoulos@spelthorne.gov.uk)>

**Subject:** RE: Supplement: Development Sub-Committee, 20 May 2024, Supplement Agenda - Item 12 to the agenda for Development Sub-Committee, Monday, 20 May 2024, 7.00 pm

Hi Councillor Saliagopoulos,

Thank you for your message.

You are entitled to attend the meeting and with the **permission of the Chair** you can speak once on each item.

If you are attending you need to confirm with us by end of day Friday.

Is there a particular item you wanted to speak on?

Best wishes,

Matthew

Matthew Williams  
Committee Manager

**Spelthorne Borough Council**

Council Offices, Knowle Green, Staines-upon-Thames, TW18 1XB

Tel: 01784 448 576



**From:** Saliagopoulos, Denise (Councillor) <[Cllr.Saliagopoulos@spelthorne.gov.uk](mailto:Cllr.Saliagopoulos@spelthorne.gov.uk)>  
**Sent:** Tuesday, May 14, 2024 11:58 PM  
**To:** Williams, Matthew <[M.Williams@spelthorne.gov.uk](mailto:M.Williams@spelthorne.gov.uk)>  
**Subject:** Re: Supplement: Development Sub-Committee, 20 May 2024, Supplement Agenda - Item 12 to the agenda for Development Sub-Committee, Monday, 20 May 2024, 7.00 pm

Dear Matthew, I hope you are well. Would you kindly advise me how I may go along and ask questions at this committee meeting please?

Many thanks and kind regards, Denise

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**From:** Matthew Williams <[m.williams@spelthorne.gov.uk](mailto:m.williams@spelthorne.gov.uk)>  
**Sent:** 14 May 2024 16:55  
**Subject:** Supplement: Development Sub-Committee, 20 May 2024, Supplement Agenda - Item 12 to the agenda for Development Sub-Committee, Monday, 20 May 2024, 7.00 pm

Dear modern.gov user

The following document has just been published: "Development Sub-Committee, 20 May 2024, Supplement Agenda - Item 12" to the agenda for Development Sub-Committee, Monday, 20 May 2024, 7.00 pm

You can view this document on the link: [Supplement details on extranet web site](#)

The following items are included in the supplement:

**No. Item**

12 Local Authority Housing Fund Acquisitions

**Appendix 4 - Trail of email correspondence between Cllr. Williams and council officers in connection with requests to speak at the Development Sub-Committee meeting held on 20 May 2024**

**From:** Williams, Howard (Councillor)  
**Sent:** 15 May 2024 11:56  
**To:** Williams, Matthew <[M.Williams@spelthorne.gov.uk](mailto:M.Williams@spelthorne.gov.uk)>  
**Subject:** RE: Dev-Sub

P.S.

Matthew,

Please send the same response to any other councillors who ask to speak at the meeting and who are not members of the Development Sub-Committee, as well as any members of the public who enquire.

Many thanks,

Howard.

**Cllr Howard Williams BA (Hons.) AITI MCIL FRSA  
Staines ward**

**Spelthorne Borough Council,**  
Council Offices, Knowle Green, Staines-upon-Thames, TW18 1XB  
Tel: 01784 446463  
[cllr.williams@spelthorne.gov.uk](mailto:cllr.williams@spelthorne.gov.uk)

**From:** Williams, Howard (Councillor)  
**Sent:** Wednesday, May 15, 2024 11:25 AM  
**To:** Williams, Matthew <[M.Williams@spelthorne.gov.uk](mailto:M.Williams@spelthorne.gov.uk)>  
**Subject:** RE: Dev-Sub

Hi Matthew,  
All councillors and members of the public may attend but only members of the Development Sub-Committee may speak. This is a packed agenda and everyone will have something to say about some of the items on it.  
I regret I cannot agree to this request.  
Regards,  
Howard.

**Cllr Howard Williams BA (Hons.) AITI MCIL FRSA  
Staines ward**

**Spelthorne Borough Council,**  
Council Offices, Knowle Green, Staines-upon-Thames, TW18 1XB  
Tel: 01784 446463  
[cllr.williams@spelthorne.gov.uk](mailto:cllr.williams@spelthorne.gov.uk)

**From:** Williams, Matthew <[M.Williams@spelthorne.gov.uk](mailto:M.Williams@spelthorne.gov.uk)>  
**Sent:** Wednesday, May 15, 2024 11:01 AM

Private & Confidential

**To:** Williams, Howard (Councillor) <[Cllr.Williams@spelthorne.gov.uk](mailto:Cllr.Williams@spelthorne.gov.uk)>

**Subject:** Dev-Sub

Hi Councillor Williams,

I hope you are well.

I've had an e-mail from Councillor Saliagopoulos requesting to attend and speak at Development Sub-Committee on Monday 20 May.

I have advised her, as per the constitution, that she can attend and **with the permission of the Chair** can speak once on each item.

I have asked her for any additional information she can provide as to what item she wishes to speak on and will let you know if I hear anything.

Best wishes,

Matthew

Matthew Williams  
Committee Manager

**Spelthorne Borough Council**

Council Offices, Knowle Green, Staines-upon-Thames, TW18 1XB

Tel: 01784 448 576

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