

Letter to Chair of Full Council

Urgent Matters

Councillor Bushby,

We thought as the five Group Leaders of the Council imperative that we write to you as Chair of Council to express our deep concerns that the behaviour of one of the Council's elected Members Councillor Ford is becoming hugely damaging to the reputation and perception of the Council, its elected Members and staff to the outside world.

At the last Full Council meeting on 13 December 2021 Cllr Ford stood up in the public part of the meeting to make several accusations and allegations against fellow Members and Officers in particular Councillor McGeough and Staci Dorey our Head of Legal and Governance (the Council's Monitoring Officer). We need to put on public record that these accusations and allegations are completely unfounded and unsubstantiated.

We cannot continue to condone such intimidating and bullying behaviour towards our staff and Members.

Cllr Ford has been asked on numerous occasions that if he has any factual evidence to back up his stories then allegations can be investigated, but he has failed to do so. Cllr Ford instead chooses to use the opportunity and platform of our Council meeting to continually and publicly abuse Members and staff and it must be stopped.

We have discussed these matters with the Chief Executive and he is deeply concerned the damaging effect this is having on the Council's staff their morale and in particular the health and well-being of those staff being indiscriminately targeted by this unacceptable behaviour.

More widely the reputational impact this will have on the Council if not properly addressed and refuted, which could lead those outside of the Council believing the stories.

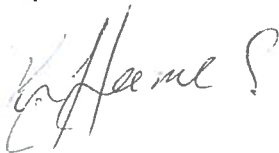
The Chief Executive asked that we as the most senior political leaders of the Council take action to address this as a matter of urgency.

As a Council we have achieved a huge amount over the last 2 and half years through the monumental efforts of our hardworking staff and Members, which Councillor Ford seems intent on trying to undermine.

We want to be a Council that is seen to want to achieve and deliver our ambitious plans with senior officers, staff and Members working together side by side with mutual respect.

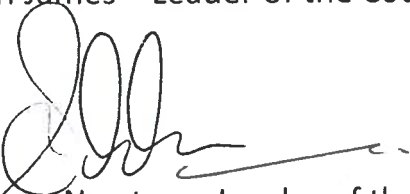
We therefore respectfully ask the Chair to ensure that Councillor Ford is stopped from making such unfounded statements in our Council meeting and if deemed necessary be removed from the meeting.

Signed by:



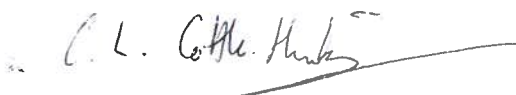
Date: 5/1/2022.

Cllr Ken James – Leader of the Council and Independent Group Leader



Date: 5/1/2022.

Cllr Simon Newton – Leader of the Conservative group



Date: 20/01/2022

Cllr Cheryl Cottle-Hunkin – Leader of the Liberal Democrat group



Date: 7/1/2022

Cllr David Brenton – Leader of Labour Group



Date: 10/1/22.

Cllr Peter Christie – Leader of Non-aligned Group