



I would like to request copies of all documents, correspondence, and records relating to the Council's letter issued to Astley Warehouse Group on 16 March 2026, as well as the decision-making process behind issuing that letter. Specifically, I request the following:

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| 1. A copy of the letter sent to Astley Warehouse Group on 16 March. | A copy of the letter is attached |
| 2. All internal correspondence relating to the drafting, review, and approval of this letter, including (but not limited to) emails, meeting notes, memos, and briefings. | Any internal correspondence, drafting etc and information relating to that was conducted between the Council, its officers and Legal services. The Council are not disclosing such information pursuant to S42 of the Freedom Of information Act as such information is covered by legal professional privilege. |
| 3. Any documents outlining the rationale, considerations, or decision-making process that led to the issuance of the letter. | |
| 4. Copies of any legal advice obtained in relation to this matter, whether from internal legal teams or external legal advisors. | |
| 5. Details of the cost of any legal advice obtained, including: - Total cost incurred - Hourly rates (where applicable) - Name of the legal firm or provider (if external) | Advice was supplied by the Council's legal services from within their budget and no identifiable costs exist. |
| 6. Any communications between the Council and third parties relating to this matter prior to the letter being issued. | The Council does not hold such information |



Wigan[♥]
Council

Astley warehouse Action Group members
Via email

Our reference: RD/LS/8791544
Your reference:
Please ask for: Janet Davies
Direct line: 07775228018
Email: Janet.davies@wigan.gov.uk
Date: 16th March 2026

Please Quote Our Reference on ALL Correspondence

This document can be made available in other languages, on audio tape, CD, large print or other formats on request.

Dear Astley Warehouse Action Group,

Re: Videos published on social media

The Council is aware of videos published on social media, including the recent content published by the account *Zoe Bread* on Instagram and TikTok and your response to the council disabling comments on its Instagram account.

These videos make serious allegations, alluding to corruption and misconduct involving the Council and identifiable individuals and include factually incorrect statements and misleading versions of the truth. All allegations made against officers and/or the Council are taken seriously and we will review our legal options.

As you are aware, planning permission for the development of the warehouse units at Astley Business Park on a designated industrial site was granted in 2024 by the Council's Planning Committee.

The planning procedure is set up in accordance with the law and the Council's Constitution. A decision of the Planning Committee can only be overturned by the Planning Inspectorate or judicial review. No application or challenge to the decision of the Planning Committee was made following the decision.

Following commencement of the work on site in 2025, concerns were raised and in response the Council commissioned an independent external audit of the planning process.

This audit represented an impartial assessment of the Council's handling of the application. It found no evidence of wrongdoing or improper process, and it did not state that the consultation was "wholly inadequate" contrary to what you have quoted online.

The audit concluded that planning permission was granted in line with national and local legislation, that members of the Planning Committee were appropriately trained and made their decision with full knowledge and understanding of the relevant considerations.

Within the recent videos serious allegations of corruption are made against both officers and members.

If anyone has any information or material they believe to be evidence of corruption or improper conduct, they are advised to report it so it can be investigated formally and appropriately.

Without evidence or a basis for the allegations, it is our view that this content damages the professional and personal reputation of those officers and members. More importantly, it puts them at significant risk.

Regrettably, both elected members and officers of Wigan Council have received threatening and intimidatory communications relating to this issue.

As you know, individual officers have the right to consider taking legal advice so we would remind you of the seriousness of your allegations and give you the opportunity to consider your next steps.

You should be aware that disclosing the names of officers' names and contact details may amount to a breach of the Data Protection Act.

The Council is also considering what options it has to protect itself as a public authority against libel or slander.

The Council has been able to engage constructively with representatives of your group, and we remain committed to respectful dialogue and reasoned debate. The decision to disable comments on our Instagram was not taken lightly and goes against our commitment to provide open and transparent communication; however we have been forced to take this decision to protect our staff and individuals from harm who have received threats of violence.

The publication of these videos represents a significant escalation and moves beyond legitimate challenge of planning decisions into personal attacks on officers and elected members who have been carrying out their duties lawfully and diligently.

As mentioned above, we are particularly concerned about the impact on staff. Several individuals, whose contact details have been shared online, have experienced distress, harassment, and threats to their personal safety and family because of ongoing online commentary and misinformation.

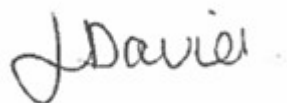
The Council will not tolerate abuse of its staff or elected members.

We strongly encourage you to raise any outstanding concerns through appropriate and lawful channels, and to remove content that is misleading and risks causing harm to individuals.

In your recent online posts, you claim that the Council has refused to meet with your group. For the record, in November we wrote to you offering an in-person meeting, and this invitation remains open. Regrettably, our offer was not taken up at the time. We wish to reiterate that we are willing to meet, provided that the discussion is conducted respectfully and constructively, and that our officers can attend without concern for their safety. Given the escalation in online activity, we would require reassurances from your group regarding the protection of their privacy and wellbeing.

Furthermore, it is essential that we agree the objectives for any meeting in advance, to ensure realistic expectations are set. As previously communicated, the planning decision cannot be reversed. Nevertheless, we welcome the opportunity to clarify the timeline and forthcoming steps for the site.

Yours faithfully

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "J. Davie". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large initial "J" and a trailing flourish.

for Assistant Director - Legal, Governance and Elections