



## **COMPLAINT AGAINST COUNCILLOR SHEILA PEACOCK – LOCAL REFERENCE SC005/1314**

### **Notice of Finding of Standards Hearing Sub-Committee relating to Councillor Sheila Peacock.**

#### **Decision**

On 29<sup>th</sup> April 2014, the Hearing Sub-Committee of the Standards Committee found that Councillor Peacock's actions in sending two letters by e-mail, about a personal matter, on Mayor's headed paper and from her Council laptop, meant that she had failed to use the resources of the Council in accordance with its reasonable requirements contrary to paragraph 3.6(a) of the Councillor's Code of Conduct. The Sub-Committee was also of the opinion that in carrying out these actions Councillor Peacock had attempted to secure an improper advantage for herself contrary to paragraph 3.5 of the Councillors Code of Conduct and that she had also brought her office as Mayor into disrepute contrary to paragraph 3.4 of the Councillor's Code of Conduct.

#### **Reasons**

The Sub-Committee was of the opinion, taking into account all the circumstances of the case that Councillor Peacock was acting in her capacity as a councillor when sending these letters on a personal matter by Council e-mail on Mayor's headed paper.

Here the circumstances of the case include the fact that Cllr Peacock sought to get attention given to her concerns by using her Mayoral title, letterhead and e-mail address and to that extent she was conducting the business of her office as Mayor and accordingly acting in her capacity as a councillor. Therefore the provisions of the Code of Conduct for Councillors were engaged, even though the contents of the letter were essentially those a member of the public could have raised.

The Sub-Committee was also of the opinion that Councillor Peacock had breached paragraph 3.5 of the Code by attempting to use her position as a member improperly to secure for herself an advantage in that after attempting other methods of communication, she then sent a letter using the Mayor's letterhead and e-mail to get attention and secure a response. In addition, she sent a second letter by e-mail on Mayor's headed paper as a follow-up to correspondence she had received on this personal matter. As a consequence of these actions the Sub-Committee also considered she had brought her office as Mayor into disrepute contrary to paragraph 3.4. of the Code.

The Sub-Committee further considered that Councillor Peacock breached paragraph 3.6.(a) of the Code as she had not followed the reasonable requirements of the Council relating to the use of Council resources, by sending correspondence about a personal matter using Mayor's headed paper and via the Council's e-mail system.

**Sanction:**

The Sub-Committee considered the breaches of the Code to be serious and censured Cllr Peacock for her conduct.

The Sub-Committee agreed to instruct the Monitoring Officer to arrange training on the Councillors' Code of Conduct within three months of this hearing.

The Sub-Committee decided to recommend to the Leader of the Labour Group that this decision be taken into consideration when making appointments to Committees, Sub-Committees of the Council and Outside Bodies.

The Sub-Committee also agreed that a notice summarising the decision should be published in Haringey People and on Council's website as soon as possible.

**DATE: 30 APRIL 2014**

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