

22<sup>nd</sup> May 2015

### **Complaint - Jennifer Grey**

I am writing in response to your letter dated 12 January 2015, in which you raised a complaint about Authority Member Jennifer Gray, and a further complaint directed to the Authority itself. As you will be aware the complaint against Jennifer Gray has been subject to our Member complaints process and it has been necessary to await the outcome of this process before responding to the other points you have raised about the Authority. You will have received, via the record of decision from the Authorities Monitoring Officer, that the outcome of the investigation and complaints process into this matter is that there has been no failure to comply with the code of conduct

In your letter you state that you waited to make your complaint for over 12 months, as you were appealing the decision of the Planning Committee, and were unable to speak freely about this matter. I want to take this opportunity to reassure you that the Planning Appeals process and the Member complaint process are two different and distinct processes and your raising of a complaint against a member of the Authority would in no way have prejudiced any appeal you may have lodged with the Planning Inspectorate.

In relation to the complaint about the Authority, you state in your letter that “a silence fell onto the room when a black man (one of our team on the day) walked in. To many of those present it made those assembled resemble something out of the Wild West.”

The individual concerned [REDACTED] wrote an email to the Planning Committee Members thanking them for listening to Durand’s case. In this letter, which was sent soon after the meeting, he made no reference to having any concerns about the conduct of the meeting. Others attending have indicated that their impression was that the reason the room fell silent at that moment was that the meeting was due to start at roughly the same time [REDACTED] arrived.

You also state that “you should have done something about it in the 12 months that have now passed; and that it paints a disgraceful picture of a public authority”.

The complaint process was launched as soon as your letter had been received and no other complaints were received before that date. As mentioned above, the process has concluded with a finding of no failure to comply with the Code of Conduct. Having regard to the outcome of the member complaints process, the received specialist advice into the issues you raised and the comments from [REDACTED] and others in attendance on the day, there was no action required to be taken by the Authority concerning the Planning Committee Meeting on 12 December 2013.

For your information, the Authority has recently taken a decision to webcast meetings of the Planning Committee and the full Authority. This will add an additional layer of transparency to the proceedings of the Authority, ensuring that anyone who is interested in witnessing the proceedings of our meetings is able to do so and that there is a robust record of what takes place.

In conclusion, I do not find any evidence in support of the accusations you have raised against the Authority and do not therefore intend to take any further action in relation to your complaint.

Trevor Beattie  
**Chief Executive**

