

STANDARDS ASSESSMENT PANEL

**11 September 2013 at 7.00pm
PART 1 - PUBLIC**

PRESENT:

Councillors Ball, Chapman and Varma.

Independent Non-Voting Member: Mr J Beastall (Chair).

Independent Person: Mr M Budd

ALSO PRESENT: (Subject Councillor), P Quill (Investigating Officer), H Harris, Director of Legal and Democratic Services and Linda Zimmerman (Democratic Services)

1. **Absent**
(Complainant).

2. **Urgent Matters**
There were none.

3. **Matters to be Considered in Private**
Item 5 – Complaint against a Councillor - contained information that is exempt from disclosure by virtue of paragraph 1 of schedule 12A of the Local Government Act 1972 and was taken in private.

4. **Declarations of Interest**
There were none.

5. **Complaint Against A Councillor**

Summary of Complaint:

A resident of Ealing complained that Councillor x had breached the Code of Conduct and brought his/her office into disrepute by sending an email to another councillor addressing him/her as racist. The email in question had been copied to four other councillors and one member of the public.

The Investigating Officer had concluded that the comments made by Councillor x, whether provoked or unprovoked, did not breach the Code of Conduct.

Councillor x's comments were an expression of his opinion and it was not for the investigating officer to express a view whether the opinion was right or not.

The Panel considered the complaint raised, the investigating officer's report and the oral submissions of Councillor x. The Panel noted that Councillor x had said that on reflection he/she would not respond the same way in the future.

On balance the Panel considered this to be an unfortunate use of language but was not serious enough to conclude that Councillor x had breached the Code of Conduct.

Resolved:

The Standards Assessment Panel:

- i. agreed that the public interest required that consideration of this complaint be held in private.
- ii. agreed that Councillor x had not failed to comply with Ealing's Code of Conduct for Councillors.
- iii. expressed the view that the wording in the email was not appropriate language for councillors to use to each other and asked that Cllr x take note of this.

Reason for Decision

The Standards Assessment Panel considered that whilst the wording in the email in question was inappropriate, it did not amount to a breach of the Council's Code of Conduct for members.

11. Date of the Next Meeting

The next meeting of Standards Committee will take place on 19 September 2013.

JOHN BEASTALL (Chair)

The meeting finished at 8pm.