

Decisions of the Group Leaders Panel

28 August 2013

Members Present:-

Stephen Ross - Independent Person (Chairman)

Councillor Jack Cohen Councillor John Marshall
Councillor Richard Cornelius Councillor Alison Moore
Councillor Anthony Finn

1. APPOINTMENT OF CHAIRMAN

That Mr Stephen Ross be appointed Chairman.

2. MINUTES OF LAST MEETING

The Minutes of the last meeting were approved as a correct record.

3. ABSENCE OF MEMBERS (IF ANY)

All Members were present.

4. DECLARATION OF MEMBERS' DISCLOSABLE PECUNIARY INTERESTS AND NON PECUNIARY INTERESTS (IF ANY)

Members declared the following interests:

Councillor:	Agenda Item(s):	Interest :
John Marshall	8 – Case no. 008/13 and 009/13	Non pecuniary interest as Councillor Marshall is a member of the Conservative Group. Councillor Marshall stayed in the room during the determination of this item but did not take part in the voting.
Anthony Finn		Non pecuniary interest as Councillor Finn is a member of the Conservative Group and is currently the Conservative Group Whip. Councillor Finn stayed in the room during the determination of this item but did not take part in the voting.

5. DECISION ON WHETHER TO EXCLUDE THE PUBLIC AND THE PRESS

Papers for this meeting had not been made available in accordance with Section 100B (1) and (2) of the Local Government Act 1972 as the matters yet to be discussed

involved the likely disclosure of exempt information. It was for the Panel to decide whether the public and press should be excluded for consideration of the item.

RESOLVED - That Case 008/13 be heard in public session and Cases 005/13, 006/13, 007/13 and 009/13 be heard in private session on the grounds that they involve the likely disclosure of exempt information as defined in Paragraph 1 of Part 1 of Schedule 12A of the Act (as amended) having been considered that the public interest in maintaining the exemption outweighs the public interest in disclosing the information.

6. CASE 008/13

The Panel considered the report on behalf of the Monitoring Officer, which set out details of the complaint.

The complaint concerns comments made at full Council meeting on 16 July 2013 by Councillor Coleman alleging that Conservative councillors attending Overview and Scrutiny meetings were being whipped, particularly in relation to One Barnet issues.

The Panel noted that the complaint was slightly unusual as the complainant does not have evidence of a breach by any particular councillor or councillors. The complainant was asking for an investigation into the veracity of Councillor Coleman's statement. The report was therefore a preliminary investigation into whether, on the face of it, Members have failed to declare the whip at Overview and Scrutiny Committees contrary to the requirement of the Council's Constitution.

RESOLVED

1. That there was no evidence before the Panel that the Conservative Group were subject to the whip at Overview and Scrutiny Committees.
2. That it appeared to be some difference in the understanding of the whipping process and that Groups clarify this to members at their Group meetings.

7. MOTION TO EXCLUDE THE PRESS AND PUBLIC:

RESOLVED - That under Section 100A (4) of the Local Government Act 1972, the public be excluded from the meeting for the following items of business on the grounds that they involve the likely disclosure of exempt information as defined in Paragraph 1 of Part 1 of Schedule 12A of the Act (as amended).

8. CASE 005/13

The Monitoring Officer introduced her factual report.

RESOLVED – That there was no breach of any of the paragraphs of the Members' Code of Conduct and that no further action be taken.

9. CASE 006/13

The Monitoring Officer introduced her factual report.

RESOLVED –

1. That there was no breach of any of the paragraphs of the Members' Code of Conduct.
2. Further details of the Panel's decision on this matter are set out in the separate exempt section of these decisions.

10. CASE 007/13

The Monitoring Officer introduced her factual report.

RESOLVED –

1. That there was no breach of any of the paragraphs of the Members' Code of Conduct.
2. Further details of the Panel's decision on this matter are set out in the separate exempt section of these decisions.

11. CASE 009/13

The Monitoring Officer introduced her factual report.

RESOLVED – That there was no breach of any of the paragraphs of the Members' Code of Conduct and that no further action be taken.

12. ANY OTHER ITEM(S) THAT THE CHAIRMAN DECIDES ARE URGENT

There were none.

The meeting finished at 7.55 pm