



## HOUSE OF COMMONS

LONDON SW1A 0AA

FAO: John William Jones  
Monitoring Officer and  
Deputy Director of Legal and Governance  
London Borough of Havering,  
Town Hall, Main Road,  
Romford - RM1 3BB

17.07.2020

Dear John

I am writing to you today in urgent response to the recent revelations pertaining to the Local Government Boundary Commission, and the potential implications on Havering Council. The 32-minute recording of the Council Leader speaking at a Conservative Group meeting has raised serious concerns surrounding the misconduct of elected representatives.

Having seen the full transcript of the Conservative Group meeting which took place on 3<sup>rd</sup> February 2020, I am urging an immediate investigation into the alarming practices and allegations of corruption that have now been brought to the fore by the local and national media.

Cllr White's flippant remarks during the meeting, and the lack of conscientious intervention implies that the entire Conservative Group are complicit in acts to subvert the democratic process by gerrymandering. I am requesting a full investigation into this matter, which if true requires action.

The contents of the recording includes Cllr White expressing that the Chief Executive has allowed him to manipulate the process for political gain stating; **"he has agreed for some reason to allow me to influence the proposals and I've been able to."** He also goes on to insinuate that the MP for Romford has also been allowed to influence the proposals alleging that he had met with the MP to check which option would deliver the largest political win. He explained to the Conservative Group that **"we've come up with a set of proposals that I think are really politically advantageous for us."**

The Leader also alleges that the Chief Executive has aided him in covering his tracks, by allowing the Governance Committee to 'filter' the options so that only the Conservative Group's preferred option is discussed at Full Council.

***"[The Chief Executive] has now agreed that we can have a Governance Committee Meeting to discuss the four options, pick which one we like, make any recommendations and changes to it and that then goes on to Full Council as an administration amendment or a motion... By changing it and having Governance Committee filter, we can argue that there's cross-party involvement in the boundary proposals we have brought forward."***

Jon Cruddas MP  
Member of Parliament for Dagenham and Rainham, incorporating South Hornchurch and Elm Park  
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There are also suggestions that council officers overseeing the boundary change process have been colluding with the Conservative Group. It is alleged in the meeting by the Council Leader that **"the one officer that is able to use the computer programme is Joshua's [Councillor Chapman] cousin."** On the recording the Conservative Group laugh at this as Cllr White continues; **"he's the chap who's been able to govern the boundaries and what not."**

I am sure in your capacity as Monitoring Officer you are aware of The Seven Principles of Public Life which consist of selflessness, integrity, objectivity, accountability, openness, honesty and leadership. It is my belief that if the recording is accurate and the allegations are found to be true pending a full investigation, the Leader of the Council should be found unfit to hold public office.

Similarly, the allegations against those directly employed by the council such as the Chief Executive and officers working specifically on the boundary change submission, have the potential to destabilise public trust in local government's ability to operate in a fair and transparent manner.

This is a concern which I urge you to look into. It is of the utmost importance that Havering Council carry out a full internal investigation into the allegations raised in this letter and by the wider media.

I await your response on this important issue.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in dark ink, appearing to read 'Jon Cruddas'.

**Jon Cruddas MP**

Member of Parliament for Dagenham and Rainham  
Incorporating South Hornchurch and Elm Park