

**Case ref: Sept-05**

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Witness Statement of Helen Sargeant

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1. My name is Helen Sargeant and I am a Senior Legal Adviser – Employment and Governance, in the Legal and Procurement Group at the Greater London Authority (“the GLA”).
  
2. I was asked by the Head of Legal and Procurement and Monitoring Officer at the GLA to work with Satish Mistry (the then Deputy Head of Law at the GLA and lead of the investigation at the time at the GLA) on the investigation into whether or not Assembly Member/ Councillor Barnbrook had breached the Code of Conduct following the Decision of the GLA’s Assessment Sub-Committee.
  
3. I wrote to Mr Barnbrook on the 19 December 2008 explaining that we were arranging a meeting with him to discuss the allegations made by Councillor Rush. In the letter I set out two possible dates on the 20<sup>th</sup> and 21<sup>st</sup> January 2009. The letter was sent by email and copied to his PA, Simon Darby. I then had several emails with Simon Darby  

and further suggested a friend, political assistant, or trade union representative. After further discussion, Simon confirmed that 6 February 2009 was convenient. I wrote to Mr Barnbrook on 23 January 2009 confirming the time and date.
  
4. I informed him in this letter that “we will be taking notes, and are minded to record our conversation. If we wish to record the interview we will ask you to

give your consent beforehand. If we rely on information gained during this interview in a report, we will send you a copy of the interview record and give you an opportunity to comment on it. If we do not send you a copy of the interview record, you may request it. It is possible that what you say at interview may be disclosed in the report. Please inform me in advance if you will be accompanied and if so by whom. You may have a friend, political assistant or adviser with you during the interview. However, the person who accompanies you should not be a member of the standards committee, a GLA or council officer (except a political assistant) or a potential witness.”

5. In attendance at the meeting on 6 February 2009 was myself, Satish Mistry, Sanjay Prashar - Deputy Head, Corporate Law and Employment, London Borough of Barking and Dagenham, and Lisa Newman, Trainee Solicitor at the GLA. Lisa had been asked to take notes of the meeting. We had drafted a framework of questions which Mr Mistry had sent to Mr Barnbrook in advance of the meeting on 3 February 2009. The investigators (including myself) took it in turns to ask questions, and I also tried to take notes where I could of the points raised in the meeting. I was not able to write down everything because I was also asking questions, listening to the answers and thinking of further points. My notes are therefore not comprehensive, however, I did try and take down as many points as I could.
6. Following the meeting, Lisa Newman typed up her handwritten notes into a record of the meeting and sent this to me and the other investigating officers to review. I cross-referenced these to my notes, as well as my recollection of the meeting, and made some amendments. Mr Prashar also made a few comments.
7. Once all investigating officers had approved the record of the meeting, I sent it to Assembly Member/ Councillor Barnbrook on 13 February 2009 and copied it to Simon Darby (in an email.) In the letter I asked him if he could



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