



**Havering**  
LONDON BOROUGH

**Roger McFarland**  
**Head of Regeneration and**  
**Strategic Planning**

London Borough of Havering  
Mercury House, Mercury Gardens  
Romford RM1 3SL

**TO WHOM IT MAY CONCERN**

**Telephone: 01708 432583**  
Fax: 01708 432512  
email: roger.mcfarland@havering.gov.uk  
Textphone: 01708 433175  
Date: 19 March 2009

Your reference:

Our reference: RMcF/mm/Complaints

**MARILYN SMYTH**

I commissioned Marilyn Smyth in November 2008 to carry out an independent investigation of a complaint against another Council service on my behalf.

The complaint was a particularly complex and sensitive one, involving staff at different levels from more than one Council department, and relating to previous court cases, an ombudsman complaint, neighbour dispute, and complaints of racial harassment and race discrimination. There had been a history of responding to these complaints in ways that had left the complainant feeling aggrieved and highly dissatisfied.

Marilyn proved herself very capable and effective in addressing this situation. She won the confidence of the complainant in her ability to understand the complaints and to resolve them fairly and independently. She was also successful in persuading Council staff to co-operate with her investigation, enabling her to establish the full facts of the case, to clearly identify deficiencies in the Council's actions, and to make recommendations as to the best remedial steps to take, in ways which were accepted as fair and reasonable by both the Council and the complainant.

The principal outcomes of the investigations were therefore an action plan to improve future performance by the relevant staff, and a letter from the complainant indicating her satisfaction that from her perspective her complaints had been fully and fairly addressed.

Marilyn showed herself to be very committed to this assignment, and she communicated well with her client at all stages, which contributed greatly to the positive outcome she achieved.

Roger McFarland  
Head of Regeneration and Strategic Planning