

2 July 2012

Mr Paul Cardin
Via email: paul.cardin@ntlworld.com

Our Ref: GS/47/017115/12

Dear Mr Cardin,

Re: Dangerous Situation

Thank you for your email of 3 June to the Rt Hon Grant Shapps MP, regarding accountability and transparency issues at Wirral Borough Council. I have been asked to reply and apologise for the delay in doing so.

I should first of all explain that local authorities act independently of central government. Ministers have no remit to intervene in the day to day affairs of local authorities, except where specific provision has been made in an Act of Parliament. Local authorities are accountable for their actions to their electorate and must act within their statutory powers.

While I appreciate your concerns about the accountability of senior officers at Wirral and transparency of the council's processes, central government does not have a role in detailed local government pay and workforce matters. These matters are for each council to determine as an individual employer in light of local circumstances. As such, we are unable to intervene or comment on events as you describe in Wirral. However, the Government expects councils to act in a fair and open manner when dealing with Human Resource matters and to take into account and act in accordance with current employment legislation and regulations.

The Department is aware of the broader concerns you raise about the corporate governance of Wirral Borough Council. The Local Government Association (LGA) is providing peer support to help the council address these issues. An independently chaired improvement board has been put in place, consisting of senior councillors and council officials, the LGA, the district auditor, and independent peers from other authorities. It is down to the council, with support from sector peers, to make improvements

Yours sincerely,



PETER EMECHETE