



Councillor Denise Hyland  
*Leader, Royal Borough of Greenwich*

Peter Edwards  
Managing Director  
South London Press LTD  
221-241 Beckenham Road  
Kent  
BR3 4UF

8<sup>th</sup> August 2014

Dear Mr Edwards,

Thank you for your letter.

I can assure you that Councillors have had access to the full range of information you have provided.

I can confirm that when the Council's Cabinet on 19 July 2011 considered the matter of Greenwich Time that the proposals put forward by Tindle Newspaper Group at your meeting with officers was included in a confidential report. This meeting was in 2011 and not two years ago.

The confidential report made clear your proposal, that your Group would be interested in either:

- buying GT as a going concern with the Council using it as the preferred outlet for our advertising
- bidding for any tender the Council let in relation to council advertising

Councillors were also informed in that report that:

- you envisaged the Council would require around eight pages each week - four pages each week for Choice Based Lettings Properties, one page for statutory notices, occasional recruitment ads and two pages for council news

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- the model you proposed would be based upon a single column centimetre rate of £11 being charged for all advertisements, whilst the news pages would be free of charge
- you informed officers that Tindle would double their circulation in the borough to 85,000 copies delivered door to door in Greenwich (not 90,000 copies door to door as you state in your letter).
- an additional 5,000 copies would be available through local supermarkets
- Council information would also be posted on the website of your local title, The Mercury.
- you would seek a three year agreement that all advertising would be placed in the Mercury.

Based upon your proposal, the Council calculated it would pay around £15,000 per week for the chargeable pages you set out in each edition, or around £750,000 a year based upon the current 50 editions of GT that are produced each year.

Whilst this offered a significant reduction on the normal advertising charges levied by Tindle, it would still have resulted in an increase in expenditure for the Council.

The Council was also concerned that the proposal would:

- still not match the borough wide distribution offered by Greenwich Time
- not match the use of a tracking system which was associated with the distribution of Greenwich Time at the time of the report
- provide a potential reputational risk as our adverts may appear alongside those of Adult Service providers and chat lines

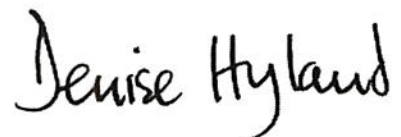
Cabinet was made fully aware of all these issues when it took its original decision to continue with the publication of Greenwich Time.

Information you disclosed was discussed by the Council's Cabinet in a closed confidential session in order to honour your request that you would not want your competitors to have access to the information you provided us with. We also ensured that we were mindful of this fact in all other public reports we have submitted in relation to Greenwich Time.

In addition, when the Council replied to the DCLG's most recent letter about Greenwich Time, the Council had just two weeks to reply. This meant that it would have not been feasible for the Council to meet local publishers to provide them with another opportunity to put forward alternative arrangements. As such, the offer you refer to was made three years ago, it had not been submitted formally as part of a tendering process. However, we did make your offer known to the Secretary of State in our submission on a strictly confidential not for publication basis. This meant we honoured your requirement for confidentiality but were fully transparent in our submission to the Secretary of State. The Council therefore provided costs based upon rates advertised by the Mercury at the time of its response. However, if it had used the information that you had provided us with back in 2011, it would still have cost the Council more for less.

I hope this reassures you on the points you have raised. The Council is now awaiting the response of the Secretary of State before it will be in a position to respond further.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Denise Hyland". The script is cursive and fluid, with the first letter 'D' being particularly large and stylized.

Cllr Denise Hyland  
Leader, Royal Borough of Greenwich