



6 July 2012

Ms K Brudenell
Solicitor to the Leveson Enquiry
Royal Courts of Justice
The Strand
LONDON
WC2A 2LL

Dear Ms Brudenell,

Leveson Inquiry into the culture, practices and ethics of the press

Thank you for your letters dated June 29th 2012, addressed to both of us. As your letters were identical, we are sending you this joint response.

Before answering your specific questions, we should clarify our position regarding the proposals for self regulation contained in the witness statement made by Lord Black of Brentwood, dated June 7th 2012.

Neither of us was aware of Lord Black's proposals until we received your letters. Upon receiving them (in the afternoon of Friday, June 29th), we each located Lord Black's submissions on the Inquiry website, and read them. Although we now both know about his proposed scheme, clearly neither of us has had sufficient time to consider the implications of his submission, and nor have our colleagues.

Moreover, we are not authorised to comment on Lord Black's suggested regime for self regulation; that must be a decision for the board of Archant Community Media Ltd. No doubt once a final proposal is produced, there will be full consultation with all Archant editors before the Board makes a decision.

All we can say at the moment, therefore, is that our personal opinions are that we agree the general direction of travel envisaged by Lord Black. We anticipate that given Archant's commitment to the current PCC Code, the company will maintain its support for self regulation, but it is far too early to give any kind of formal indication, one way or the other, regarding Lord Black's scheme.

Turning to the specific questions you have raised, we respond as follows:

- (1) Terry Hunt, Editor of the East Anglian Daily Times; and Nigel Pickover, Editor of The Star, Ipswich
- (2) See above.

Press House, 30 Lower Brook Street, Ipswich, Suffolk IP1 1AN
Telephone 01473 230023 www.archant.co.uk

Archant Community Media Ltd:
Registered in England 00019300: Registered Office: Prospect House, Rouen Road, Norwich, NR1 1RE

(3) Entering into the type of contractual obligation envisaged by Lord Black would be a matter for the company's Board, which will no doubt make its decision after internal consultation. We, and Archant's other editors, will be influential participants in that process, but ultimately, the decision will not be ours, but the Board's.

(4) See above.

(5) If it were to be implemented, we do not consider that the system envisaged by Lord Black will have any effect at all on the current culture, practices and ethics of our respective newspapers. As we have both said in our evidence, our titles are fully compliant with the PCC's Code, and that will continue to be our position.

(6) We cannot speak for the company, but the initial personal reactions of both of us to Lord Black's proposal is mixed: we anticipate that Archant will have no difficulty in complying with the day to day scheme of self regulation and with the Code; but we are concerned to ensure that, in its final form, it does not add an expensive layer of governance infrastructure.

Finally, may we say that like the rest of the country, we have been horrified by the unethical and allegedly criminal conduct of certain elements of the national press. By concentrating on the unacceptable behaviour of part of the national press, we are extremely concerned that the Inquiry will conclude that such behaviour is endemic throughout the newspaper and publishing industry.

Therefore, we wish to emphasise that this is not the case. In terms of readership, the UK's regional press is read by 33 million people per week (source: Newspaper Society). Clearly, the regional press regularly reaches a huge proportion of the UK's adult population each week, and yet no-one has suggested to the Inquiry that any improper, unethical, or unlawful behaviour has occurred within any part of the regional press. This crucial fact is one which we urge the Inquiry not to overlook.

Yours sincerely



Terry Hunt
Editor, East Anglian Daily Times



Nigel Pickover
Editor, Ipswich Star

Press House, 30 Lower Brook Street, Ipswich, Suffolk IP1 1AN
Telephone 01473 230023 www.archant.co.uk

Archant Community Media Ltd:
Registered in England 00019300: Registered Office: Prospect House, Rouen Road, Norwich, NR1 1RE.