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## News

**Ross Lydall and Anthony Kimber**

08.02.10

### A housing chief who quit after failing to persuade tenants to give up control of their council homes is named today as London's best-paid town hall official.

Neil Litherland secured a pay-off in excess of £320,000 from [Camden](#). Research for the Evening Standard shows how "fat cat" pay has soared across London's 33 local authorities, despite demands for efficiencies to protect jobs during the recession.

Figures obtained under the [Freedom of Information Act](#) show 498 officials took home more than £100,000 in 2008/09 — a 21 per cent increase on the previous year. There were also 12,231 council staff on more than £50,000.

Mr Litherland's "golden goodbye" was about £40,000 more than the money earned by London's best-paid chief executive, Newham's Joe Duckworth.

Camden tried to keep the payment secret by saying that identifying Mr Litherland, who had been housing director, would be an "unfair and unwarranted interference" in his privacy.

Tenants' representatives in Camden reacted angrily to the size of the payout. Mr Litherland had been at the forefront of a campaign to persuade them to transfer their council homes from town hall control to a quango known as an Almo, or arms-length management organisation.

Opponents of the policy claim it is a first step to the homes being privatised, and in Camden tenants voted overwhelmingly to retain the council as their landlord.

Meric Apak, chairman of Camden Fed, which represents the borough's tenants' associations, said: "My experience was that he did not have a record of interaction with tenants, positive or otherwise. In this economic climate when there is no money, it's a disgrace that the council has to pay executives such exorbitant amounts.

"The £320,000 is adequate to build two council homes. That could help two homeless families on the waiting list. He never climbed down from his ivory tower. He never spoke to tenants."

Mr Litherland, who was also deputy chief executive and head of adult social care, had been with the council for 13 years. He quit in August 2008 in a restructuring, and said at the time: "I have had a great time at Camden."

The payment was approved by the council's Liberal Democrat and Conservative administration in the 2008/09 financial year. Camden paid 26 staff more than £100,000. Chief executive Moira Gibb got between £220,000 and £229,000.

A Camden spokeswoman said: "The public interest in withholding this information outweighs the public interest in disclosing it. Disclosure would be an unfair and unwarranted interference in the individual's privacy."

The Standard found that there was a dramatic increase in six-figure salaries at several boroughs. Those earning £100,000 or more at Greenwich went up from 11 to 24; in [Islington](#) from nine to 23; [Tower Hamlets](#) from 15 to 26; and [Westminster](#) 17 to 30.

## The 10 Best-Paid Council Officials

**Neil Litherland** Camden  
£320,000-£330,000

**Joe Duckworth** Newham  
£280,000-£289,000

**Colin Wilson** Westminster  
£270,000-£279,000

**Unidentified officer** Newham  
£250,000-£259,000

**Anthony Mayer** GLA  
£250,000-£259,000

**Gerald Jones** Wandsworth  
£230,000-£239,000

**Graham Ellis** Westminster  
£230,000-£239,000

**Moira Gibb** Camden  
£220,000-£229,000

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**Darra Singh** Ealing  
£220,000-£229,000

**Derek Myers** Ken'ton & Chelsea  
£220,000-£229,000

\*Figure are for London in 2008/09

\*Those named are serving chief executives except Mr Litherland and Mr Mayer, who is a former chief executive of the GLA.

\*Many councils refused to identify their highest earners by name



### Reader views (3)

A Camden spokeswoman said: "The public interest in withholding this information outweighs the public interest in disclosing it. Disclosure would be an unfair and unwarranted interference in the individual's privacy."

Is it just me or has this 'camden spokeswoman' forgot the they work for US, yes we the tax and council tax payer, the man was a so called 'public servant' therefore we have a right to know what our money is squandered on or who it is being given away to without any regard to the current financial restraints. This just shows how out of touch these local authorities have become and how incompetent they are with the money fleeced from the ordinary hard working people of this country.

- **Ed, Hampshire**

singalong! We're in the money, we're in the money, we gotta lotta what nulabour's handin round! oink oink!

- **Jules\_London, london**

How do they get away with it? How come these creatures can sit behind closed doors, away from public scrutiny, and award themselves such obscenely huge incomes from the public purse? When they're occasionally questioned about these extravagant wages, they usually come out with the nonsense about having to pay high wages to employ the cream of the crop. Despite the fact that the 'cream' are usually exposed as useless, inept and unfit for office. As with all in the public services, they know they can't be sacked, they either take 'early retirement' or move on to an other choice 'job for the boys' with some other unfortunate (for the ratepayers) council. Just imagine the sort of pension burden, the huge size of the pension that these jobsworths will inflict upon ratepayers and their offspring in the years to come. Already, a sizable proportion of our rates goes on maintaining retired council staff in luxury, as few in the private sector, assuming they're in employment at all, have access these days to even a paltry works pension and even then are told they have to work till they're 70. The government should set a limit of about £75,000 (and that's being generous) on council leaders pay and if these freeloaders have the nerve to suggest they'll leave the public services for employment in the private sector - what a joke! Who on earth in the diminishing wealth-creating sector in our land, would possibly employ them.

- **William Boreham, Kingston upon Thames.**

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