

## **OPPOSITION BUSINESS PAPER – COUNCIL 25 JANUARY 2012**

### **Opposition Priority Business: The Portas Review into the future of our high streets**

In May 2011 Mary Portas was asked by the Prime Minister and the Deputy Prime Minister to conduct an independent review into the state of our high streets and town centres.

She took on this challenge, in full knowledge that it would be complicated and controversial, for one simple reason – she believed that our high streets have reached a crisis point. She believed that unless urgent action is taken much of Britain will lose, irretrievably, something that is fundamental to our society. Something that has real social and well as economic worth to our communities and that after many years of erosion, neglect and mismanagement, something she felt was destined to disappear forever.

Enfield's High Streets and Town Centres are no exception, and the recent action by the Council in imposing parking charges on Sundays having previously raised on and off street charges significantly above inflation will certainly not help an already difficult local economy. The fact that the new and increased charges were driven by a desire to raise income makes them all the more questionable. Mary Portas draws specific attention to the link between successful high streets and cheaper car parking provision and makes a specific recommendation in this regard which are completely at odds with the Council's approach.

The Portas Review has undertaken much of the research and brainstorming that this council would have spent years and great expense undertaking itself. The Council's attention is drawn to the attached report.

While most of the Review's 28 recommendations will require action on the part of Government, some are well within the remit of local government, and are relevant to Enfield's high streets, including the following:

Recommendations Numbers: 9, 1, 10, 7, 18, 19 and 21

It is a fact that Enfield as a shopping centre faces stiff competition from shopping centres within easy reach of our residents, most of which offer free parking and other attractions. It is imperative that the council acts quickly to arrest the decline, symptoms of which are already evident, and should consider the Review's recommendations as a matter of urgency

#### **Recommendation**

The council:

1. reconsiders it's decision to introduce parking charges on Sundays in Enfield Town and reverts to allowing free off and on street parking on Sundays and Bank Holidays with immediate effect;

2. Introduces a 15 minute free parking period at all on street bays in shopping high street areas.
3. instructs the Housing, Growth & Regeneration Scrutiny Panel to consider the Portas Review in detail, with particular reference to matters identified above (the specific recommendations for local government) together with those recommendations that require action by Government, and to report to Cabinet and the Council with recommendations by July 2012 and to facilitate that consideration agrees to provide the Housing, Growth & Regeneration Scrutiny Panel with the reasonable and necessary resources.