

## **Opposition Priority Business: Lack of Corporate Governance in Enfield**

This Labour administration is failing the borough and its residents through the lack of good corporate governance, which manifests itself in one or more of the following:

1. lack of proper scrutiny of the executive;
2. planning application decisions being taken on a party political basis rather than on merit;
3. poor commercial judgment in its business decisions;
4. an innate desire to avoid discussion and therefore accountability for major decisions; and
5. a failure to understand that democracy ultimately depends on transparency.

The justification for these comments is set out in Appendix A.

### **Recommendations**

That the council:

- (1) requests cabinet as a matter of urgency to benchmark the Council's corporate governance arrangements against the report by Grant Thornton (attached as Appendix B);
- (2) sets up a cross party public investigation into the decision making process on the planning committee and in particular the allegations of "whipping";
- (3) requests the Members & Democratic Services Group to review procedure at council meetings so to ensure that motions requiring notice can never be taken ahead of main items on the agenda unless urgent, and in that case the meeting has to be extended to accommodate the time taken for an urgent motion; and
- (4) The Council should employ rigidly a first line of defence model of corporate governance.\*

\*(The first line of defence in such a model embeds within the organization an obligation on all members of staff above a particular grade to complete a form and

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send it to the head of internal audit whenever there is a breach of a written policy. The prescribed form (typically referred to neutrally as operational comment forms) enables the member of staff to identify the policy and the breach. The reason for the breach is immaterial. This must be part of a no-blame culture. As a consequence of the form being completed and acknowledged as valid by internal audit, the breach has to be remedied within an agreed timescale. The causes of the breach, be they system related, human error or otherwise are identified and addressed through process or system changes or through training and in extremis disciplinary action. The Audit Committee should receive updates at every meeting of the operational comments raised, the action plan, resources employed and the timescale for conclusion).