

RE Ltd Contract Review Member Working Group: 26 June 2017, Hendon Town Hall.

I wish to speak and answer questions at the public meeting of the Member Working Group on 26 June 2017. I am also sending the WRITTEN SUBMISSION below because of the very limited period of time allocated at the meeting for public speakers: one hour total, for all speakers. There would not be sufficient time at the meeting to communicate all of the significant points below.

In this submission to the Re Ltd Contract Member Working Group I question the degree of accountability of the Council's planning department in its Re Ltd. partnership.

I will cite, as examples, two current planning department problems I am having to deal with.

I experienced an alternative and more effective approach to accountability in a different Conservative council in North London when working as Course Manager and Public Administration lecturer on Southgate College's examination courses for council staff and civil servants (BTEC National - A-level standard, and then also the Higher National - first-year degree standard - for which I also wrote the College's successful accreditation submission to BTEC.)

When council outsourcing began to be greatly expanded under Mrs. Thatcher's government in the 1980s, Conservative Enfield Council established a clear distinction between its Council (councillors and staff) as the **Client**, and businesses as **Contractors**. It took steps to avoid the conflicts of interest and lack of accountability that are causing problems with the Re Ltd. relationship here in Barnet.

Enfield Council was our major source of council-staff students, and they invited me to attend the detailed learning session they held at the Civic Centre for their staff and councillors on the out-sourcing requirements. I was given all documentation, so that we would be in a position to incorporate out-sourcing procedures and issues into our courses. Numerous issues were raised and discussed by staff and councillors on the core principles of **Client** and **Contractor**.

The emphasis was on the **Client's** (the Council's) responsibility, actively and in practical terms, through its own staff, to monitor the performance of **Contractors** effectively. In terms of practical authority and accountability, it was council staff who would be in the key position. They were **accountable upwards** to the elected Council, and **responsible downwards** for the careful monitoring of a **Contractor** organisation's activities. Proper administrative measures would be in place to ensure that this monitoring functioned effectively. There would be clear blue water between the Client and the Contractor.

This cannot, of course, be the case with the Re Ltd Contract. Their entry in "*The Online Directory of Planning Consultants*" shows part of the enormous range of the compromised powers in Barnet's partnership relationship with Re Ltd. For instance, among the 17 listed services shown online as being "included" in Re Ltd.'s Barnet range are:

- "Premium pre-application services."
- "Preparation, submission and negotiation of planning applications."
- "Planning enforcement solutions."
- "Lobbying in response to and in support of planning issues and planning applications."
- "Heritage advice."
- "Tree and landscaping advice."

Their introductory paragraph in this online entry reads: "RE (Regional Enterprise) Ltd. is a joint venture particularly between Capita and the London Borough of Barnet which delivers