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PUBLIC QUESTION SUBMITTED FROM DR JEREMY KLEIN

FULL COUNCIL – 18 NOVEMBER 2013

To the Leader of the Council.

You will be aware that I discovered that the Council had made multiple mistakes in the sale of land in Cranley Gardens that resulted in a loss of over £300,000 to the Council. You will also be aware that I remain concerned at the way the case was handled and that the senior staff involved have not been disciplined.

Having discovered the error immediately wrote to the Council on 11 July 2009 stating "There would appear to be a prima facie case of maladministration here so I submit this letter as a formal complaint. It trust it will be addressed as a matter of urgency". Following the failure of the Council to properly investigate my complaint I received the following response dated 25 March 2010:

"It is my view that [] did not regard his email as the Council's response to a formal complaint about this matter. It did not purport to be a report on the findings of an extensive investigation. I understand that there had been considerable contact between you and officers in my team as well as you and others within the Council and that [] was replying in an informal way to the latest email from you".

Quite why a letter flagged as a formal complaint on the loss of £300,000 should have been regarded by Council staff as an informal matter is unclear. No evidence of prior contact between myself and the Council department has ever been found. The previous Chief Executive of the Council stated in correspondence that "[the author of this email] has been prepared to acknowledge that he would have answered your e mail differently if he had been in possession of the findings of the audit report".

Yet the email was dated 25th March 2010 whereas the Internal Audit Report the author claimed not to have seen at this point was dated September 2009. The Internal Audit report had the author of the email as a named addressee. The assertions of this member of staff simply do not accord with the facts. The current Chief Executive has refused to address the errors and inconsistencies in the statements of this senior member of staff, which in my view amount to a cover-up of failures in his department.

Will the Leader of the Council agree to personally review the case with me and properly address the questions I have raised as her staff have evidently been unwilling to do so, and to take all appropriate actions if my allegations of inconsistencies are upheld?