

OPPOSITION PRIORITY BUSINESS - EQUALITY**Council – 11.11.2009****Report of the Labour Group**

It is very clear that whatever socio-economic measure is used, there is a lack of equality in Enfield and it is the view of the Labour Group, which we hope will be shared by all Members, that the Council should use its powers and resources to do what it can to redress this inequality.

For the purposes of this paper, 4 indicators have been used, unemployment rates, life expectancy, eligibility for free schools meals and income levels. It is highly unlikely that if any other indicators had been used, the results would have been any different.

In relation to unemployment, the wards in the borough with the highest levels of registered unemployed are as follows:-

- Edmonton Green – 14.2%
- Ponders End – 12%
- Upper Edmonton - 11.1%
- Lower Edmonton 10.3%

And the four wards with the lowest rates were:-

- Grange 3.5%
- Highlands 3.7%
- Town 3.9%
- Bush Hill Park 4.1%

So whereas in the worst affected ward, Edmonton Green, 1 in 7 of the workforce is unemployed; in Grange ward only 1 in 28 of the workforce is unemployed. This demonstrates that a resident of Edmonton Green is 4X more likely to be unemployed than a resident of Grange.

Turning to life expectancy, which in large measure is linked to economic wellbeing, the 4 wards in the borough with the lowest life expectancy are:-

- Edmonton Green 73.5 years
- Upper Edmonton 74.3 years
- Enfield Lock 74.9 years
- Lower Edmonton 75.4 years

And the 4 wards with the highest life expectancy are:-

- Highlands 82.3 years
- Grange 81.3 years
- Cockfosters 81.3 years
- Southgate 80.9 years

So if you are in the ward with the highest life expectancy, Highlands, you can expect to live nearly 9 years longer than if you live in the ward with the lowest life expectancy, Edmonton Green.

Eligibility for free school meals is based on family income and therefore is an accurate indicator of economic deprivation. The wards with the highest proportion of eligible children are:-

- Edmonton Green 36.8%
- Enfield Lock 36.3%
- Lower Edmonton 34.2%
- Turkey Street 33.1%

The 4 wards with the lowest proportion of children eligible are:-

- Winchmore Hill 6.7%
- Grange 6.9%
- Town 8.4%
- Highlands 9.6%

So the proportion of children who are eligible for free school meals because their family's income is low enough to qualify is 5 times greater in Edmonton Green than in Winchmore Hill.

The final indicator is the proportion of households with an income of less than £15,000 per annum, which by the standards of 2009 is undoubtedly very low. The 4 wards with the highest proportion are:-

- Edmonton Green 24.5%
- Upper Edmonton 20.5%
- Turkey Street 19.1%
- Ponders End 19%

The wards with the lowest proportion of low income households are:-

- Winchmore Hill 6.5%
- Grange 7.6%
- Bush Hill Park 8.5%
- Town 9.4%

So in the poorest ward, virtually 1 in 4 households have an income of less than £15,000 per annum whereas in the ward with the lowest proportion, there are less than 1 in 15 households with such low income.

On each indicator Edmonton Green is the most deprived ward in the borough. Taking the 4 indicators together, it is possible to rank all the wards in the borough in relation to their relative prosperity. Given that there are 21 wards in the borough, if the scores are allocated on the basis of 1 to the most prosperous and 21 to the least prosperous on each indicator, the results are as follows in order of relative prosperity:-

1. Grange
2. Highlands
3. Winchmore Hill
4. Bush Hill Park
5. Town
6. Southgate
7. Cockfosters
8. Southgate Green
9. Palmers Green
10. Bowes
11. Chase
12. Southbury
13. Haselbury
14. Jubilee
15. Enfield Highway
16. Turkey Street
17. Enfield Lock
18. Ponders End
19. Lower Edmonton
20. Upper Edmonton
21. Edmonton Green

What we have is a clear east-west divide, with the poorest wards in the borough being east of the Great Cambridge Road.

Apportioning blame is not the purpose of bringing this to the attention of the Council but instead to demonstrate that there is significant economic inequality in the borough and the Council can give practical reality to its commitment to equality by agreeing to take action to counter the inequality demonstrated by the statistics set out above.

The Labour Group therefore proposes that the following actions are taken as a beginning towards creating a more equal borough.

1. Provide free school meals for all primary aged children in the borough as an effective way of ensuring that young children are not prevented from being able to concentrate in school because of lack of adequate nutrition.
2. Provide assistance in the form of business rate rebates and business rent reductions in the 7 most economically deprived wards in order to assist existing businesses to survive and to encourage new businesses to come into these areas. This assistance to be available on application, with criteria for qualification for assistance to be drawn up and published in advance.
3. Set aside funds to attract grants and other inward investment monies to these wards .
4. Devote a much higher part of the Council's discretionary environment budget to the least economically successful wards in order to improve the environment in those areas and make them more attractive to inward investment.
5. To work with education providers, inside and outside of the borough, to ensure that people in the most deprived areas have access to opportunities to acquire additional skills. The Council will make funding available in these areas so that lack of income is not a barrier that prevents the acquisition of additional qualifications.