

Opposition Priority Business - Delivering the Labour Party's Manifesto Promises

Council – 30.6.2010

Report of the Conservative Group

Attached as an appendix is the Labour Party's Manifesto.

There are a number of matters contained within it which the Conservative Party does not disagree, in fact many of the items continue the work of the previous Conservative Administration. These are welcomed.

The Conservative Administration's policy was to publish fully at each cabinet meeting the outturn of expenditure against budget in respect of both revenue and capital and to publish its medium term financial strategy. At the Council's annual budget setting meeting, the financial pressures which the Council would face to deliver its existing programme were disclosed. Furthermore, whichever party (or parties) were elected to Government nationally, the Council anticipated that the pressures it would face to balance its budget would become more acute. These matters were known to the Labour Party which now forms the new administration of this Council.

The previous Conservative Administration was therefore surprised at the cost of the Labour Party's manifesto promises and queried whether they were affordable.

Nationally, it transpires that the Labour Government was making spending promises during the election in respect of which there was no means to deliver. Locally, the Conservative Party believes that the Labour Party was likewise making similar spending promises.

The Labour Party was successful locally. Therefore these promises were believed by the electorate, particularly those in the east and south of the Borough; an electorate that the Labour Party has time and again argued to be vulnerable and in need of support.

The Conservative Party, now in opposition and fulfilling its role of holding the administration to account and scrutinising the administration's promises and record, therefore seeks that the Council examines each of the manifesto promises and ascertains in respect of each, whether it is affordable, practicable and lawful.

The Council should therefore seek from the Labour Party administration an explanation in respect of each promise, what that promise actually means, what that promise will cost and when it will be delivered.

The Council therefore seeks from the new Labour administration a full costed action plan, containing deliverable milestones, inputs and outputs in respect of each of its manifesto pledges.

If the new Labour administration cannot do this, and cannot do this now, then it begs the question whether the pledges were ever properly thought out before they were promised or in fact whether the new Labour administration ever had any intention of delivering them.

The Council calls for this to be a regular item on the agenda of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee.