

OPPOSITION PRIORITY BUSINESS - 28 MARCH 2007

LEISURE

“Customer satisfaction with museums, sport and leisure facilities remains below average.” Audit Commission – Comprehensive Performance Assessment score card 2006

Since 2002, Enfield Council has abolished the Leisure Services Directorate, taken specified Leisure functions away from first and second tier staff (making them redundant) and relegated those functions to an additional responsibility for existing senior managers with no expertise in those areas. During the same time there has been a different Member with responsibility for Leisure on every year with their seniority ranging from back bencher, to Cabinet member.

Enfield has also seen a decline in parks during the same period. In 2002 Enfield won a beacon ward (its only one ever) for its parks and open spaces, now it has a solitary Green flag following the reduction in staffing and maintenance in the parks.

During the same period Enfield’s reduction in funding for the running of Leisure centres was cut by over £300,000 this resulting in the Council instructing insolvency practitioners to intervene at a cost estimated to be between £1-£2million per year to run Enfield’s Leisure centres.

Resident satisfaction with sport and leisure facilities, libraries, parks and open spaces and museums, galleries and theatres is between low and average.

Meanwhile, Enfield has the second highest number of violent youth gangs (13) in London (*source BBC - 21 February 2007*).

Enfield has less than a fifth of the population participating in regular moderate intensity sport or active recreation and is in the bottom 25% nationally for residents volunteering to support sporting activities as coaches, etc, for at least 1 hour per week (*source – Sport England – Active People Survey*).

Enfield is also in the bottom 7 of London boroughs, by percentage of population, of people who are within 20 minutes travel time of a sports facility which has achieved a quality assured standard (*source – Sport England Choice & Opportunity Score*).

Enfield Council has managed to alienate clubs, and their users, of both Bramley Squash and Edmonton Leisure centres by closing them down without working out an alternative for months in the case of Edmonton or at all in the case of Bramley.

“This Council notes Enfield’s declining performance in leisure as spelt out by the Audit Commission in their latest CPA report into Enfield. This Council will therefore:

1. establish a dedicated unit headed by a senior officer with expertise in leisure
2. resolve the issue of the future management of the operation of the Boroughs’ Leisure Centres as a matter of urgency.
3. forge better links with young people and other groups in the community who have an interest in the provision of high quality Leisure facilities.”