

## **Opposition Priority Business**

### **The Labour Administration 2018-22**

#### **Executive Summary**

- The Labour Administration 2018-22 has been one of the most turbulent in our borough's history. It has been marred with controversy for the full four years.
- The constant theme throughout this Administration is its inability to listen.
- This issue is tied to the decisions over wheeled bin collections, the proposed de-designation of Green Belt land for development, fly-tipping, low traffic neighbourhoods, Whitewebbs and relocating the archives.

#### **Wheeled Bin Collections**

- Prior to 2018, residents received a weekly wheeled bin collection service for refuse and dry recycling.
- However, soon after the election a decision was made to go out to consultation to potentially change wheeled bin collections to a fortnightly service with a paid for garden waste service.
- The cost of dealing with fly-tipping incidents has also risen significantly. In 2016/17 the council spent £694,000 clearing up dumped waste, but in 2020/21 this rose to £1.25 million.
- The consultation which drew the biggest response in Enfield's history, up until that date, showed just 9 per cent of more than 5,500 respondents backed the proposals favoured by council officers to move to fortnightly collections for refuse and dry recycling.
- Two-thirds of those who were consulted said they wanted to keep weekly collections.
- The Labour Administration ignored the outcome of the consultation and decided to implement the system least supported by residents.
- Recycling has declined to just 31.9% since the introduction of the fortnightly service. Residents have also experienced missed bin collections.

#### **Fly-tipping**

- Fly-tipping has increased across the borough during this four-year term.
- Dumped items are regularly left on our streets making areas unattractive to live and work in.
- Reports of fly-tipping in Enfield have risen every year for the last four years. In 2016/17, there were 1,226 reports made, while in 2020/21, there were 8,719 – a rise of more than 600%. On average last year, it means fly-tipping reports were being made almost every single hour.
- The cost of dealing with fly-tipping incidents has also risen significantly. In 2016/17 the council spent £694,000 clearing up dumped waste, but in 2020/21 this rose to £1.25 million.
- In addition, the Administration has refused to remove the appointment system at the Barrowell Green Household Waste and Recycling Centre which in the Opposition's opinion has contributed to the increase in fly-tipping.

- The Opposition has continuously raised the standard of the street scene and the impact of fortnightly collections within the council chamber and with senior officers. However, our concerns have been ignored.

### **Green Belt**

- The Labour Administration put its Draft Local Plan on the 9<sup>th</sup> June 2021 Council Agenda. The decision was to agree whether or not to put the document out for consultation.
- The Draft Local Plan included proposals to allow development on the Green Belt in areas such as Rammey Marsh, Vicarage Farm, Crews Hill and Hadley Wood.
- The plans would allow thousands of homes to be built destroying farms, fields, trees and open spaces.
- The proposals would also remove part of London's environmental infrastructure that helps our fight against climate change.
- The Draft Local Plan ignored views given by councillors in workshop meetings. The document also disregarded the Mayor of London's views on the matter as the proposals are against the London Plan. Local residents' opinions given during an earlier round of consultation were similarly ignored.
- Despite this, the Labour Group voted unanimously to put the document out to consultation even though there were protests outside the Council Meeting held at Enfield Grammar School.
- The Mayor of London's letter was particularly damning stating that the Administration should take a brownfield approach rather than proposing to allow development on the Green Belt. The Administration and senior officers were aware of the likely response from the Mayor but arrogantly ignored the GLA.
- The Leader of the Council has repeatedly ignored requests both before and after the consultation to drop plans to allow development on the Green Belt.

### **Low Traffic Neighbourhoods**

- The Fox Lane and Bowes Low Traffic Neighbourhood schemes were implemented in the summer of 2020 without consulting residents causing deep division in our community. There has never been a transport project that has caused this amount of division.
- Local authorities did not have to submit schemes for funding. There were many authorities that did not take up the opportunity to implement LTNs notably Bromley and Hillingdon.
- LB Wandsworth, Redbridge and Ealing chose to implement LTNs in 2020 but after significant opposition to the schemes they were removed.
- The schemes since implementation have pushed vehicles on to neighbouring main roads and side streets.
- The tailbacks caused by the upsurge in traffic on these roads have created long queues of vehicles with their engines idling.
- There have been large protests against these schemes something not seen in Enfield for years. There have also been petitions opposing both schemes.

- The outcome of the consultation on the Bowes LTN becoming permanent showed that residents overwhelmingly reject the scheme as three quarters of responses were negative.
- The Labour Administration has once again disregarded the majority of respondents' views and decided to make the Bowes LTN permanent.

### **Meridian Water**

- This major scheme, which the Conservative Opposition supports in principle, has been in the acquisition and planning stage for over 10 years without a single completed home to show for it.
- The Council wasted several years trying to procure a master development partner and only finally succeeded on the third attempt.
- The original target of developing 10,000 new homes and the creating of 6000 new jobs was reduced by a planning inspector at the end of 2019 to a more realistic to 5000 new homes and 1,500 new jobs.
- The Administration has continued to blur the difficulties in persuading the GLA to release the Strategic Industrial land on the site (approx. a third of the total) and has never publicly acknowledged the Inspector's downsizing of the project.
- The significant impact of developing (or failing to develop) housing on the IKEA and TESCO sites (approx. 3,000 new homes) in achieving the overall aims of the original masterplan was never made clear.
- The critical Meridian Water (MW) Workstream Report into Meridian Water in July 2020 and its subsequent concerns over housing density, the amount of genuinely affordable housing, the provision of sufficient public open space were brushed aside without any serious attempt to address the issues raised.
- The determination by the Administration to act as the lead developer has resulted in burdening future council taxpayers with debts approaching a billion pounds leaving the Council at grave risk of never recovering its financial outlay
- In summary, this Administration has hampered every attempt by Conservative and Independent members to properly scrutinise the finances, progress and risks attached to this scheme.

### **Failures in Housing Delivery**

- Over the past three years London Borough of Enfield has only met about a half of its housing targets. As a result, the Government has placed Enfield in the unwelcome "Presumption in Favour of Development" making it less able to resist high density, high-rise developments in unsuitable locations by private developers.
- The Labour Administration made a decision to act as lead developer on development projects such as the Small Sites Programme (94 new homes) and Meridian Water (10,000 new homes planned). The schemes have proved to be seriously disappointing. Both examples

demonstrating a repeated failure to control programme timescales and costs.

- The latest attempt by the Administration to recover lost ground is the Housing Development Programme through which the Council intends to deliver 3,500 new homes over 10 years. Ignoring the lessons of the past, this programme will be largely Council led and requires a huge investment in new staff and substantial additional borrowing.
- The fact that the Government is prepared to support Meridian Water and the Housing Development Programme with large amounts of grant only serves to demonstrate the triumph of hope over experience.
- The Council's recent Housing Needs Analysis provides an evidential base that Enfield needs to develop far more three and four-bedroom homes for its growing population for both private and affordable tenures. There are, for example, 5,000 children living in temporary accommodation. It is alarming, therefore, that the building of social rented accommodation has fallen so sharply in Enfield since 2018.
- The failure of this Labour Council to deliver the appropriate new housing that the borough desperately needs is best summed up by the private sector Colosseum Scheme that was approved by the Labour dominated planning committee last year which will see 9 different blocks on the corner of the A10 and Southbury Road. Several of the blocks will be between 16 and 29 storeys high. The scheme will be in one of the most densely populated areas of London, on one of its busiest roads. However, only 8% of the flats in Phase 1 will be at London affordable rent levels (social rent). The scheme will not deliver enough family-sized homes. Only around 15 of the 440 new flats planned in the first four blocks will have three bedrooms (no 4-bedroom flats). Six Labour councillors voted the scheme through, although they didn't give their reasons why.

## **Borrowing**

- The Labour Administration has pursued a strategy of long term borrowing throughout the term.
- The authority currently is £1 billion in debt with not a lot to show for it. Meridian Water which is the cause for a large part of the debt has yet to complete its first phase. Energetik continues to fail to break even.
- The Ten-Year Treasury Strategy that has been agreed will mean that Enfield Council will be £2 billion in debt by the end of the programme.
- The Opposition has frequently highlighted the impact that borrowing at this level has on the revenue account.
- However, these concerns have been ignored even though next year Enfield Council will be paying an increasing level of interest which means less spent on the services residents' care about such as e.g. waste collection, fly-tip removal, social workers etc.

**Table 1: Balance Sheet Summary and Forecast**

	31.3.22 Forecast £m	31.3.23 Forecast £m	31.3.24 Forecast £m	31.3.25 Forecast £m	31.3.26 Forecast £m	31.3.27 Forecast £m	31.3.28 to 31.3.32 Forecast £m
General Fund CFR	1,036.5	1,210.9	1,285.4	1,315.9	1,319.6	1,310.1	1,436.0
HRA CFR	271.8	328.2	456.5	456.5	518.5	529.5	597.2
<b>Total / Borrowing CFR</b>	<b>1,308.3</b>	<b>1,539.1</b>	<b>1,741.9</b>	<b>1,772.4</b>	<b>1,838.2</b>	<b>1,839.6</b>	<b>2,033.2</b>
<b>PFI Liability</b>	<b>30.3</b>	<b>26.3</b>	<b>22.1</b>	<b>17.7</b>	<b>13.8</b>	<b>10.7</b>	<b>0.0</b>
<b>Total Debt CFR</b>	<b>1,338.6</b>	<b>1,565.4</b>	<b>1,764.0</b>	<b>1,790.1</b>	<b>1,852.0</b>	<b>1,850.3</b>	<b>2,033.2</b>
Less: Internal borrowing	(262.7)	(150.1)	(141.2)	(137.1)	(134.3)	(131.8)	(112.0)
<b>External borrowing</b>	<b>1,075.9</b>	<b>1,415.3</b>	<b>1,622.9</b>	<b>1,653.0</b>	<b>1,717.7</b>	<b>1,718.5</b>	<b>1,921.2</b>
<b>Breakdown of external borrowing:</b>							
Existing Borrowing Profile	939.5	930.0	906.3	883.5	859.8	836.4	813.3
New Borrowing to be raised	<b>136.4</b>	<b>485.3</b>	<b>716.6</b>	<b>769.5</b>	<b>857.9</b>	<b>882.1</b>	<b>1,107.9</b>

	2021/22	2022/23	2023/24	2024/25	2025/26	2026/27	2027/28	2028/29	2029/30	2030/31	2031/32
	£'000s										
Interest Charged to General Fund	4,190	8,257	11,298	13,348	13,606	14,614	15,592	15,786	14,679	15,500	16,750
MRP	17,494	20,567	21,906	19,273	21,636	20,930	19,251	18,299	18,457	17,681	22,766
<b>Total Financing Cost Charged to General Fund</b>	<b>21,684</b>	<b>28,823</b>	<b>33,204</b>	<b>32,621</b>	<b>35,242</b>	<b>35,543</b>	<b>34,843</b>	<b>34,085</b>	<b>33,136</b>	<b>33,181</b>	<b>39,517</b>
Budget	22,565	26,495	29,288	33,238	35,036	36,036	37,036	38,036	39,036	40,036	41,036
Variance	(881)	2,328	3,916	(617)	206	(493)	(2,193)	(3,951)	(5,900)	(6,855)	(1,519)

## Planning

- Minor Planning applications are not being determined within the statutory time frame of 8 weeks.
- Responses to applicants and members of the public on planning applications are frequently too slow and sometimes non-existent.
- Reliance on the council website and online consultations disenfranchises the many residents who have no internet access or computer skills.
- Consultation on planning applications is frequently criticised as being limited to immediate neighbours only when the impact of an application may affect the wider community, site notices are essential, and the Council should not use the minima formula for consultation.

## Libraries

- The use of pandemic restrictions to limit access to libraries was unwelcome and not in keeping with fuller access provided by some other councils.
- The relocation of the Borough Archive from Thomas Hardy to Bush Hill Park Library and then to the Civic Centre is expensive and protracted, it is essential full access to the archive for the public is maintained throughout the process.

### **Whitewebbs**

- The leasing out of Whitewebbs Park to Tottenham Hotspur Football Club is against the wishes of residents.
- There was a total lack of consultation leading to multiple protests and petitions.
- The proposed agreement equates to just £1.36 per acre of parkland per day.
- One of the reasons used by the Administration to explain why it was acceptable to close Whitewebbs Golf Course was that there were other local golf courses in the area, only to immediately put them under threat via the Draft Local Plan as potential development sites for housing.
- The Administration has broken promises to preserve public access to the whole park.
- Tottenham Hotspur has a poor record of honouring commitments to the council in existing leases yet are being given a lease to further council land.

### **Recommendations**

- The Labour Administration should reflect on its record over the last four years.
- Enfield Council should be an organisation that listens to the residents it serves.
- This Council has no faith in this Labour Administration.