

Standing Full Council, 29 October 2019

Motion: Cllr Gabriel Rozenberg

Standing up for North Londoners

Barnet Council's Equalities Policy requires the council to offer every citizen the chance to live "free from harassment and discrimination", and commits the council to integrating "equalities into everything we ... do".

Council therefore notes with concern the rise of a form of discriminatory language against North London residents. Barnet is part of North London, a seven-borough region that is home to 1.7 million people. As such, roughly one in four North Londoners lives in Barnet. Council sees it as fully part of its remit under its Equalities Policy to challenge robustly any trend towards blanket discriminatory language against Barnet residents.

Council notes several high profile examples of this trend in recent weeks at the Conservative Party conference.

- The Brexit Secretary, Steve Barclay, made a speech in which he claimed that opposition politicians were listening to "the opinions of the North London few".
- The Home Secretary, Priti Patel, made a speech in which she commented, in reference to her attempts to end free movement across the EU, that she needed "no lectures from the north London, metropolitan, liberal elite".

Council believes that all pejorative and discriminatory language against population groups within our borough should be opposed. That is particularly the case when senior figures in government uses such terminology with a view to whipping up distrust and division. Given that context, these senior politicians' use of "North London" to single out opponents is highly regrettable.

Council therefore instructs the Leader of the Council to write to the Brexit Secretary and the Home Secretary, requesting that they refrain from using 'North London' as a pejorative term in the future, and encouraging them to visit our part of North London, and to meet with our residents, so that they can better reflect on their choice of language.

Under Full Council Procedure Rule 17.17: If my item is not dealt with by the end of the meeting I ask that it be voted upon at the Council meeting.