

Council: 25 January 2022
Administration Motion in the name of Cllr Dan Thomas
Political Discourse within Barnet

Amended by Councillor Rawlings

Council notes that:

1. It's the job of the Opposition Labour Group to point out the failures of the Conservative administration running Barnet Council.
2. Barnet's Labour councillors have highlighted the following:
 - a. Boris Johnson's Conservatives in Barnet claim that they have maintained weekly bin collections and have the lowest number of missed bin collections in London, but they neglect to mention the thousands of bin collections that have been missed, including an average 3,500 a week during the height of the bin collection chaos following their poorly managed re-organisation of the Council's waste service.
 - b. The Conservatives cite that in real terms Council Tax in Barnet has been reduced by 5.2% over the past decade, but over the total 19 years under the Conservatives, Barnet's share of Council Tax has increased by over 4% in real terms. Band D in 2002 was £742, it is now £1,337, and although the Conservatives promised to keep Council Tax low at the last local election, they have hiked it up by the legal maximum every year.
 - c. The Conservatives claim that Barnet has zero "non-decent" Council homes, but Labour councillors' housing casework has included problems with mould, damp, pest-infestations, structural damage / subsidence, building safety, damaged security doors, flooding / leaking roofs, and exposed electrical wiring. Some of this casework is from residents in wards with only Conservative councillors. And who can forget that the Council famously came under fire in the Victoria Derbyshire show for leaving residents to rot in squalid, pest-infested conditions on the derelict West Hendon housing estate.
 - d. The Barnet Conservatives claim that their mass-outsourcing of Council services to Capita has saved millions, but it has been such a resounding failure that they are now scrabbling to bring most of the services back in-house. The Council's own figures show that they have spent £217.93 million more with Capita than the original contract price.

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.

- e. The Conservatives claim that they have stood up to developers, but at the last local election they promised to stop overdevelopment. They have not stopped it and have even forced through massive mega-high, mega-dense developments themselves, most recently at Cricklewood B&Q.
 - f. The Barnet Conservatives claim that they would not and will not build on our parks or green spaces, but they proposed installing renewable energy solutions such as batteries at substations and solar farms in parks and open spaces which they deemed low quality / low value. Following public outcry, the Conservatives later changed the proposal to “open space sites which are under-utilised”. This remained in the budget until two months ago. For the record, open spaces are green spaces.
3. These are only some examples of Conservative failure in Barnet, but they appear to be the ones the Conservatives are most worried about.

Council recognises that:

- 1. Barnet’s Conservative councillors do not like it when Labour highlights these issues.

Council resolves to:

- 1. Promote democracy and opposition holding the administration to account.

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