

# Our Barnet

INSIDE:  
● One  
Barnet ●  
BAPS diary  
● film

ISSUE 4: June 2012 • Barnet Alliance for Public Services news • [barnetalliance.org/](http://barnetalliance.org/)@barnetalliance

## BT, Capita, EC Harris: Hands off our services!

This is the newspaper of the **Barnet Alliance for Public Services (BAPS)**. We campaign for high quality public services. In this issue we tell readers about **One Barnet**. This is a plan by Barnet Council to change public services in Barnet (things like collecting council tax, paying people their housing benefit, looking after vulnerable people, keeping the streets clean).

At the moment the Council does this work itself. In future it wants to give big amounts of our money — more than one billion pounds — to private companies to do the work. There are three companies who want to get our money and do this work. These companies are BT, Capita, and EC Harris.

If this plan happens we are worried that we will end up getting worse services. We are worried that the plan could go wrong and Barnet residents could lose lots of money. In this paper, as well as explaining a lot of detail about One Barnet, we suggest some ways for residents to campaign against it.

On 31st May, Labour won a council seat in Brunswick Park ward from the Conservatives, who run Barnet council.

In the days before the election, Barnet Alliance for Public Services leafleted every household in the ward with an “Our Barnet” by election leaflet (front page shown below). In this leaflet we laid out our concerns about the council’s “One Barnet” privatisation plan.

Although we did not call for a vote for any particular party, we believe that residents having more information about One Barnet affected the outcome of the vote. We will continue to inform Barnet residents about the council’s One Barnet plan. Residents need to know the facts!

● Leaflet: <http://alturl.com/npujk>



## One Barnet: a resident's view

By John Dix, Barnet resident



**B**arnet Council are privatising large swathes of core services in a project known as “One Barnet”. This billion pound experiment is exceptionally risky. If it goes wrong it could represent the largest financial mistake this Local Authority has ever made.

I need to make it clear that I am not opposed to outsourcing as such. Many organisations outsource non-core serv-

ices, such as cleaning, catering and security. Mistakes still happen, as we saw in Barnet with the MetPro security contract, but there are other companies that can quickly step in and take over these types of contract.

One Barnet is quite different. The Council are outsourcing core services and Council functions. Along with Regeneration and Housing Strategy, Planning, Building Control, Environmental Health, Trading Standards, Cemeteries and Crematoria, the Council are also planning to outsource Council functions such as IT, HR, Finance and Procurement. The Council’s objective is to provide directly as few services as possible. The functions listed above will be done instead by one or two private companies. The Council will directly employ only a limited number of staff to set policy, and monitor the services provided by the private companies.

I have spoken about this with Barnet councillors. Some of them say that residents do not care who provides the serv-

ices so long as they are delivered cost effectively and to a high standard. That is a rather glib statement. Ensuring that private companies provide a high quality of service at the lowest possible price — especially when they are services that the private sector have little or no experience of running — is actually very difficult.

Some of the key risks with One Barnet are:

● **Lack of a credible business plan:** I reviewed the initial Development and Regulatory Services business case. It is not the type of business case I would expect to see for a contract with a value of £275 million. The business case was full of unsubstantiated assumptions with little or no supporting evidence. In the private sector this business case would not have survived the first inspection but, sadly, in Barnet this business case was nodded through.

● **Scale and length of the contract:** When you out-

*Continues on back page*

Saturday 21 July TORCH RELAY FESTIVAL & MARCH  
Our Barnet, not “One Barnet”!

See page  
3 for  
details