

## **Barnet Alliance for Public Services: Draft Policy Positions**

Barnet Alliance for Public Services (BAPS) opposes the privatisation of public services, locally and nationally. We continue to oppose the One Barnet Programme, which has resulted in Capita and other private companies running the majority of our public services, supposedly for *our* profit, when in fact they are cutting those services to make *their* profit. We also work with other organisations to stop the insidious privatisation of the NHS, including through Clinical Commissioning Groups (CCG).

We believe that residents must not stay silent and angry about what has been imposed on us without consultation. We must raise our voices so that the people who are or want to be elected to represent us will listen to what *we* want rather than do what *they* want. Here is a draft of some of the measures we want a new administration to take; this is a work in progress and we invite you to join the discussion.

### **HOUSING**

Launch a massive house building programme:

- Give developers planning permission only if they commit to providing at least 40% of any development as social housing, and ensure that the homes meet the standards set out in the London Housing Design Guide, published by the London Development Agency in 2010 and implemented in April 2011.
- Build council housing on all available council-owned land other than Green Belt and do not permit developers to use this land for private housing.
- Use Compulsory Purchase powers to take control of long-term empty houses for council housing, and increase council tax on shorter-term empty houses.
- Introduce rent controls.
- Defy the Bedroom Tax and ensure there are no evictions because of rent arrears accrued as a result of it.

### **PUBLIC SERVICES**

- Within 12 months after the election, take back in-house failing privatisations, such as NSL, the parking contractor, and Your Choice Barnet, providers of social services to disabled adults.
- Within two years after the election find the most cost-effective way to extract the council from the contracts with Capita.
- No more cuts, no more privatisations.
- Support the London Living Wage.
- Eliminate zero-hour contracts for council staff and pressure contractual partners and other employers in Barnet to do the same.

### **SOCIAL CARE**

- Bring back in-house all day and residential social care services.
- Ensure that they are permanently staffed to the optimum level to deliver high-quality care.
- Employ council staff in home care services.
- Ensure participation by users, family carers and staff in the planning and monitoring of the services.

## **REGENERATION: approve plans that benefit the community**

### **Council estates**

- In order to maintain and support existing communities, replace existing council and social housing with homes that meet the standards set out in the London Housing Design Guide, published by the London Development Agency in 2010 and implemented in April 2011, and include leisure facilities as good as or better than those existing before demolition.
- People whose homes are destroyed in the regeneration must be rehoused in the new development if they choose.

### **High streets**

- Bring in reasonable parking policies to encourage use of local trade in the high streets: provide 30 minutes' free parking and restore cash meters.
- Limit the number of supermarkets, estate agents and gambling shops in areas where they already exist, and encourage street markets.
- Use Compulsory Purchase powers to buy empty shops, and encourage a range of independent shops and businesses and community organisations to use them.
- Sign up to the sustainable Communities Act.

## **LOCAL DEMOCRACY**

- Promote the meaningful participation of residents and staff in the decision-making process of the council. For example:
  - Create and consult boards of local people with practical experience in relevant areas, and invite representatives of all relevant stakeholder organisations to attend and contribute to each committee.
  - Keep all council and committee meetings open to the public.
  - Restore the previously allowed time for public questions and comments, and allow residents to put forward concrete proposals for formal consideration by the council.
- Institute genuine, equitable consultation, which was denied us in the mass privatisation. For example:
  - Ensure that survey questions are unbiased, and that open consultations allow people to put forward their own views rather than being limited to questions of the council's choosing.
  - Be pro-active in making residents aware of consultations and in providing survey forms.
  - Act on and publish the results of the consultations, and show how they correspond to decisions taken.

## **EDUCATION**

- Ensure all classes are taught by qualified teachers.
- Don't encourage Free Schools or allow them to be built on council land. Find ways to build new schools that are not academies (other councils build new schools as annexes of existing schools to bypass the government directive that every new school has to be an academy), and restore local authority control of all state-funded schools.
- Get maximum collaboration with existing academies and free schools in allocating school places, and ensure that Barnet children whose parents want them to go to school locally will be found a place.
- Ensure there is adequate Special Educational Needs provision in Barnet schools.
- Defend the existing children's centres and restore pre-school education and care.
- Create well-equipped educational resource centres offering resource materials, technology, and classes.

## **EMPLOYMENT**

- Keep public service jobs in Barnet.
- Set up a job agency for Barnet residents.
- Eliminate zero-hour contracts and secure the London Living Wage for all council employees, including those in Barnet Homes and Your Choice Barnet, and pressure other contractual partners to do the same.
- Require developers applying for planning permission, outsourced contractors and subcontractors to provide 3-year apprenticeships for Barnet residents proportionate to the workforce on the project.
- Work with other employers to create apprenticeships and discourage unpaid internships.
- Restore the funding for services like CAB, law centres and welfare advice centres to create jobs and help residents.

## **HEALTH CARE**

- Reinstate the A&E at Chase Farm, the closure of which has caused havoc at Barnet General and is seen as a precursor to closing Chase Farm completely.
- Prevent any attempt to close Chase Farm and oppose the merging of Barnet General and the Royal Free.
- Ensure that all care related to health, mental and physical, remains free at the point of delivery and is protected from further cost-cutting.
- Ensure that all issues related to the NHS are open, transparent and public- friendly, with more information being provided and the public being consulted, particularly in CCG decisions
- Ensure that all patients sent home from hospital under the Post Acute Enablement Service continue to be treated by health-care workers, not care workers with no medical qualifications or training

## **FINANCE**

- Limit council officials' pay to the level of the equivalent grade of civil servants' pay for London.
- Stop the large-scale use of consultants.
- Prohibit contracts with firms convicted of fraud or contravention of standards of behaviour.
- Prohibit further privatisation of services and disallow any clauses that require the council to compensate a private contractor for its failure to produce profits.
- Prohibit PFIs (Private Finance Initiatives).
- Commit the council to investigating and considering ways to increase income, such as provision of utilities, transport, community banking.
- Join with other councils and trade unions to pressure central government to restore funding.

## **ENVIRONMENT**

- Protect Pinkham Way against use at any time for a waste processing plant.
- Support the Pinkham Way Alliance's demand to designate the area as a protected nature reserve.
- Introduce more public transport, preferably electric
- Apply for GLA funding to create a cycling infrastructure ('mini-Hollands'), with, for example, cycle routes, cycle super highways and cycle-friendly plazas
- Introduce 'play streets' (roads closed on certain times of the day and the week for children to play in)
- Promote 20-mile-an-hour zones
- Enforce permeable surface requirement for off-street parking that replaces front gardens, to

reduce the risk of floods

- Protect allotments and encourage local food growing
- Reverse the policy of charges for use of the parks

### **Youth and community**

- Support existing community centres in every ward.
- Impose the maximum Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) on private developers and use the money to build new or refurbish old community centres.
- Fund the youth service to provide activities for different age groups in every ward.
- Retain outdoor sports and leisure facilities, such as Pavilion Way, throughout the borough and return them to council control.

### **Trade Unions**

BAPS recognises that Barnet council's employees maintain good standards of work despite the attacks on their jobs and their unions by the Conservative council. The council should:

- Acknowledge the democratic right of workers to belong to a trade union.
- Recognise that employees who have job security and decent working terms and conditions are motivated to provide the best quality of work.
  - Recognise and engage positively with trade unions, which monitor good practice in service provision and the safety of workplaces, and thus ensure the smooth and efficient running of services.
- Allow union officers adequate facility time to represent their members.