

BROMLEY LABOUR GROUP NEWS

NEWSLETTER OF THE LABOUR MEMBERS OF BROMLEY COUNCIL

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This is a report on the Council Meeting held on Monday 23 January 2006.

BROMLEY TORIES PROPOSE TO CHARGE FOR DAY SERVICES

In yet another attack on vulnerable people, Bromley Tories are proposing to implement day centre charges for those people attending the senior citizens facilities or those adults with learning disabilities. The latter could face charges of up to £8 a day. Final agreement on this has not been reached with the budget for 2006/07 being prepared as we go to print. The Tories in Bromley have consistently underfunded Social Services and are currently heading for an overspend of over £1 Million. All the above charges would bring in £40,000. Day centres for adults with learning difficulties are set to close anyway with a change of service to more community based satellite units over the next few years. What is the point of introducing charges now?

BROMLEY RECEIVE REWARD GRANT FROM GOVT OF NEARLY £6 MILLION

The Tories in Bromley are always bleating on about wanting more money from the government but they are set to receive £5.7 Million out of a possible £6 Million for reaching various performance standards which were set with the government previously. These related to reductions in the number of road accidents, efficiency savings, processing homelessness applications, electronic delivery of services, increasing recycling rates and promoting the independence of older people.

TORIES SCUPPER DEBATE ON THEIR RECORD IN NORTH OF BOROUGH

Bromley Tories moved quickly to try and curtail debate when their record in the north of the borough was discussed at the last Council Meeting. The debate was triggered by Kelsey and Eden Park Independent Councillor Rod Reed who highlighted the failings of the administration with many facilities being closed, eg, Woodbrook School. The Labour group highlighted the lack of support for local town centres with the loss of town centre managers, community groups under threat due to the closure of 101A Parish Lane, far too much graffiti with no strategy for dealing with it. Most of the money being spent in the area is coming from Central Government, eg, SureStart. The lack of tree pruning is leading to many complaints as the contractors cut the whole of the specimen rather than pollard them.

BROMLEY TOWN CENTRE PROPOSALS

The Council are currently consulting on proposals for the future of Bromley Town Centre. The aim is to develop a plan for the next fifteen years. There is concern that the competitiveness and viability of the town centre is being undermined, highlighted by the recent closure of two department stores. Bluewater and further developments at Lewisham and Croydon mean that Bromley has been finding it tougher economically. This is despite it being a popular location, particularly for residents in Southwark who do not have such ample retail choice. The plans could see the retail extension of the Glades with the relocation of the leisure centre to the Civic Centre site, enhancement of North Village with housing and new retail facilities around Bromley North station, and a new entertainment and leisure focus in Bromley South. In the longer term, could Bromley North and Bromley South stations be linked up? Key issues include making Bromley more competitive and distinctive, integrating the new with the old, dealing with congestion and the demand for parking and making the town feel safer at night. A lot of preliminary work has been done with other stakeholders but clearly most of this development is reliant on the private sector. Further information is available at all borough libraries or via the Bromley website - www.Bromley.gov.uk

BROMLEY CPA SCORE IMPROVES DESPITE YOUTH SERVICE FAILINGS

Bromley have received a three star rating from the government in the annual publication of Comprehensive Performance Assessment and is judged to be “improving well”. Social Services has improved from no star to two star in two years. These are from a maximum of four stars. We are pleased to see some improvement but there were outstanding issues, eg, the Youth Service has been assessed as inadequate by Ofsted. An action plan is currently being produced to rectify that situation. Housing services were also not as good as they should be. Bromley residents deserve first class services but are still not getting a “Rolls Royce service”. Bromley is a nice area to live in but there is plenty of room for improvement by penny pinching Bromley Tories.

£830,000 BOOST FOR ADULTS WITH LEARNING DISABILITIES

Government reward money received from meeting various targets listed overleaf is to be spent trying to promote independence amongst the 218 adults who currently live in residential care homes. We support the aim of looking at trying to get people into their own accommodation but not to be used as a cost cutting measure which is often the case with Bromley Tory schemes. 153 adults are currently placed outside the borough. It is recognised that for some people with more complex difficulties then residential care is appropriate but others could move to less rigid arrangements with the right support and if it is handled sensitively. The Council will individually assess those affected by these proposals and will ensure that they and their families are fully involved in planning their future by providing additional resources for support and independent advocacy. The average cost of a residential placement is £800 per week.

FUTURE USE OF THE STUDIO SECURED

The future of The Studio, an Edwardian listed building in Beckenham has hopefully been secured after the council agreed to accept a proposal from the Herbert Justice Academy for the arts based venue. The proposals include refurbishment of the theatre and auditorium for regular live entertainment and performances, five refurbished studios and two community rooms, a gallery, a fully equipped arts centre, mobile recording studio, a café/restaurant/bar, a shop and a crèche facility. This follows the withdrawal of Proper Music who had similar plans last year.

CONTACTING BROMLEY LABOUR GROUP

We are always happy to take up issues that you raise with us. One of the best ways of doing that is on e mail or through the council website - www.Bromley.gov.uk You can contact councillors by using the same format e.g. Peter.Fookes@Bromley.gov.uk This is the same for members and officers of the authority as well. We also have our own website which can be accessed at www.bromley-labour-group.co.uk. You can also use the old snail mail and write to us c/o Bromley Civic Centre, Stockwell Close, Bromley BR1 3UH.