

# BROMLEY LABOUR GROUP NEWS

NEWSLETTER OF THE LABOUR MEMBERS OF BROMLEY COUNCIL

CRAY VALLEY WEST WARD  
COLIN WILLETTS

PENGE & CATOR WARD  
PETER FOOKES, JOHN GETGOOD, & KAREN ROBERTS

JULY - AUGUST 2007

This is a report of the July Council meeting.

## BROMLEY TO CLOSE AND REBUILD CARE HOMES FOR THE ELDERLY

The Council are currently consulting with residents, staff and relatives on the closure of six care homes for the elderly in the borough with the intention of rebuilding four of them to meet future need. The first being consulted on is Anne Sutherland House in Penge. A final decision on its closure will be made in January with the home scheduled to close in May 2008. It is planned to reopen the new home by the Summer of 2009. The other homes involved are Sheila Stead in Chislehurst, Manorfields in Orpington, Kingswood in Shortlands, Isard House in Hayes, and Belle Grove in St Pauls Cray. The current homes do not meet the new National Minimum Standards introduced in 2000. Most of the homes are at least 40 years old. The Commission for Social Care Improvement (CSCI) are beginning a more stringent check on homes and Bromley's are beginning to look dated. More people are now helped to live in their own home than ever before with intensive packages of support. The proportion of people with dementia who need residential care is increasing as is the proportion that need nursing care. 75 places will be available in the new homes for people with dementia. Currently our homes do not provide nursing care and if people deteriorate, they often have to move out. The new homes will provide nursing care if required. The Bromley homes have been managed by Shaw Healthcare since 2004. The proposed consultation strategy establishes that the Executive would not be asked to recommend proceeding with a home closure until suitable alternative accommodation had been identified for each individual resident. However, the timing of the closure and building programme means that residents cannot be guaranteed a place in one of the new homes. The council will work with the residents to find alternative provision in one of the private or voluntary sector homes in the borough. The government have given Bromley £290,000 to allocate between the current providers in the borough to upgrade their homes to meet the new care standards.

## COUNCILLOR CHRIS GASTER

We are sad to report the death of Councillor Chris Gaster who served the Anerley/Crystal Palace area with unflinching concern for over 36 years. The first eleven of these from 1971 to 1982 was as a Labour Councillor. He was also involved with many community groups in the area. A by-election will be held shortly in Crystal Palace ward.

## OFFICERS DEPART

Chief Executive David Bartlett and Chief Planner Stuart Mcmillan both retired from the council in June. Mr Bartlett was formerly the borough treasurer and worked for Bromley for nearly 20 years. Stuart McMillan worked in planning in the borough for over 35 years. Doug Patterson, currently Chief Executive at Wokingham, will be taking over from David Bartlett very shortly and Bob McQuillan who is the current Head of Development Control is currently acting up to cover Stuart Mcmillan. Paul Dale, Director of Resources and Deputy Chief Executive is currently the man in charge.

## TORIES BACK MOTION ON BACK GARDENS

Bromley Tories pushed through a motion at the last council meeting on back gardens. They have been bleating on about saving them and not allowing them to be built on. There has been no change in government policy and it would be difficult to have a policy that completely excluded it totally. This is something that Jacqui Lait, Conservative MP for Beckenham has been bleating on about. They seem to conveniently forget that places like Beckenham were turned into flatland during the 1980's when they were in power nationally and locally. Some people do not like gardening and having to maintain them! The government have encouraged developers to build on brown field sites, i.e. land that has already been used for development previously. The Tories were supported by their allies, the Liberal Democrats on the motion. Labour Leader, John Getgood responded to the debate but unsurprisingly we were outvoted! The Tories now say that they are in favour of building new homes but David Cameron needs to face the reality on the ground in areas like Bromley where his local councillors adopt the "not in my backyard" approach far too easily. There is a demand for more housing/flats but it has got to be of good quality and maintain existing residential amenity. Places like part of the Glaxo Wellcome site have been developed for 400 units in Beckenham without any major problems, except for the lack of community facilities. It is important that good public transport/health/educational facilities are provided on these major sites usually by the developers themselves via a planning gain agreement with the local authority.

## POLICE COMMUNITY SUPPORT OFFICERS TACKLE TRANSPORT PROBLEMS

Eighteen Police Community Support Officers are being deployed in the borough to deal with instances of anti-social behaviour on buses. We salute the work that the News Shopper have been doing to identify those people who are defacing buses. It is important to remember that it is only a small minority of mainly young people who are actually involved in this behaviour as the Tories are talking about withdrawing free travel for youngsters on buses. For some unknown reason, this seems to more of a problem in Bromley than elsewhere in London. The 208 and 61 bus routes are particularly bad for this kind of thing. This is part of the Transport for London campaign known as Operation Bustag to target offenders who are often linked to other crimes and prevent them travelling across the capital.

## AWARD FOR BROMLEY HEADTEACHER

Congratulations to Helen Norris, Head of Phoenix Children's Resource Centre in Bromley who was recently awarded an MBE for her work for young children with disabilities and their families.

This is a fitting reward for her and her staff who have achieved national acclaim for ground breaking initiatives in this area of work. The team also won the National Customer Service Team of the Year award for Disability in the Autumn of 2006.

## CONTACTING BROMLEY LABOUR GROUP

We are always happy to take up issues that you raise with us and to keep the Tories in Bromley in check. One of the best ways of doing that is on e mail or through the council website – [www.Bromley.gov.uk](http://www.Bromley.gov.uk) You can contact councillors by using the same format eg, [Peter.Fookes@Bromley.gov.uk](mailto: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](http://www.bromley-labour-group.co.uk). You can also write to us c/o Bromley Civic Centre, Stockwell Close, Bromley BR1 3UH or leave a message on our answer phone (020) 8460 0626.