

BROMLEY LABOUR GROUP NEWS

NEWSLETTER OF THE LABOUR MEMBERS OF BROMLEY COUNCIL

CRAY VALLEY WEST WARD
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MARCH - APRIL 2009

BROMLEY GETS FOUR STARS BUT PLENTY OF ROOM FOR IMPROVEMENT

The Audit Commission have published their most recent assessment of councils as of March 2009 and Bromley has received a maximum of four stars up from three last year under the Comprehensive Performance Assessment (CPA) scorecard. We congratulate all Bromley officers on the work that they have done to achieve this. Doubtless Bromley Tories will try and claim credit for this but it has to be taken in context. 19 out of 32 London boroughs also received four stars as did 42% of councils nationally. Another 38% received three stars. Bromley was regarded as improving well with an annual rate of improvement that is just below other authorities. Results for children and young people continue to improve, with good progress made in achieving better outcomes for vulnerable children, especially those with learning difficulties and/or disabilities and looked after children. Partnership working is improving. Crime levels have decreased from an already low level. Support for more vulnerable older people is improving and there is good value for money. Although the overall assessment of environmental services has improved, the cost of waste disposal is high and increasing and levels of littering are in the worst quartile. The improvements in delivery to vulnerable groups are not matched by a clear corporate commitment. This is something that the Labour group have consistently argued for.

Bromley residents deserve a first class service from Bromley Council and we want to see sustained improvements but Bromley Tories frequently tend to ignore areas of the borough where their political support is weakest. We welcome these improvements which have largely been achieved through government investment

And dedication from local government workers. This was amply demonstrated during the recent spells of inclement weather. More information on this topic is available on the Audit Commission website.

COUNCIL TAX 2009/10

Band A = £859.32	Band B = £1002.54
" C = £1145.76	" D = £1288.98
" E = £1575.42	" F = £1861.86
" G = £2148.30	" H = £2577.96

COUNCIL TAX INCREASES BY NEARLY 3% IN BROMLEY

Bromley Tories presided over one of the largest council tax increases in London this year by demanding a 2.7% increase from local residents. Labour Group Leader, John Getgood responded to the low key debate (no sign of any press in the public gallery) by highlighting areas which the Tories had neglected and proposing to take some money from reserves. This included the creation of a town manager post in Penge and Crystal Palace, restricting increases in domiciliary care charges to

inflation only, restoring cuts to the school support service of £250,000, particularly at a time when four schools in the borough are currently in special measures. We would also have added £100,000 to develop a recruitment and retention strategy for Children's social services. A topic very much in the news of late in the wake of the Baby P case and an area where all councils are struggling to retain staff. Bromley have recently recruited a dozen staff from America. We would also have restored cuts of £100,000 to the youth service which is something that is frequently highlighted by residents in surveys across the borough as something that should be prioritised. Bromley currently has £45 Million in reserves, much of this money was obtained from the sale of the council housing stock to Broomleigh Housing Association in 1992 and the development of the Glades Shopping Centre. The Lib Dems proposed a budget which would have seen no increase in council tax this year which of course is totally unsustainable in the long term and they would have funded it by using reserves. This is about the only time during the year that they have actually opposed the Tories. Bromley is a good authority but we need to make sure that all residents continually receive excellent services commensurate to their need.

BROMLEY TORIES NEGLECT FOOTWAYS

An independent report by the Audit Commission has highlighted the fact that Bromley has 23% of footways requiring structural maintenance. By their judgement, Southwark has 15%, Lewisham 10% and Croydon just 6%. The London average is 20%. The Audit Commission also highlighted the fact that there is a problem with litter/waste in the borough which meant that the Environment only scored three out of four stars.

BROMLEY SCHOOL CHALLENGES STEREOTYPES

Students from Ravensbourne School in Hayes Lane, Bromley have been able to publicly challenge stereotypes of young people in the borough thanks to an initiative by the Safer Bromley Partnership. A number of pupils, both past and present, are featured in a poster campaign, designed by the students themselves to demonstrate that not all young people behave badly or should be judged adversely because they dress in a fashionably casual way. The posters are being displayed in High Streets across the borough. It is only a small minority of young people that do cause trouble with the vast majority conducting themselves appropriately. This is linked to the fear of crime and the fact that the reality is far different. Bromley continues to remain a very safe place to live even when Bromley Tories cut truancy patrols in the borough. Crime in Bromley is continuing to fall. The question is now how do we take it to the next level?

HEAD CAMERAS TO BE USED TO IMPROVE PARKING ENFORCEMENT

Head cameras will be used by Civil Enforcement officers across the borough to record the issuing of penalty charge notices to vehicles and provide additional evidence relating to the parking contravention.

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 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 or www.pengeandcatorcouncillors.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. Don't forget that the only scheduled election this year is on Thursday 4th June from 7-00 am to 10-00 pm when the European Elections take place. If you might be away or have difficulty in voting in person, you can vote by post so don't lose your vote. More details are available on the Bromley Council website.