

Cllr. Charith Gunawardena

Thank you Mr Mayor for the opportunity to speak on this important topic.

Enfield Council faces significant challenges.

We are under enormous financial pressures due to funding cuts, Covid-19, projected £2bn peak debt burden but also what I genuinely believe are some irresponsible political choices.

The borough is facing an increasingly serious housing crisis. Astonishingly, there are not enough genuinely affordable family-sized homes being built today.

This administration is not responding to the environmental crisis with the level of transparency needed and not offering considered, and evidence-based responses and policies.

Under these challenging circumstances, there is an urgent need for an inclusive political culture - supporting open and honest policy discussions and scrutiny to reach solutions that benefit residents across the borough.

Unfortunately, over the past 3 years the wisdom, experience and ability of many able councillors of the majority party, those who have left and some still remaining, have been ignored and undermined by this administration.

The wellbeing of Enfield residents and the environment must be in better hands.

Therefore for all these reasons I will be supporting this motion tonight.

Cllr. Dinah Barry

Thank you Mr Mayor.

At a recent council meeting, members of Community First were referred to as misfits. That is an epithet we are proud to own - what committed socialist would want fit in to the current Labour group?

But we were also accused of being right-wing and that we will not accept, especially from an administration whose policies demonstrate no ethical or political compass, and that repeatedly demonstrates the lack of respect it has for our residents.

We have had the infamous increase in SRAs; awarding themselves all that extra money while many of our residents were suffering cuts to their incomes, increases in council tax and as we were reminded tonight, becoming dependent on food banks.

And what truly socialist group would choose to fund the council tax support scheme by taking money from some of our poorest residents - not the poorest, but those just slightly better off. Last year the GLA asked them to reconsider.

Compare that to the Labour administration in Harrow. They provided extra Council Tax relief and made it easier to claim in order to boost support for their most vulnerable residents.

What a contrast.

I was disgusted by this last year when it was introduced - I'd be disgusted whoever had introduced it

But for a Labour Administration who awards itself so many perks to take money from our most vulnerable residents is beyond despicable.

And then there is Meridian Water. In 2018 it was expected that this would provide jobs and affordable homes for Enfield people. Now the homes will only be affordable by the most wealthy of our residents, including private landlords, and by people moving into Enfield from outside the borough. What about our residents languishing in unsuitable housing and TA

Until 2018, I had never found being a Quaker to be a problem in the Labour Party. Indeed Quakers' commitment to conserving the earth's resources and sharing them more equitably always seemed to be completely in accord with Labour values.

I think those values are still at the heart of the Labour party - they just don't matter to this administration; they should resign.

Cllr. Dino Lemonides

To understand this debate, we need to understand how we got here.

In 2017, 10 of the 13 members of the Local campaign forum became concerned that irregularities had arisen in the candidate selection process run by Councillor Caliskan.

So, it was not surprising, following her election as leader, that a number of us asked the central party for an investigation.

Since then, those that signed that request have been systematically harassed by the leader and her supporters with accusations of racism.

If there were no impropriety, surely Councillor Caliskan would have addressed the numerous requests by the local party for meetings and explanations.

And it seems unlikely that the NEC would have made their recommendations.

But the current administration never explains itself.

That breaches a fundamental principle of democracy and the Nolan principles of openness and transparency.

Taking an alternative viewpoint is not seen as healthy and part of a democratic process or indeed a key element of scrutiny- fundamental to the checks and balances required to ensure decisions are robust.

Rather it is seen as a personal attack and met by bullying and intimidation

– can I remind the chamber that Cllr Caliskan has been found guilty both of bullying and interfering with the scrutiny process.

On the question of racism, I am saddened that Councillor Caliskan implied that as a fellow Cypriot I would engage in such behaviour against a compatriot or indeed anyone.

I have previously referred to an article in Skwawkbox about Councillor Barnes – It is difficult to know the true facts as there is no open debate about the situation.

As far as I am aware 3 of the 6 or so candidates that possibly failed the selection process were not of an ethnic minority background.

So I fail to see where the racial discrimination comes in!

Indeed the only evidence of racial discrimination that I have witnessed was during a meeting of Enfield Southgate Labour Party where some current councillors “talked down“ a motion by councillor Don McGowan which was highly critical of the selection process.

Cllr Caliskan and her supporters would have us believe that the 5 defections and 2 resignations from the labour group are some sort of display of anti-labour politics.

That is nonsense.

Party rules mean you cannot leave the Labour group without leaving the Labour party!

In fact, the central party wanted me to stay and fight.

The defections and resignations are simply a reflection of the deeply held view that this administration’s rule is too autocratic and is not in keeping with Labour traditions.

Indeed, its politics are not driven by facts, but by trying to invent facts to back up their ill-conceived policies.

Politics used to be about doing the right thing, now it appears to be about power and control!

I would not be surprised if there are more defections. I for one have no confidence in this Labour administration.

Cllr. Derek Levy

Normally, it is only at the end of an agenda item here that a roll call is taken, but - in the best interests of the residents of Enfield - I shall begin this brief contribution to a much needed and long overdue debate with one of my own:-

Selflessness Integrity Objectivity **Accountability** Openness Honesty
Leadership

These seven highly principled siblings, collectively going by the name of Nolan, have been missing from Enfield and have been neither seen nor heard for more than three years. Authorities are particularly concerned by the absence of accountability, and now have firm evidence to declare this to be a case of abduction - by a group whose street name is very well known to them.

Should anyone have any knowledge of the whereabouts of one, some, or all members of **this** Nolan family, please do your public service duty, and you can do this anonymously, by contacting Municipal Crimestoppers.

In doing so, you be playing a major part in helping to rebuild the credibility of this Council and to restore the reputation of this once great Borough

Cllr. Daniel Anderson

Mr Mayor,

In the now halcyon days of May 2018 the good residents of Enfield voted to reelect a successful Labour Administration under the then leadership of Doug Taylor, who had led the Labour Group to three successive victories, increasing the majority on each occasion, from just 9 seats in 2010, to 19 seats in 2014, to a staggering 29 seats in 2018.

What could possibly go wrong?

Well, everything as it so happens. Cllr Taylor was replaced, a result of a hostile takeover, apparently as he was deemed as not being “political enough” and the rest, as they say, is history.

For instance, who can forget the Bush Hill Park by-election in November 2018, when the new leadership, against advice from many more experienced hands, chose to proceed with a misjudged bin consultation that treated the public as fools and as a result saw a marginal Conservative seat, with a wafer thin 64 vote majority, become a Conservative stronghold with a 712 vote majority?!

Fast forward three years. And just two weeks ago, the public again gave their verdict. Labour not only lost the Chase by-election, helped no doubt by its cack-handed decision to close Whitewebbs, but also saw their share of the vote fall substantially in the two safe seats of Jubilee and Southbury.

And then there’s the resignations and defections from that toxic Labour Group, including one this very evening.

Indeed, Mr Mayor, to paraphrase Oscar Wilde, to lose one councillor could be classed as a misfortune, to lose two carelessness, but to lose NINE - well I’ll let you draw your own conclusions.

That 29-seat majority from 2018, has now been slashed to just 14.

You might have thought that the current leadership would have reflected on how it has come to this and already reappraised its approach, but no, not a bit of it. Mr Mayor, I say to former colleagues in the Labour Group, both old and new, wake up, yes wake up because next May Labour stands to lose its majority and many of those councillors will lose their seats, let alone their special responsibility allowances. And if they think that this is just hyperbole then I will remind them of what happened in 2002 when hubris saw the then Labour Administration, of which I was a member, lose 19 seats and a 20-seat majority became a 15-seat deficit.

Mr Mayor, they say you can fool some of the people all of the time, all of the people some of the time, but not all of the people all of the time.

But then the only people this Labour Administration fools are themselves and their self-congratulatory echo chamber.

Alas, Mr Mayor, common sense is a bit like deodorant. The people who need it most, never use it.

Cllr. Anne Brown

I support the motion of no confidence in this administration.

I will not repeat the many valid points made by others - when they were allowed to be heard but I will say this: I was proud to be elected as a Labour Councillor in 2018 on the strength of a Manifesto for Enfield which I believed in and a national Labour leadership which truly sought to represent the many and not the few.

Sadly this administration has proved unequal to the delivery of those values.

For all their talk about Labour values, this particular administration has chosen to ignore consultations with residents - if they consult at all, undermine scrutiny, crush dissent and impose a whip on every point, often denying their own councillors the opportunity to pursue the interests of their residents in debate for fear of ruthless discipline - especially galling when backbenchers have not had an opportunity to input to the decision.

This administration does not represent the interests of their citizens or Labour values and does not deserve their or our confidence.

I support the motion