



## Barnet Joint Trade Unions Press Release:

# 'Save our Warden Services in Barnet '

## Barnet Council Cabinet Committee

8 June 2009 6 pm.

Venue: Committee room

Barnet House, Barnet House

1255 High Road, Whetstone N20 0EJ

(Nearest tube Totteridge on Northern line)

*"We'll begin a massive redistribution of power in our country from the powerful to the powerless – from the political elite to the man and woman in the street."*

(David Cameron 26 May 2009)

Conservative run Barnet Council announced earlier this year Budget proposals deleting Sheltered Housing Services to make **£950,000** in savings.

There are **1500** sheltered housing tenants provided under contract by **24** separate organisations, including housing associations, charities and the council's ALMO. **19** of the **24** organisations provide support staff and an alarm service, and the remaining five organisations provide an alarm-only service.

The announcement provoked widespread opposition from residents, relatives, Trade Unions and the emerging voice of Barnet residents 'Barnet Community Campaign'.

The attack on sheltered warden services is not an isolated case. It appears these schemes are being cut across the UK (see link to **Sheltered Housing UK Association below**).

Barnet Council conducted a extensive consultation and in its own report

- **833** completed questionnaires were received, with 73.7% of respondents being residents of sheltered housing
- The majority (**88%**) disagreed to some extent with the proposed budget reduction, with **81%** strongly disagreeing
- According to the report 31 Wardens will be evicted from the flats in which they have been living and supporting residents.

Four Options are to be put to Cabinet Committee tonight. The recommendation is for **Option Three** making a saving of £400,000. This is not enough for residents and their relatives who quite clearly fear for the future.

One example of feedback in the Council Report:

***“The security and safety of a vulnerable group will be compromised.”***

**Option Four** which seeks to retain the service as is. In the Council report it states:

***“Reflects the majority of the responses to the Public Consultation.”***

The decision on the Future of the Sheltered Housing Service is in the hands of 10 elected councillors in the Cabinet Committee. We have witnessed UK wide anger against the three mainstream political parties resulting in the BNP taking two seats in the European Elections. The result is directly related to the electorates lack of confidence in politicians and their policies.

**Politicians need to get back into the community and show they are listening and understand what the local issues are.**

Tonight Barnet Council Cabinet could make history and throw out the proposal to delete the service. It would be a first and send a clear message to Barnet residents that this time politicians really have listened.

**End.**

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## **Information/links**

### **1. Barnet UNISON**

**Sheltered Housing End of and Era?**

<http://www.barnetunison.me.uk/?q=node/278>

**David Cameron “Power to the people ”**

<http://www.barnetunison.me.uk/?q=node/279>

### **2. Barnet Community Campaign**

<http://barnetcc.wordpress.com/2009/06/04/join-the-lobby-on-monday-8-june/>

### **3. Barnet Trades Council**

<http://www.barnettuc.org.uk/>

### **4. Sheltered Housing UK Association**

<http://www.shelteredhousinguk.com/>