

Barnet Community Campaign:

Shaping Our Own Future!

We need all sorts of help with the campaign, and anyone can make a contribution. From running stalls and delivering leaflets, to drawing cartoons, to blogging, to simply telling us what you think. Please get in touch if you can help or if you would like more information: FutureShape@barnettuc.org.uk.

Below are some examples of activities that you can be involved in:

Thursday 5 February

Hendon residents' forum, 6.30pm, Broadfields Primary School, Hartland Drive, Edgware HA8

We will present a petition to the council, calling for the 'Future Shape' plans to be made available in a Plain English version so that residents can understand what is being planned. The Plain English Campaign has described the 'Future Shape' report as 'an awful document', full of gobbledegook.

Tuesday 17 February

Chipping Barnet residents' forum, 6pm, Danegrove Primary School, Windsor Drive, East Barnet EN4 8UD

We will present a petition to the council, calling for the 'Future Shape' plans to be made available in a Plain English version.

Thursday 19 February

Finchley and Golders Green residents' forum, 6.30pm, Avenue House, 17 East End Road, Finchley N3

We will present a petition to the council, calling for the 'Future Shape' plans to be made available in a Plain English version.

Wednesday 4 March

7-9pm, launch meeting of Barnet Community Campaign (see front of leaflet). More information: FutureShape@barnettuc.org.uk

Monday 8 June (date subject to change)

Council meeting to take decision on whether or not to proceed with 'Future Shape' plan.

Please recycle this leaflet when you have finished with it. Thank you.
www.barnettuc.org.uk

Barnet Community Campaign:

We Can Shape Our Own Future!

Barnet residents learned recently that the council is planning wholesale privatisation of council services. The council wants to do this through a programme they call 'Future Shape'.

But it was not from the council itself that we found out about these plans. Councillors tried to push this major plan through without consulting residents. They thought we wouldn't be interested. They were wrong!

Informed about the 'Future Shape' plan by council trade unions, hundreds of Barnet residents and council employees attended a public meet-

ing on 11 November and a rally outside the council Cabinet meeting on 3 December. In some cases people just wanted more information, but in most cases they wanted to protest.

We got major coverage in the press.

Why were we protesting? We don't believe that now (if ever) is a good time to contemplate large-scale privatisation of council services.

Council unions and concerned residents have compiled 10 reasons why Barnet residents should oppose the council's 'Future Shape' plan. Please read this leaflet, and join the campaign.

If you want to campaign against the 'Future Shape' plan and against council cuts, if you want to campaign for better services and a better environment in Barnet, if you want more effective local democracy... come to this meeting.

Guest speaker:

Professor Dexter Whitfield on what the council's 'Future Shape' plan would mean for Barnet.

More information:
FutureShape@barnettuc.org.uk

**Barnet
Community
Campaign
launch meeting
Weds 4 March**

**7-9pm, Barnet
Multicultural Community
Centre, Algernon Road,
London NW4 3TA**

10 reasons why Barnet residents should oppose the council's 'Future Shape' plan

1. **The council has made no attempt to consult Barnet residents about what *they* want** the 'Future Shape' of Barnet to look like. The 'Future Shape' plan has been developed with almost no input from council trade unions representing the workers that deliver the services. All the public feedback so far shows total opposition to the scheme. It is hard to believe that any such scheme can succeed, especially when it is being imposed on the community.
2. The **business failure rate is soaring**. Even household names are going bust. We should not be looking to private companies to deliver services when we can't be sure how long they can survive in business. When contracting companies go bust, services are disrupted and money is wasted while the service is brought back in-house and possibly retendered.
3. When it comes down to it, private companies are only interested in making profits. Often, **the easiest way for them to make a profit is for them to cut staffing costs** – the number of posts, pay, staff terms and conditions (e.g., holidays), training. Cutting staffing costs almost always in the long run leads to poorer services through problems of staff retention, low morale and inadequate training.
4. Future Shape would end direct employment of 4,000 non-teaching staff. Many council employees also live in Barnet. Particularly in a recession, we believe the council should remain as a major employer that guarantees relatively well-paid employment to a significant number of Barnet residents. Privatising jobs, possibly moving them out of the borough, will impoverish the whole community, with a **knock-on effect on local businesses and the local economy**.
5. Private companies' **profit-seeking can lead to corner-cutting** with disastrous consequences for the quality of services. The increase in the rate of hospital infections in the UK is largely the result of the privatisation of hospital cleaning services. In October 2008 the Scottish government banned privatisation of hospital services such as cleaning and catering, and made in-house provision a cornerstone of its fight against healthcare associated infections.
6. **Privatisation threatens democratic accountability**, weakens scrutiny and undermines public confidence in decision-making – these are all factors that have contributed to the global financial crisis. A contract culture of commercial secrecy erodes the political controls that exist in the current system, where residents elect councillors to control services that are provided directly by the council.
7. We doubt that Future Shape will save money long-term. In the short term, **the programme is already costing Barnet residents a small fortune**. In December 2008 the Council Cabinet voted to spend £250,000 on the next phase of developing the programme. They have already paid consultants PricewaterhouseCoopers £130,000 for the main 'Future Shape' report – which the Plain English Campaign has condemned as 'an awful document'.
8. The council currently has carefully developed equal opportunities policies. **'Future Shape' would jeopardise equal employment opportunities and equal access to services**, as the private sector is much less developed and transparent in this area.
9. **The council is not considering alternatives to the 'Future Shape' plan**. In spite of earlier promises (made before the current economic turmoil) that they would look at several options, there is only one on the table: large-scale privatisation. Council trade unions are promoting an alternative: services should remain in-house, but they should be improved through consultation with service users and workers.
10. **The 'Future Shape' plan will not solve the problem of inadequate funding for local government** by central government: only a political campaign for better funding can do that. Future Shape simply offers private companies an opportunity to make profits from our taxes, through cutting the quality of services, and the employment conditions of employees. It offers no answers at all.