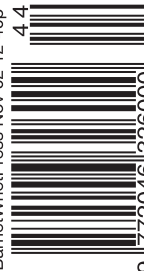


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THURSDAY NOVEMBER 1 2012

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Barnet's best local newspaper is
inside this advertising wraparound

**Barnet Council wants to
give two multinationals
£1,000,000,000 of your
money and control over
70% of council services for
10 years*.**

Do you approve?

Yes

No

A third large contract is likely to follow, meaning 90% of services will be delivered by private companies. The Barnet Alliance for Public Services think that these plans are wrong and that councillors need to consult more with residents about them. We explain why in this four-page special newspaper.

*Part of Barnet Council's 'One Barnet' programme. To sign the petition calling for these plans to be put to a referendum of residents visit <http://petitions.barnet.gov.uk/StopOneBarnet>.

What is One Barnet? What is wrong with it?

The One Barnet programme is a plan by Barnet Council to change the way council services are delivered. The Council currently delivers most services itself, but it is negotiating with a handful of multinational companies for them to deliver the services instead for the next 10 years.

Azi Khatiri, 33, film-maker from Whetstone

'We'll lose accountability'

"My main concern with the One Barnet plan is that we will lose accountability.

"And there is a risk that if it goes wrong, if services are not delivered properly, if the companies with the council contracts don't make the profits they are expecting, the council will just have to shovel more taxpayers' money to them."



In return for these services, we will pay the companies more than £1 billion. A £275 million contract to deliver Development and Regulatory Services (DRS)¹ could go to either EC Harris or Capita Symonds; a £750 million contract to deliver a New Support and Customer Services Organisation (NSCSO)² could go to either BT or Capita; a £15 million five-year contract for parking has already been won by NSL.

Soon Barnet will offer a fourth contract for 'street scene' services (parks maintenance, street cleaning, etc). When all of these contracts are operating, around 90% of council services will be delivered by, at most, four large multinational companies. Barnet Alliance for Public Services opposes the One

Barnet programme; on these pages residents explain why. On the back page, we suggest ways to campaign against the plan.

So what is wrong with One Barnet?

One Barnet – the £1 billion gamble. Outsourcing – as schemes like One Barnet are called – is unusual on this scale and represents a gamble. Other large schemes of this type have gone wrong and proved expensive to the local authority concerned as they try to get out of the contract or pick up the pieces of a failed contract. This could result in Council Tax bills having to be increased. We saw problems with G4S at the Olympics, Southwest One in Somerset and councils up and down the country including Sefton and Liverpool.

Who are you going to call?

If something goes wrong with council services at the moment, you can ask your councillor for help to get things fixed. With everything tied up in contracts, we lose local, democratic control because Councillors will no longer be able to influence how services are provided.

A lot can happen in 10 years.

By tying us in to 10-year contracts, Barnet Council loses flexibility and the chance to respond to changing circumstances. That means we may end up paying for services that are no longer what we need.

Costing more than it saves?

The DRS and NSCSO contracts are supposed to save taxpayers £67 million

over 10 years, but some of the targets are only 'aspirational'.

If the savings can't be made, services will have to be cut to balance the budget. Meanwhile, Barnet Council has already spent more than £10 million – of our money – on One Barnet consultants and reorganisation.

Worse services?

Companies taking over our services expect to make money on the deal. If they – or Barnet Council – have done their sums wrong, the quality of services can suffer as the contractors cut corners and try to cut their losses. Barnet residents could end up with worse services.



Cllr Gill Sargeant, Colindale

'One Barnet will impact on how I do my job as a councillor'

"Once services like planning and environmental health, benefits and customer care are delivered from outside the council I'm worried that residents' problems will not be sorted out properly. You just need to look at what happened when meals-on-wheels and street lighting services were privatised – older residents didn't get their meals on time and there were complaints about the replacement of street lights, and problems getting faulty lights replaced."



Derek Dishman, 55, blogger from Chipping Barnet

"Take what happened with parking. It was privatised, charges rocketed and they are messing it up.

"A £15 million contract going wrong is serious enough but scale that up to £1000 million and it's very worrying. And the fact that these contracts will be for ten years – that's a ridiculously long time.

"Nobody has thoroughly checked out this policy. Councillors leave everything to the officers and both seem to think that if you outsource services you outsource the problem."

'We're concerned about how we'll pay for care in the future'

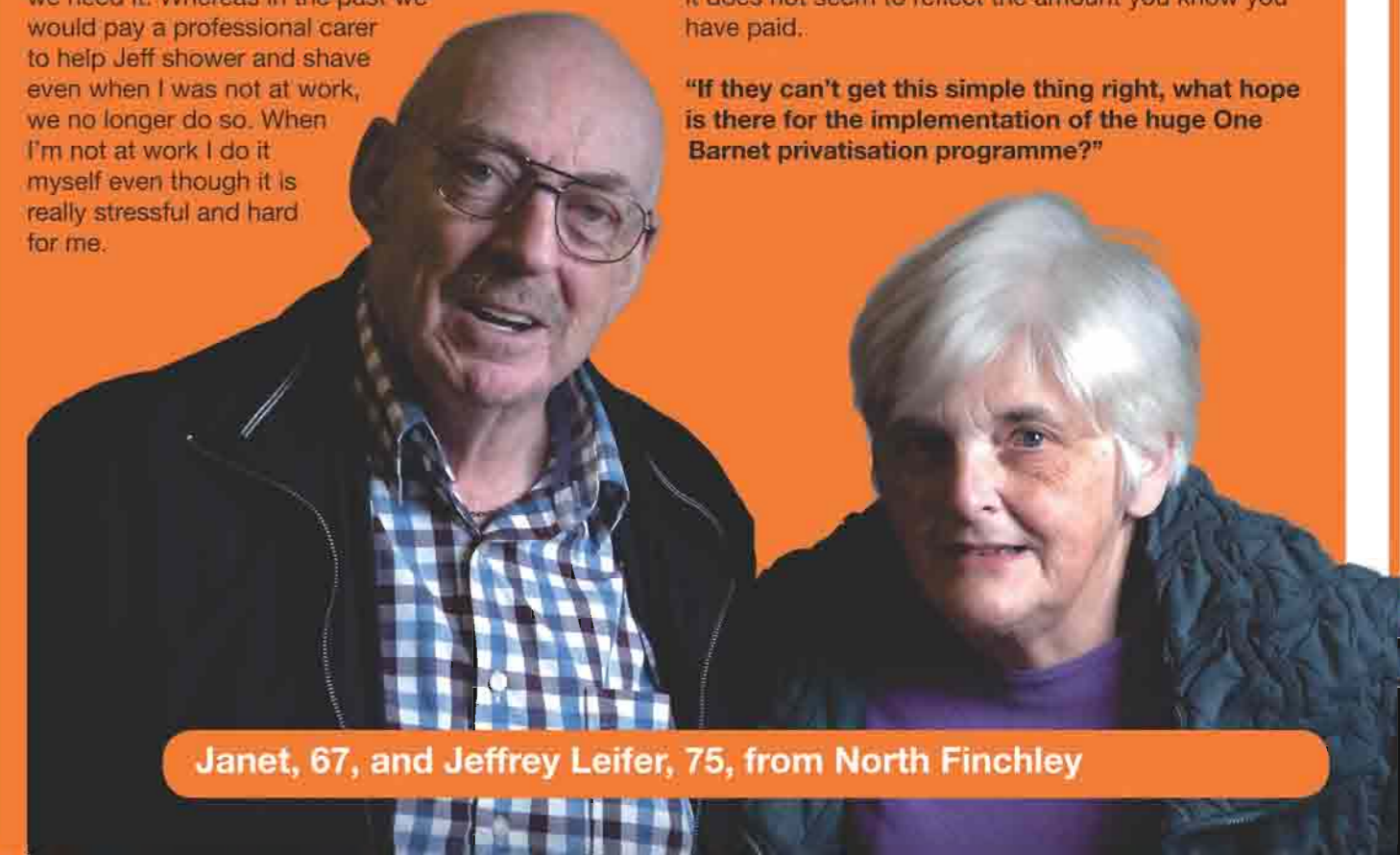
"The council used to fund my husband's visits to a day centre, run by Jewish Care, twice a week and now we have to pay for it ourselves.

"Having to pay the full cost of the visits has made us much more wary about purchasing extra care when we need it. Whereas in the past we would pay a professional carer to help Jeff shower and shave even when I was not at work, we no longer do so. When I'm not at work I do it myself even though it is really stressful and hard for me.

"We are concerned about how we will pay for Jeffrey's increasing care needs in the coming years.

"To make matters worse, we have rarely been correctly invoiced, it is impossible to try and discuss this either by telephone or letter and if you ask for a statement it does not seem to reflect the amount you know you have paid.

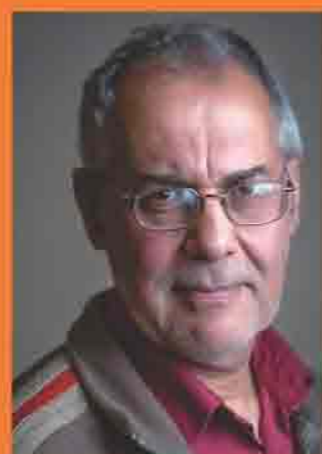
"If they can't get this simple thing right, what hope is there for the implementation of the huge One Barnet privatisation programme?"



Janet, 67, and Jeffrey Leifer, 75, from North Finchley

¹ The DRS contract covers building control; planning; regeneration; highway maintenance; environmental health; and... Hendon Cemetery and Crematorium

² The NSCSO contract covers switchboard and call centre; property management; finance and payroll; HR; IT; procurement; revenues and benefits; commercial services



Dave Nyman, 63, engineer from New Barnet

"I have been told by a councillor that this is the first time any council has outsourced such a huge proportion of its services.

"No one knows what the impact will be. I can't see any logical reason why anyone would want to outsource that many services.

"As a resident I don't remember anything being circulated by the council saying they are doing this. Issuing contracts for ten years is a big step to take without residents knowing what's going on."

One Barnet: have your say!

The One Barnet programme is an enormous project that will impact on the lives of all of Barnet's residents for years to come.

It will take a third of the council's budget, and tie it up for at least 10 years in contracts with multinational companies that have more experience of winning contracts than they do of delivering council services.

If the promised savings from these arrangements do not materialise, we, Barnet residents, will have to foot the bill. If the contracts have not been written robustly enough from the Barnet side, we will suffer through worse services.

We believe that there is an alternative to One Barnet, we call it Our Barnet. The council should continue to deliver services directly; this has worked well up until now. Of course there is always room for improvement and we can get more value for our

money. But the way to achieve this is through better consultation with residents about what they want and with staff about the best way to do things.

We say that residents must have the ultimate decision in whether One Barnet goes ahead.

The current administration do not have a mandate for the One Barnet programme. It was not in their manifesto for the 2010

elections and they have not consulted residents about it. The chief executive who was central to pushing One Barnet through the council has recently resigned from the Council to take up the CEO post in Haringey.

There is still time for you to tell Barnet Council what you think about One Barnet, and it is important that you do. On this page we propose some actions you can take.

Have your say – please join us in saying NO to One Barnet.

Take action

Sign the One Barnet referendum petition

Please sign the petition calling for Barnet Council to put One Barnet to a referendum of residents.

Sign online at <http://petitions.barnet.gov.uk/StopOneBarnet> or download a pdf of the petition: <http://is.gd/ITu3ve>

For a paper copy of the petition telephone 07534 407703 or email barnetalliance4publicservices@gmail.com

See this film

Lifelong Barnet resident Roger Tichborne has produced a film about the One Barnet programme.

“Barnet – The Billion Pound Gamble” features interviews with local residents about their fears for the future. It premiered at the Phoenix Cinema, East Finchley on 22 October.

Join us for one of many local, free screenings of the film; details on the Barnet Alliance website: <http://is.gd/fdA1zX>

Website: www.billionpoundgamble.co.uk

One Barnet ‘QuestionTime’ Thursday 8 November

How will The One Barnet programme affect you?

Barnet Council Leader Richard Cornelius has accepted our invitation to come and answer questions about One Barnet. Other members of the ‘Question Time’ panel include opposition councillors, and experts in public administration.

Thursday 8 November, 7pm, Greek Cypriot Community Centre, 2 Britannia Road, London N12 9RU

Free entry, all welcome.

Contact your councillor

Talk to your local councillors about the One Barnet programme. Ask them to support a debate in the council chamber on the issue.

To find your councillors and their contact details visit the Barnet Alliance website: <http://is.gd/dRZcBg>

Join us for a lobby of the Barnet Council meeting on Tuesday 6 November; lobby - 6pm, meeting - 7pm, Hendon Town Hall, The Burroughs, London NW4 4BG.

Barnet Alliance for Public Services

This wraparound was produced by the Barnet Alliance for Public Services. We are a coalition of residents, campaign groups and trade unions in the London Borough of Barnet. We champion democratically accountable, high quality public services. We reject the idea that public services should be cut in order to bail out the banks. We reject Barnet council's plans for mass outsourcing of its services – no to the One Barnet programme! We meet regularly, and welcome the participation of anyone who broadly agrees with our aims.

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