



Full Council – 12 October 2009

Motion selected for debate by Councillor Ann John, Leader of the Labour Group

Proposals to enhance local democracy

This Council notes that membership of political parties and voter turnout in elections is at an all time low; the turnout in the last two general elections being the lowest since 1918.

This Council agrees with Baroness Helena Kennedy, QC that the public perception is that 'political institutions and politicians are failing, untrustworthy and disconnected from the great mass of the British people'.

This Council recognises that this is a problem for local authorities as well as for central government and there are number of ways in which local authorities can enhance democratic renewal and take action both to involve local people more fully and to reduce the democratic deficit.

This Council welcomes ideas from across the political spectrum to enhance local democracy. We welcome the Labour Group Leader's pledge that any future administration of which she is part would honour decisions taken by a majority of councillors irrespective of the fact that current legislation allows the Executive and/or the Highways Committee to impose decisions contrary to the will of a majority of councillors.

To further enhance local democracy, this council resolves to:

1. Televisе council meetings and make the proceedings available to the public on the council's website so that the public can see their elected representatives in action without having to visit the Town Hall;
2. Televisе citizenship ceremonies;
3. Hold Scrutiny meetings in a variety of accessible venues across the borough and not just in the Town Hall in Wembley;
4. Make Executive decisions subject to a "Peoples' Call In". If 120 registered electors write in within a week of the Executive report, the item shall go before the relevant scrutiny committee in a similar manner to a Councillors Call In;
5. Extend Area Forums to one per ward to bring councillors closer to their constituents;

6. Give backbenchers the right to ask questions at meetings of the Executive;
7. Abolish Non-Executive items and the party leaders' motions at Council meetings and replace them with motions for debate signed by five or more non-executive councillors; Obtain the agreement of all political groups on the total number of motions allowed at any particular Council meeting, and how to select them; Abolish the First Reading debate, and replace it with motions as above;
8. Consult with other local authorities to seek further ideas on ways of enhancing democratic accountability.