

Annual review of Councillor Ann John

I submit the following review as activities I have participated in as a councillor over the Municipal Year 2010/2011.

Please continue on separate sheets if required.

Local ward work:

I take a proactive approach to representing Stonebridge ward and I organise regular walkabouts with council officers to pick up on any shortcomings in service, particularly in the street cleaning, refuse collection etc.

I keep in touch with tenants and residents' associations, as well as two organisations representing Stonebridge's older residents, and support St Michael's Church, in particular at performances of their youth steel band.

I and my ward colleagues have been closely involved in the establishment of a Children's Centre at St Raphael's estate, and continue to monitor progress in that community.

In addition to my surgeries and casework, I attended 699 meetings in 2010-11, including 57 meetings of outside bodies (including school governors etc), 66 with local community groups, 35 formal council meetings (including committees), 310 briefing meetings with council officers, 35 meetings with Labour councillors (Group meetings, Shadow Executive etc), 81 Labour Party meetings, 47 council sponsored events, 33 meetings with individual constituents, 7 meetings with local MPs and 28 meetings with the local press.

Surgeries held:

With my ward colleagues, I continue to hold three advice surgeries a month in different parts of the ward. This generates a great deal of casework, particularly housing problems. Service delivery has improved in the past year, which has been reflected in the feedback I receive from residents. Casework is a very important part of my work and it keeps me in touch with the way in which council policies impact on my constituents.

In addition, my ward colleagues and I regularly hold street surgeries which are an excellent means of hearing the concerns of residents who may otherwise be unable to attend other surgeries.

Council meetings attended:

I have attended every full council meeting and all of the meetings of those committees of which I am a member. I chair the Council's General Purposes Committee and the Executive Committee.

Community meetings attended:

As in previous years, I have attended the major cultural festivals, which are organised in co-operation with the Council including Eid, Diwali, Navratri and Holocaust Memorial Day, and I have spoken at many of those events.

I have attended Area Consultative Forums in every part of the Borough to explain the Council's Budget and answer residents' questions on it. In addition I have held ad hoc meetings with groups of residents over a wide range of issues, including meeting with groups to discuss changes to Council funding as a result of this year's Budget.

Work in respect of which a special responsibility allowance is paid:

I am Leader of the Labour Group, and following our success at the ballot box am proud to serve as Leader of Brent Council.

In my capacity as Leader I report to every Full Council Meeting, as well as every meeting of Brent Labour Group. I also represent Brent at London Councils' Leader's Committee, the London Leader's Congress, and have held meetings to make the borough's case with the Mayor of London.

As Leader I am responsible for policy coordination and strategic direction of the Council's work programme, and take an active role in every aspect of Council policy. This has this year been dominated by the task of steering the Council through the most savage government attack on our funding in living memory, whilst continuing to deliver the best possible services for all our residents, and delivering our manifesto commitments.

As Leader I also receive casework from across the Borough, in addition to my own ward.

Participation in outside and governing bodies:

I am a member of the governing body of the College of North West London and I am a council observer on the board of the Tricycle Theatre. I am a member of the governing body at Stonebridge Primary School in my ward.

Training events attended:

Personal Development interview;
Member Induction session on Communication and Community Leadership;
Partnership Briefing – Safer Neighbourhood Ward Panels and Community Payback;
Speed Reading and Retention training;
Disability Equality training;
Ward Working briefing;
Safeguarding Children and Corporate Parenting training.

Other achievements throughout the period:

This report period has been marked by an unprecedented attack on our community through unfair, counterproductive frontloaded cuts to our central government grant amounting to £42million. In the face of this I have ensured a legal balanced budget was passed by this Council, and made the case for this borough and its communities, as well as local government generally, through a number of media appearances including local, regional and national television news.

I personally lobbied the Secretary of State for Education to secure £35 million for the rebuild of two local schools and a 6th form college, and also secured £4.5 million of funding for Roundwood Children's Centre.

I have also been pleased to deliver our manifesto commitment to abolish the £25 bulky waste charge, reducing fly tipping across the borough and demonstrating that Labour keep our promises.

Form completed on: 17th June 2011