

Harrow Friends of the Earth

Local Election Candidates Survey 2010

May 6th is not just the day of the General Election. All seats on Harrow Council are also being contested on that day. And, as far as the effect on the local environment is concerned, these elections are very important too.

With this in mind, we have posed a number of questions to parties and candidates involved in the Harrow Council elections. The questions and replies are tabulated on the following pages.

We sent our questionnaire to the leaders of the three political groups on the *old* Council (they will not necessarily be group leaders after the elections). These are as follows:

Conservative - David Ashton

Labour - Bill Stephenson

Liberal Democrat - Christopher Noyce

The **Green Party** is the only other party which contested a number of seats in the last elections and will be doing the same this time. We sent them a questionnaire too. The questions were discussed at a candidates' meeting and replies were sent to us, on behalf of Harrow Green Party, by Madeleine Lauder-Atkins.

Finally, we sent a questionnaire to **Eileen Kinnear**, who is the only sitting Independent Councillor who is seeking re-election. Her replies are shown in the table under the heading '**Independent Candidate**'. She would like us to point out, though, that these are her personal opinions and that she cannot speak for any other Independent candidate who may be standing. She adds that, in many cases, she cannot give an unqualified 'yes' in reply because it is not known what the Council's financial situation will be in the future.

Harrow Friends of the Earth would like to thank all the above for participating in our survey.

Harrow Friends of the Earth Local Election Survey Responses

Question	Conservative	Labour	Liberal Democrat	Green Party	Independent Candidate
Are you committed to carbon cuts in Harrow by at least 40% by 2020?	We remain committed to our Climate Change Strategy, which specifically includes a commitment to reduce CO2 emissions by 4% a year – equivalent to a 40% cut over ten years.	Yes. We would sign the 10:10 charter to reduce CO2 emissions. We asked a Cabinet question but this idea was not supported by the current Administration.	Yes.	Yes.	Yes, I am committed to Harrow's Climate Change strategy and pursuing carbon cuts. I think the reduction of 4% p.a. is challenging but in view of the need for this we have to try.
Are you committed to Harrow Council's Climate Change Strategy?		We support Harrow's Climate Change Strategy as far as it goes but we do not think it goes far enough. We submitted our own proposals to be included but these were not accepted.	Yes.	Yes, as a minimum benchmark.	
Are you committed, in line with Harrow's Climate Change Strategy, to providing loft and wall insulation and central heating systems in all Council owned houses by 2015?	This is a commitment in our Climate Change Strategy. However, delivering on this will be dependent on working within national – such as the recently published 'Warm Homes, Greener Homes' strategy – and regional policy frameworks, and the availability of funding from central government.	Yes.	Yes.	Yes, and would include council owned flats as well. Would also ensure maximum uptake of any schemes to help install energy-saving measures in any properties, regardless of tenure, ownership or usage.	Yes, as far as is possible. Again, it is a commitment in the Climate Change Strategy but it will have to be delivered within the government's 'Warm Homes Strategy' . . . In essence I do think it necessary to aim to improve the insulation within Council owned housing as soon as is practicable.

Question	Conservative	Labour	Liberal Democrat	Green Party	Independent Candidate
<p>Do you support the introduction of local carbon budgets for every Council – that is a budget limiting the carbon that each area can emit?</p>	<p>Carbon reduction is currently being delivered for authorities like Harrow via the Carbon Reduction Commitment – Energy Efficiency Scheme, which will introduce carbon trading from April 2011. The scheme is designed to deliver national reductions in carbon use without the need to allocate individual carbon budgets to the organisations in the scheme.</p>	<p>Yes. We asked a Cabinet question about this and this idea was not supported by the current Administration</p>	<p>Yes.</p>	<p>Yes, as long as the limits are binding.</p>	<p>I do support the idea of local carbon budgets but am not sure of the time-span etc within which this can be implemented, notwithstanding government intentions on introducing them. This is 'Work in progress' . . which needs to be monitored to achieve results.</p>
<p>Are you committed to re-instating Harrow's Fair Trade Steering Group, so that Harrow becomes a Fair Trade Borough?</p>	<p>Becoming a fair trade borough is a refreshed commitment in our Climate Change Strategy. The council approved a motion on fair trade tea and coffee being served at all Council-run sites back in Oct 05, and the in-house service has provided this to the Council through. As of the end of 2009, we have further enhanced this service by providing fair trade Starbucks coffee and biscuits products on site at the Civic Centre.</p>	<p>We are totally committed to Harrow becoming a Fair Trade Borough and have asked several Cabinet and Council questions to get this moving. This led to the Leader of the Council taking over as Chair of the Fair Trade Committee but even so I am afraid absolutely nothing has happened.</p>	<p>Yes.</p>	<p>Yes.</p>	<p>Yes, I do think Harrow should aim to become a 'Fair Trade Borough.</p>

Question	Conservative	Labour	Liberal Democrat	Green Party	Independent Candidate
<p>Are you committed to the employment of a Council Officer whose primary function will be to co-ordinate the management of Harrow's Green Belt?</p>	<p>The Council has existing arrangements to manage land that it has responsibility for located in the green belt, and is satisfied with this arrangement. Other land in the green belt is not in the Council's ownership. The Council also submitted a proposal under the Sustainable Communities Act asking the government to amend planning legislation to help local authorities protect gardens and urban green spaces from development.</p>	<p>We are totally committed to both these ideas as and when resources allow. These proposals were put in our draft Open Spaces Strategy over five years ago. We would regard the Biodiversity Officer as the number one priority. We would also want to have an integrated strategy to protect and manage all our open/green spaces and not simply for the Green Belt.</p>	<p>Yes.</p>	<p>Yes.</p>	<p>I do subscribe to the need for good management and preservation of Harrow's Green Belt in a co-ordinated manner as I think it is very important to maintain it for the Borough.</p>
<p>Are you committed to employing a permanent Bio-Diversity Officer?</p>	<p>The Council currently employs a biodiversity officer.</p>	<p>We are totally committed to both these ideas as and when resources allow. These proposals were put in our draft Open Spaces Strategy over five years ago. We would regard the Biodiversity Officer as the number one priority. We would also want to have an integrated strategy to protect and manage all our open/green spaces and not simply for the Green Belt.</p>	<p>Yes.</p>	<p>Yes.</p>	<p>The Harrow Biodiversity Action Plan was launched in 2006 when I was the Environment Portfolio Holder. In May 2008 Cabinet formally adopted the BAP for the Borough to be implemented over the next 5 years via certain action plans. It is an important component of the LDF so there is a recognised commitment to it.</p>

Question	Conservative	Labour	Liberal Democrat	Green Party	Independent Candidate
<p>What plans do you have for the provision of electric car charging points in Harrow?</p>	<p>The Council's Corporate Plan for 2010/11 – 2012/13 includes a Flagship Action to provide electric charging points in the "heart of Harrow" by October 2010. We will also work with the Mayor to implement his proposals for 25,000 charging points across London.</p>	<p>We support this idea. We would initially put these in car parks.</p>	<p>We will instruct the officers of the council to initiate an immediate feasibility study for provision of electric car charging points, with a view to implementing this when electric cars appear on the roads.</p>	<p>No specific plans but will seek to ensure the provision remains ahead of the demand.</p>	<p>I don't think Harrow can provide charging points on its own, but feel sure the borough will work with the Mayor to implement his proposals to put in such points across London – which includes Harrow.</p>
<p>What transport measures do you propose to reduce traffic in Harrow?</p>	<p>The Council has in place a number of measures to encourage responsible car use, to ensure that there is good availability of public transport, to encourage more children travel to school by means other than a car journey, and to stimulate more people to use cycles.</p>	<p>Encourage the use of public transport and campaign to make it efficient and affordable.</p>	<p>We would continue and increase the existing traffic calming measures in Harrow streets.</p>	<p>Would encourage walking and cycling through increased traffic safety measures and will promote car clubs and car sharing.</p>	<p>I think we need to continue managing traffic by persuasion and education (i.e.on the effects of congestion etc) including the use of planning policies. (I personally do think now about NOT using the car for various occasions!!) At the same time I think it is vitally important that we have good public transport (i.e.running to time and easily accessible to all – which is why the recent campaign for better access to Harrow on the Hill station has been so important) to encourage more people to choose to use it as their preferred mode of travel.</p>

Question	Conservative	Labour	Liberal Democrat	Green Party	Independent Candidate
<p>What proportion of Harrow's residential streets will be 20 mph by 2014?</p>	<p>We have introduced 20 mph schemes where appropriate, but have no specific targets.</p>	<p>We intend to implement a rolling programme to review the use of road humps and traffic cushions and replace them by better and more up to date safety measures which in many cases would be 20 mph zones. We will also review all residential streets with a view to increasing road safety including 20 mph zones.</p>	<p>We would envisage that all minor roads would become 20 mph zones.</p>	<p>100% of residential side streets.</p>	<p>I understand that approx 8% of Harrow streets have 20pmh limits at present: this should increase to about 14% by 2014. I believe these zones are particularly important around schools and shopping areas. As a Ward Councillor I was much involved in fighting for a long while on behalf of many residents to try to get a 20mph zone put in on the Hill: so I am aware!! of the efficacy of these.</p>
<p>Will you continue to oppose the 3rd runway at Heathrow Airport?</p>	<p>The Council is, along with 11 other London authorities, a member of the 2M Group – which expresses concern about the potential impact of a third runway at Heathrow. Over 200,000 extra flights a year would have an unavoidable impact on air and noise pollution, and a third runway is therefore not in the best interests of Harrow residents. We were delighted at the recent successful Court hearing, which seems to put any proposals back to square one.</p>	<p>We are concerned about all airport expansion. We need to reduce both aircraft noise and CO2 and other emissions as a whole. We do not feel we should look at just one airport and just shift the problem elsewhere but look at aircraft pollution as a whole wherever it is. We also have serious concerns about any expansion of Northolt Airport.</p>	<p>Yes.</p>	<p>Yes.</p>	<p>Again, I think opposition to this is more of a strategic commitment by the Mayor of London: the Borough will no doubt liaise with him about this. But I also know that a number of residents in Harrow on the Hill Ward are very unhappy about the possible expansion. I acknowledge their concerns.</p>

Question	Conservative	Labour	Liberal Democrat	Green Party	Independent Candidate
<p>How are you going to implement recycling in all flats and by what date?</p>	<p>This is something we are committed to, but the date is difficult to pin down. Funding remains the critical issue in respect of delivering the collection infrastructure that we require (to enable us to provide recycling facilities to all flats). We have lobbied the London Waste and Recycling Board to include the provision of this type of infrastructure in their business plan and will continue to do so. In the meantime we have provided recycling facilities to 5,000 (out of 14,000) flats. In collaboration with WLWA we are also investigating "dirty MRF" options that will allow us to recycle approximately 25% from the unsorted, residual waste from flats. While this does not produce high quality materials, it does enable us to reduce the amount of waste going to landfill and this is a useful interim measure.</p>	<p>We are committed to increasing recycling from flats and would aim to achieve a 65% recycling over a four year term. We will implement recycling measures in Council owned properties and work with RSLs and private landlords for non Council owned flats. We think persuasion and education and even rewards are the best way forward to begin with but we do not rule out a sanctions-based approach if this fails.</p>	<p>Yes, as soon as is practicable. This should already have been implemented a long time ago.</p>	<p>By learning about and copying best practice, and putting into effect by 2014. Also investigating the use of financial incentives.</p>	<p>I'm very interested in this: it was one of the items of strategic importance that struck me when I became Environment Portfolio Holder in 2006. I think all new build now has to have adequate provision for recycling made when plans are submitted. The difficulty is to 'convert' older flats. I think at present about 5000 out of 14000 of these have recycling facilities: increasing this figure takes time and needs funding, but Harrow has been steadily pursuing this strategy. Currently some waste is being sent to a 'dirty merf' – which has helped, and I expect we will continue to explore other options. I know quite a lot of people in flats DO want to recycle: we need to assist them in that. I regret I cannot give a precise date by which recycling for all flats will be implemented – there are too many unknowns. But I am committed to continuing to pursue the policy of increasing recycling in flats to achieve the maximum improvement in waste reduction, in best possible time.</p>