

YOUROPINIONS

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Editor's Comment

Michael Adkins



Government in denial over homelessness

Before you can start to deal with any problem in life you have to first admit you have a problem.

It's a simple theory, but very true and quite obvious.

Recovering, or recovered, gambling, drug or alcohol addicts would surely agree.

Denial, or not realising you have a problem, is the biggest hurdle you will have to overcome. If you can't pass this stage nothing changes.

It's one of the reasons I feel successive governments, and this one in particular, have failed to tackle the growing problem of homelessness and have often exacerbated the problem. Either they can't spot the bleeding obvious or they are in denial - probably because admitting there's a problem is not a vote winner.

This week the widely respected Shelter - the country's leading housing charity - said Newham has

“Denial, or not realising you have a problem, is the biggest hurdle you will have to overcome

the highest number of homeless people in the country. We see the plight of the homeless in the pages of the Recorder, we see it in our communities and from local organisations such as Caritas Anchor House, more in demand than ever before.

It's not just the man on the street begging for change, it's the sofa surfer, the mum-of-four in temporary accommodation, the father who lost his job and is estranged from the family or the immigrant who failed to find work. There are official numbers but a larger amount is government are happy to deny.

It's clear the housing crisis and welfare reform is impacting massively in Newham and elsewhere yet government refuses to recognise the uncomfortable figures levelled at their door.

More than 12,000 in this borough have no place to call home and I'm struggling to find a government plan to bring this figure down.

Letters to the Editor may be edited for length or legal reasons. Please always include your name and postal address although these will be omitted from letters should you request them to be.

Fly-tipping puts me off returning home

Valerie Sullivan, Ascot Road, East Ham, writes:
Ascot Road on the Central Park estate in East Ham has, over past year, become a fly-tip area.

Every time I come out of my house to go shopping or elsewhere, I regularly see a pile of rubbish left by a tree.

Last Monday, when I came out of the house, I found this horrific sight making the road impassable.

Not having seen who dumped the rubbish I couldn't report them. I didn't feel like coming back to the road I live in.

Newham might be spending millions on improving the roads but won't stop people from dumping their rubbish on them.

Build recycling facilities for food

Peter Knight, Unex Tower, Stratford, writes:

Regarding the article "Borough is rubbish at recycling goods", has Newham council no sense of responsibility, has it no civic pride?

I have previously remarked that it is shameful that Newham does not collect nor recycle food waste. There is an ideal site west of the London Stadium for the building of a modern food plant.

This would be instead of the odious cement works that are planned. (I realise that this would require the co-operation of other bodies.)

Will Newham Council respond to said article? I doubt it.

Spread wealth and vote Green

Rachel Collinson, Green Party spokesperson for business, writes:

I was galled when I read about 'outrage' from Sir Robin Wales about the cuts to adult social care.

Let me remind readers, this is a Labour council who were elected with the explicit aims to:

- increase property prices
- privatise more and more council services
- move 'people requiring sustained support' away from the borough.

(Source: Robin Wales' vision statement for Newham, 1997)

Our mayor and his cabinet are unwilling to challenge the banks' mis-selling of the council's toxic debt. This meant that the equivalent of 80 per cent of our council tax goes on loan repayments to RBS and Barclays, instead of adult social care. This is despite Newham Green Party's representations to the council and a petition of nearly 900 residents.

At council meetings the idea of a



■ Rubbish dumped in Ascot Road, East Ham

Picture: VALERIE SULLIVAN

legal challenge has been repeatedly dismissed out of hand, (incorrectly) labeling it an expensive procedure.

Yet those same councillors found room in the budget to give themselves pay rises and pensions. [source: forestgate.net/2015/07/23/the-geezer-is-underpaid/]. They also insist on dumping the Newham Mag on us at a cost of millions.

If you believe in the true spirit of Labour - to spread the wealth around - then it is time to start voting Green in Newham.

Mayor's plan for renters not fair

Sian Berry London Assembly Member for the Green Party, writes:

Sadiq Khan's plans for London Living Rent homes fall short of what he promised during the election.

His new plans, announced this week, appear to be only for renters who are on track to own their own home already and ready to take on a mortgage within a few years. It's suspiciously like the Coalition and Tory governments' discredited schemes to promote home ownership, which have primarily helped people on higher incomes.

What he's now calling the London Living Rent is nothing more than a 'Rent to Buy' scheme, whose term demand a good credit rating from renters, as well as an annual income up to £60,000 and a plan to move on to shared ownership within three to ten years.

What will happen to renters who aren't able to save for a deposit within this timescale, or whose family or employment circumstances change. Will they be

forced to lose their tenancies when their time is up?

Renters in London come from all walks of life. What we most need most are simple homes for rent that we can afford - without conditions attached.

It's very disappointing that the mayor has already broken his promise to renters within just six months of taking office.

Festive food still okay for diabetics

Roz Rosenblatt, head of London, Diabetes UK, writes:

If you are living with diabetes, following a healthy lifestyle during the festive period can be a struggle, but it shouldn't mean treats are off the table entirely.

This festive season our website is packed with ideas for easy ways to create healthier versions of your favourite Christmas dishes, nibbles and treats, and tips for keeping an eye on your calorie intake at parties and alcohol consumption.

Buying expensive 'diabetic' Christmas cake or 'diabetic' chocolate is not recommended. It makes much more sense to have small amounts of traditional festive foods instead and balance that with healthier recipes and snacks.

Staying active helps to manage your blood glucose levels as well as helping to shift those extra calories you might have eaten. So instead of settling in front of the TV after your meal, why not squeeze in a quick walk round the block or a longer stroll to the park - or even go out to the sales.

For more information go to diabetes.org.uk/enjoying-Christmas and www.diabetes.org.uk/enjoyfood

Social Networks

Your views from Twitter, Facebook and streetlife

@newhamrecorder

Re: Tributes have been paid to former @NewhamLondon councillor John Lock, who has died aged 62.

@A_WilliamsNHS: @NewhamRecorder @NewhamLondon Very sad to hear this. John was an important part of the NHS in east London for many years. We will miss him.

@Crouchendtiger7: Such sad news about John Lock - a thoughtful, kind man & great servant to people of @NewhamLondon, NHS & education

/newhamrecorder

Re: Newham Council praised for resettling Syrian refugees

Andrew Jarman: What about the rough sleepers dotted around Stratford and Forest Gate?

Sara Chilton: Put the families already on the waiting lists first...

Re: Stratford town centre plans under consideration

Nicholas Monopoli: Excellent for the area!

streetlife.com

Re: Locksmith needed

Thomas R: Can someone recommend a locksmith in the West Ham / Stratford area? My front door Yale lock unit literally 'dropped off' the inside of the front door, and either I need a new lock supplied and fitted or the existing one refitted. Grateful for any recommendations please.

Jamil plumber: Morning Thomas. I can do that please call me if you like. 07951765514. Wharfpropertieservices.co.uk

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