

Statement by Robert Page to B&NES Cabinet 09.00 July 8<sup>th</sup> 2009

Subject. Is B&NES Council Management Fit For Purpose?

I am a resident of B&NES at Newbridge.

I really value the local democratic freedom that we have in B&NES

- a small local council

- our interests not lost in competing ones in a huge population.

If we are to protect this freedom we need a top class democratic organisation able to make the right decisions first time with willing and educated public involvement. My recent experiences as a B&NES resident in dealing with Council matters has me wondering if all parts of its management are Fit For Purpose?

In 2006 B&NES partner organisation the Primary Care Trust in common with all other PCTs had to ask itself Are We Fit For Purpose? The NHS has developed a methodology and toolkit to make itself into a World Class Commissioning Organisation.

I have searched B&NES website for any evidence of similar self examination and redesign.....

#### Commissioning services.

Have B&NES commissioners the right competencies to ensure they are fit for purpose in achieving the delivery of services?

Does B&NES adequately identify potential conflicts of interest in existing relationships internally and externally?

Has B&NES Cabinet done any work on its own fitness for purpose?

#### Safeguarding Children Board.

Can B&NES Council assure its residents that the SCB is properly constituted to ensure there are no conflicts of interest and that it is fit for purpose?

Please will B&NES Council confer with its partner organisation NHS B&NES to see if the NHS "Fit For Purpose" toolkit has any useful lessons?

Robert Page July 2009

Examples of concerns are as follows;

1. In the Planning application for a Park and Ride Extension at Newbridge the Planning Case Officer accepted the interpretation of the value of the Biodiversity (of what is described as a Nature Reserve) by the same company commissioned to perform the survey. This company may stand to gain from the success of this application and from other contracts unrelated to Biodiversity. There is to a lay man an apparent conflict of interests here in an area which is little understood by the Public.

In this case the interpretation of the biodiversity is in my opinion deeply flawed

- the work of the company has been criticised by statutory consultees

- Has B&NES appointed a consultant Planning Officer with the necessary competencies to assess the ecological merits of the case?
  - Is either of them are fit for purpose?
2. In attempting to put a school crossing in at Newbridge the Transport Department did consult over where a crossing should go. We objected to the position since it interfered with our safety and even the legality of our own access to our property.
- Nothing happened for a year then what appeared to be a very similar proposal appeared again. We met the engineer with a school representative and proposed two possible places to position the crossing in order to get as many students as possible to use it. The objection to this from the council was that having already consulted it would have to do it all again. The final proposal is out for comment and it hasn't changed substantially from the original. What is the point in the school and immediate residents commenting if it is ignored?

A different approach would have been for B&NES to sit down with the School, Parent Teacher association and immediate residents, a blank piece of paper and come up with a plan.

Web link is

[http://www.dh.gov.uk/en/Managingyourorganisation/Commissioning/Policyguidanceandtoolkits/DH\\_081520](http://www.dh.gov.uk/en/Managingyourorganisation/Commissioning/Policyguidanceandtoolkits/DH_081520)