

THE
HARINGEY
BUSINESS
ALLIANCE

*Business and
Community Partners
Working Together to
Build a Better Haringey*

**“2018 – 2019
HARINGEY COUNCIL
BUDGET PROPOSALS”**

**THE HBA
RESPONSE**

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The HBA Vision:

*to make Haringey an even better place
in which to work and live
and how your business community can
join collectively with Haringey
councillors and staff to expand and
grow for the benefit of all*

The HBA Approach:

*to foster a business-friendly
environment for the greater good of
all Haringey residents, traders,
employees, investors, entrepreneurs,
innovators, customers, council staff,
public sector workers, shoppers and
visitors*

FORWARD from your HBA officers

The Haringey Business Alliance fully recognises the enormous challenges facing our elected councillors in the current administration and the new council that will follow from the forthcoming local elections.

Despite many gloomy forecasts for the economic future of boroughs such as ours the HBA is fiercely optimistic about Haringey. We believe our incoming council leadership should face the forthcoming short term fiscal period with bold and imaginative measures. The HBA urges you to replace the mantra of austerity, cuts and service reductions with a wholly new set of inclusive policies for the Haringey business sector as well as all our social partners.

The core of your business rates income derives from the hundreds of small and medium businesses who collectively employ the significant majority of our borough's private sector workers. It is these businesses that are the beating heart of our designated town centre high streets in Tottenham, Tottenham Hale, Wood Green, Turnpike Lane, Bruce Grove, Highgate, Stroud Green, Muswell Hill, Crouch End, Green Lanes and the numerous subsets off the key high street hubs. These employers and their active network of local high street Traders Groups combined three years ago to form the HBA. The HBA is their collective voice to represent our hopes and aspirations for the borough's short, medium and long term economic viability.

The majority of Haringey's local businesses are owned by residents living in our borough. We pay our council taxes as well as our business rates. We are long term investors in Haringey. Many of us are deeply rooted in our numerous religious and ethnic communities with school and family connections stretching back through generations. We employ, train and develop workers who live locally. We create inward investment. We adapt quickly to the rapidly changing patterns of trade. We utilise fast moving technologies to survive and compete. Some businesses fall by the wayside, which is natural in a highly competitive market, but most of us survive and do our best to expand. It is in all our interests for the Haringey business sector to be supported and encouraged by the council.

Your local business leaders are the ones that pump significant donations into our school festivals, our vast array of local charities and our mosques and churches. These are the local community activists that, from their business background liaise with the borough's resident's associations, school and college heads, religious leaders, council employees, police, health and community workers and others. They are joined in the HBA by the national chain stores, banks and large retail outlets to form a powerful and cohesive unit with which to engage our council leaders.

So, are we satisfied with the progress made by the HBA in our role as the trade union for Haringey's business sector? In a word, no. It has taken us over 15 years to build our numerous and still expanding local town centre Traders Groups, but we are not confident the council fully appreciates the vast wealth of knowledge we have accumulated and that we wish to share with the policy makers for a better Haringey. We are concerned that decisions are often taken by the council which are detrimental to the economic viability of our high streets and damaging to our goal of growing the borough's business rates income for the general good of our whole community.

Is it easy to improve the relationship between the council and the HBA for the better? In a word, yes. The HBA is unique in its mass based representative structure amongst all London boroughs. It serves as a model for others to copy. Your business sector leaders wish to work together with council policy makers and officers in a new and concerted team effort. We seek your commitment to joint initiatives promoting investment, jobs, apprenticeships and training. In this way we can grow income generation for the council finances through an expanding business sector in which we take advantage of the many positive advantages of living and working in our wonderful Haringey.

There are numerous examples of how the business sector can help Haringey to grow. Our local building companies want to work towards making our borough the home of world class sustainable building by working with residents and promoting gender equality, diversity and inclusiveness. Our SMEs and larger businesses have developed strategies to support and encourage BAME communities, so we need to ensure such best practice policies are promoted amongst the smaller businesses who do not have their own in-house human resource skills. There are so many ways in which a new partnership can benefit our borough, and now is the right time to make progress, together.

As Haringey councillors and members of the borough's Senior Leadership Team you have had to make cuts in services and staffing. Most businesses in our borough had already made similar and even greater proportional cuts since the beginning of the recession. Sadly, some of the businesses long established in Haringey have been forced out of existence. Others are surviving but only just. Despite such economic pressures we have developed vibrant retail, commercial, trading, manufacturing and service sectors offering a vast range of goods and services to Haringey residents and visitors as well as the immediate local, regional, national and even international markets.

Most notably we have successful local employers who have thrived, invested and employed yet more staff. In doing so they have shown initiative, grit and resilience of which we should all be proud – but the HBA is convinced that by forging a genuine cooperative working relationship between the council and the business community we can achieve a great deal more for the benefit of all our borough's workforce and residents.

We are pleased to submit a four-point plan as the basis for detailed discussions as to how to make the most of the vast pool of business experience we want to place at Haringey's disposal for the benefit of our borough's economic growth.

HBA PANEL MEMBERS:

Chair: Roger Ward (Muswell Hill Traders Group)

Vice Chair: Christine Patterson (Wood Green Business Forum)

Vice Chair: Rob Tao (Haringey Green Lanes Traders Association)

Vice Chair: Sol Ali (Turnpike Lane Business Forum)

Vice Chair: Lewis Freeman (Crouch End Traders Group)

BUDGET PROPOSALS: SOME OBSERVATIONS

COUNCIL TAX FREEZE?

Whilst we appreciate a 2% increase in council tax may “only” raise £2million it should be remembered that this will increase over the life of the incoming council through the impact of compound growth. It may be wise to reconsider that proposal.

ADULT SOCIAL CARE

Without being privy to the detailed costings of this vital service to our community it would seem prudent for our council to press ahead with the precept as proposed.

£15M CENTRAL (ADMINISTRATIVE) BUDGET CUTS

The package set out in the consultation paper is difficult to comment upon without access to the detailed costings. However, it does seem to the HBA that progress on sharing services with other councils has been rather slow to implement. We look forward to further advances in this area of service delivery improvement at reduced overhead costs.

INWARD INVESTMENT

Obviously, this is the one topic with which the business sector feels most able to assist the incoming council leaders. We are eager to work in partnership to forge a practical joint approach to raise investment in businesses be they small, medium or large. It is possible that such an initiative may require some challenges to entrenched perceptions on all sides. Genuine dialogue should solve that matter if it is indeed an actual reality. The HBA feel this is now the time and opportune moment in the life of our borough to take advantage of creative thinking for the benefit of all the social partners in Haringey.

4 POINT ACTION PLAN

The HBA proposes

the appointment of a Business Czar to work with the Council Leader, the appropriate elected Cabinet Members and senior officers to lead new initiatives aimed at expanding the business sector in Haringey for the benefit of all.

The HBA proposes

that the implementation of existing council policies and the adoption of all new policies by the council's officers and elected members be subject to a simple test, publicly identified, as to how that policy will impact either positively, neutrally or negatively on the business sector in terms of investment growth and employment.

The HBA proposes

that council officers with significant responsibility for borough businesses be coordinated to avoid duplication of effort and ensure a multi-disciplinary approach in liaison with the borough's business sector.

The HBA proposes

the council should commit to strengthening the current network of Town Centre Traders Groups with a view to providing administrative and logistical support in their promotion of the business sector thereby increasing the borough's business rates income.

THE WAY AHEAD: TOGETHER! BUSINESS IN PARTNERSHIP WITH HARINGEY COUNCIL

The future of Haringey's income stream increasingly depends on your need to nurture a thriving local business sector. If we cannot work together to support and develop the latent talent within the borough's business community, it will inevitably harm our council coffers. By 2020 nearly 50% of your non-hypothecated income will derive from our borough's business sector of which small and medium companies are the dominant private sector employers.

Let us be optimistic regarding the provision of vital services to our community. The 2018 – 2019 budget should take a positive approach towards growth and investment. This is a perfect opportunity to reappraise the traditional approach to handling central government budget cuts. If the council listens to the concerns, hopes and aspirations of its local businesses, as well as its residents, we are convinced we shall boost its income by growing the number of businesses in Haringey and thus increasing its Business Rates monthly income whilst reducing the borough's unemployment levels. What's not to like about that?

In simple terms your borough's business community stands for growth leading to prosperity and a better Haringey for all. The HBA seeks the creation of a business-friendly environment to encourage investment to earn income to pay suppliers, to pay rent, to pay wages, to increase staff numbers and of course to pay Business Rates as our contribution towards your expenditure on crucial service delivery objectives to our public.

To help in achieving this objective requires a positive working relationship between the council's elected representatives, its staff and the borough's business people based on mutual trust and understanding.

If ever there was a moment for us all to come together in the development of the borough of Haringey, this is it. It is our mutual opportunity to jointly work towards the creation of a socially progressive and dynamic local economy in which the business sector is actively engaged in the preparation and implementation of all those crucial policies with a direct impact upon economic growth.

We thank you for taking time to study our submission. We wish you well in the process of finalising the budget for 2018 – 2019 confident that the council's current and future leadership fully appreciates the business sector's concerns, and hopes, for a brighter future for all.

The HBA PANEL

NOTE: Whilst we are confident the views expressed in this document are a fair and honest reflection of the HBA membership the authors accept sole responsibility for its contents. Jan 2018.