

Green Party focuses on housing crisis

BY SIMON ALLIN,
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The Green Party in Enfield wants to make the borough cleaner, greener, safer and healthier if it is successful in the local elections. The group plans a “big focus on housing” to ensure it meets the needs of local people and to promote transport schemes that are fair as well as environmentally friendly.

Charith Gunawardena, who represents Southgate, became the borough’s first Green councillor after quitting the Labour group last May. Anne Brown, who represents Southgate Green, also joined the Greens after leaving Labour last September.

After increasing its vote share in last year’s council by-elections, the party now intends to field candidates in every ward in Enfield.

Speaking to the Local Democracy Reporting Service, Cllr Gunawardena said the Greens wanted to stop the council placing temporary accommodation residents in housing outside Enfield, give priority to local people on new developments, and stop “demolishing affordable social rent houses and replacing them with unaffordable private housing”.

He added: “There has to be real evidence

that shows the type of housing people need in terms of affordability and everything else. We will ensure that evidence gets acted on and not ignored.”

Cllr Gunawardena said the Greens opposed building any homes on the borough’s Green Belt and planned to push for more family-sized and social housing on the council-led £6billion Meridian Water regeneration scheme in Edmonton.

“Council-led projects are not addressing local housing need”

“The council is a master developer [on Meridian Water],” Cllr Gunawardena said. “If the council-led projects are not addressing local housing need, who is going to do it?”

Enfield Council’s climate action plan sets a target for the whole borough to be carbon neutral by 2040. Cllr Gunawardena said the “aspirations” of the plan were good but claimed the objectives and baseline data were “not very clearly defined” and the criteria for success were “not transparent”.

With transport accounting for more than a third of the borough’s carbon emissions, low-traffic neighbourhoods (LTNs), which are designed to encourage walking and cycling, are one of the means by which the council aims to reach the 2040 target.

Cllr Gunawardena said the Green Party supported LTNs in principle but only if schemes were fair, evidence-based and transparent. “In any transition to the green economy, the burden of the transition process should not be borne by the poorest people,” he explained.

The Green councillor said the local party would set “measurable goals” for LTNs and take into account the effect of the schemes on people with protected characteristics, ensuring mitigation measures were in place for these groups before making LTNs permanent.

Cllr Gunawardena added that the Greens supported ‘school streets’ and 20mph speed limits in residential roads, and wanted to ensure cycle stores were installed in new blocks of flats to make it easier for people to travel by bike.

To boost recycling, he said the Greens supported the return of weekly bin collections, in addition to better education and



Charith Gunawardena became the Green Party’s first councillor in Enfield last year, after quitting Labour

engagement with residents. He also called for an independent impact assessment to be carried out on the planned new Edmonton incinerator and for a stronger scrutiny process within the council.

For more information on the Green Party in Enfield: Visit enfieldgreens.org.uk