

Matt J. McLaren | Liberal Democrat

Defending Democracy, Upholding Decency, Advancing Truth

www.mattjmclaren.com

Tel/SMS/WhatsApp: **07540 860 353**

Email: matt@mattjmclaren.com

Facebook: [@mattjmclaren](https://www.facebook.com/mattjmclaren)

Twitter: [@mattjmclaren](https://twitter.com/mattjmclaren)



Friday, 14 January 2022

**THE WORSHIPFUL THE MAYOR OF ENFIELD,
CLLR SABRI OZAYDIN**

CIVIC CENTRE
SILVER STREET
ENFIELD
EN1 3XA

RE: YOUR RESPONSE TO MY EMAIL CONCERNING AN EXTRAORDINARY MEETING OF THE COUNCIL

Dear Mr Mayor,

I write to you concerning your response to my email dated 6th January 2022 requesting that you convene an extraordinary meeting of Enfield Council with urgency to facilitate a debate by local elected Councillors on the implications of the new, hugely expanded Edmonton incinerator which was approved by the North London Waste Authority (NLWA) in December. The response to which I refer is that received by me yesterday having been sent by the Mayor's Secretary, Koulla Panaretou at 5:01pm on Thursday, 13th January 2022.

In my email to you on 6th January, which I note was just one of many similar emails received by your office from local residents concerned about the NLWA plans, I specifically asked that you make a decision to convene an extraordinary meeting of the Council by 5:00pm on Friday, 7th January 2022 and went on to say:

*'This is so elected members might debate both the exceptional circumstances surrounding the decision of the NLWA to award the contract to expand the Edmonton Incinerator to Acciona (the sole bidder) and the Council's fiduciary duties to Enfield taxpayers. And **to ensure that the debate occurs before the contract is signed.**'*
[emphasis added].

Additionally, in your response yesterday you state that:

"A request for an Extraordinary General Meeting (EGM) signed by five members was presented to me on 4th January 2022."

However, you immediately then went on to say:

'I called the EGM within the time period set out in the constitution, in line with the council constitutional procedure.'

'In line with giving the required length of time for notice of the meeting, and as set out in the council constitution, I am informed that the earliest the Extraordinary General Meeting can be held is Wednesday 19th January 2022.'

Senior officers have confirmed that the Extraordinary General meeting (EGM) is legally required to comply with usual rules in relation to publication of agendas and invites, which has an impact on timescale. If the request from councillors for the EGM was made sooner, the meeting could have been called before the 19th January.'

I have several very grave concerns about your statements here which, upon inspection of the Council's constitution (available for all to view online on the Council's own website here: <https://governance.enfield.gov.uk/ecCatDisplay.aspx?sch=doc&cat=260>) appear to be at least inaccurate, if not deliberately misleading.

Firstly, under rule 3.1 detailed in Chapter 4.1 of the Council's constitution, as Mayor of Enfield you have the power to call an extraordinary meeting of the Council '*at any time*'. You do not need to wait for requests from Councillors or from members of the public. You certainly do not need to wait once you have received any such requests.

Secondly, under rule 3.2(iv) detailed in Chapter 4.1 of the Council's constitution, an extraordinary meeting of the Council may also be called by a five Councillors if '*they have signed a requisition presented to the Mayor and the Mayor has refused to call a meeting or has failed to call a meeting within seven days of the presentation of the requisition.*'

Furthermore, under rules 5.2 and 5.3 detailed in Chapter 4.1 and rule 3.1 detailed in Chapter 4.6 of the Council's constitution, only five working days' notice is required for any Council meeting (ordinary or extraordinary), excluding the day of publication of the agenda and day of the meeting, along with weekends and bank holidays.

Taken together, and contrary to what you have stated in your response yesterday to my email requesting that you convene an extraordinary meeting, these provisions of the Council's constitution mean the following:

- You could have called an extraordinary meeting of the Council yourself immediately upon receipt on 4th January 2022 of the request to convene just such an extraordinary meeting signed by five Councillors.
- You could have called an extraordinary meeting of the Council yourself immediately upon receipt on 6th January 2022 of my email requesting that you convene just such an extraordinary meeting.
- Indeed, you could have called an extraordinary meeting of the Council yourself at any time prior to Monday, 10th January 2022.

And, had you done so:

- Any extraordinary meeting thereby called could have met and debated the issue prior to the date when the contract for the new Edmonton incinerator will actually be signed.

Moreover, your statement, previously quoted, that had you received a request from the five Councillors earlier than you could have convened a meeting earlier is patently false. This is because it is not you who has called the meeting, since you have cited the requisition from the five Councillors in your reasons for convening it, and as you can see from rule 3.2(iv) quoted above, **the requisition from five Councillors is only relevant under the constitution in the event that you as Mayor of Enfield refused or failed to call just such an extraordinary meeting upon receipt of their request for a period of seven days or more.**

As such, it is you who has caused the delay by your refusal to act within the powers granted to you under rule 3.1, which has thereby denied the right of Enfield's elected representatives to debate this enormously important issue which may have profound implications for generations to come *before* the contract is signed.

I further note with some concern the lines in your response concerning your non-Executive role on the Council. You say:

'Please note that my role as Mayor is not an executive decision maker; and that I can only act on guidance issued by senior officers in matters relating to the constitution.'

You are quite right that, as Mayor, you are the civic leader of the London Borough of Enfield and therefore supposed to act in a non-partisan manner. However, by your refusal to call an extraordinary meeting when requested to do so by your Councillor colleagues or by many local residents such as myself, and along with your subsequent attempt to present your refusal as a procedural requirement (a statement shown above to be wholly untrue) I can only assume that you are acting as a pawn of the Labour Administration in pursuit of its policy objective of securing the NWLA approved incinerator – despite its potentially catastrophic consequences for the residents of Enfield.

In so doing, you have profoundly disappointed me as a citizen of this great borough and let down all my fellow residents who were relying on you to step up and act in a fully impartial manner. All we wanted was the chance to debate the issue on the floor of the Council chamber prior to the contract being signed, but your clearly partisan-based inaction has now made that impossible.

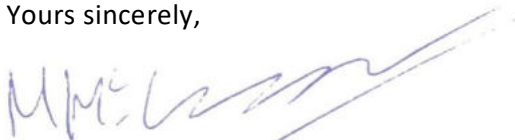
Lastly, having reviewed the **Members Code of Conduct** applicable to all Enfield Councillors (available here: <https://governance.enfield.gov.uk/documents/s24190/Appendix%20A%20-%20Code%20of%20Conduct.pdf>), I believe **you may be in breach of that Code**.

Specifically, based on the response to my email which your office sent to me yesterday, you may be in breach of paragraph 8.5 of that Code (the requirement for **Openness** – failing to give your true reasons for not calling a meeting in sufficient time for the debate to take place before the contract was signed) and paragraph 8.6 of that Code (the requirement for **Honesty** – failing to disclose your interest in furthering Enfield Labour's policy objective of the NLWA approved incinerator, if that is indeed the true reason for your failing to call an extraordinary meeting in due time).

To reassure myself and fellow citizens of the London Borough of Enfield, I would be most grateful if you could please respond to this letter setting out in detail why it was you failed to call an extraordinary meeting of the Council either on 4th January 2022 following receipt from five Councillors, or on 6th January 2022 following receipt of my email and many others like it from fellow Enfield residents. I would further very much like to hear how you feel your actions in this regard and your subsequent account of them in the email send to me from your office yesterday do not breach the Members Code of Conduct as suggested above.

I await your response with interest.

Yours sincerely,



Matt J. McLaren

Liberal Democrat prospective Council
candidate for Winchmore Hill – May 2022



PS Given the gravity of my concerns about your statements yesterday, I am making this letter publicly available so that fellow Enfield residents and interested community groups may also follow up with you on this issue directly.