

## Harrow Council primes media to pacify protestors

**Tuesday, 09 December 2003**

Today representatives of Harrow Council have allegedly been briefing journalists in an attempt to head off a protest by residents at next Tuesday's council meeting. Possibly fearing a repeat of last month's demonstration, during which hundreds of campaigners were denied access to the public council meeting, calls have been made to local news media hinting that next year's massive council tax rise won't happen.

Harrow residents were hit by a 20% tax rise last year and a similar hike is threatened for 2004/5. Homeowners' bills have already risen by 111% since 1997 and the Harrow Council Tax Campaign (HCTC) represents 18,000+ residents who have simply had enough.

The Labour majority on the Harrow Council cabinet is now allegedly hinting at a lower increase of six to eight percent, but it's unlikely to include the tax rise from the Greater London Authority and neither the figure nor its basis has been published on their web site.

Spokesman for the HCTC, Stanley Sheinwald, was heartened to note that the council was starting to buckle under the pressure but would have welcomed some positive action by councillors to curb their excessive spending instead of simply attempting to pacify the protestors.

"Taken together with the increased charge yet to be announced for London the current proposals mean that at best our Council Tax is still planned to increase by 9-10%-more than 3 times inflation! This is totally unacceptable and HCTC will continue its campaign unabated."

Mr Sheinwald continued

"All supporters should continue to cancel Direct Debits and should attend the next Council Cabinet meeting at the Civic Centre on 16 December when the public will have its first opportunity to see the proposals."

### **Note for Editors:**

Residents involved in this protest are available at any time for interview and background information is being prepared. Editors are welcome to contact the group's spokesman, Stanley Sheinwald, on 020-8421-1281.

Please see the press area on HCTC web site for further contacts and information

**<http://hctc.ag-netcom.net>**

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