

Labour BNP snub puts policies under spotlight



● WANSTEAD HIGH STREET: Labour refused to debate with the BNP after a hustings event was arranged by residents for the by-election in the ward

THE REFUSAL to debate with the BNP candidate for the Wanstead by-election (see page 17) is a well-worn tactic by the Labour party.

“Well worn” might more accurately be replaced by “wearing thin” because it is a policy which has not enjoyed great success in the past.

In neighbouring Barking and Dagenham they adopted the same tactic and prior to the last local elections in 2007 it back-fired, big time. Twelve councillors from the far right party were elected, making the party the main opposition.

Like it or not, the BNP is a legitimate party and has a candidate standing for the Wanstead seat. The spokesman from the Counties Residents’ Association

is correct in highlighting the danger the move poses to the democratic process.

Challenging the party, which has its roots in far right extremism, to answer questions on local issues usually exposes serious flaws when it comes to the political process.

In Barking and Dagenham, our sister paper has regularly challenged their claims and usually debunked them – the Africans for Essex council house bunkum one example.

Labour’s tactics of putting their fingers in their ears and refusing to acknowledge the existence of the BNP, hoping they will go away, is clearly not working and it’s high time it was abandoned.

All it does is fuel the BNP’s martyr status and also exposes Labour to claims they are afraid to debate the issues because their policies don’t bear scrutiny.