

**LONDON BOROUGH OF ISLINGTON**  
**COUNCIL MEETING - 15 DECEMBER 2016**

**MINUTES OF PROCEEDINGS**

At the meeting of the Council held at Council Chamber, Town Hall, Upper Street, N1 2UD on 15 December 2016 at 7.30 pm.

**Present:**

Andrews	Gill	Picknell
Burgess	Greening	Poole
Caluori	Hamitouche	Poyser
Champion	Heather	Russell
Chowdhury	Hull	Shaikh
Comer-Schwartz	Ismail	Smith
Convery	Jeapes	Spall
Court	Kay	Turan
Debono	Kaseki	Ward
Diner	Klute	Watts
Donovan	Ngongo	Wayne
Erdogan	O'Halloran	Webbe
Fletcher	O'Sullivan	Williamson
Gallagher	A Perry	
Gantly	R Perry	

**The Mayor (Councillor Kat Fletcher) in the Chair**

**119 MINUTES**

**RESOLVED:**

That the minutes of the meeting on 15 September 2016 be confirmed as a correct record and the Mayor be authorised to sign them.

**120 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

None.

**121 MAYORAL ANNOUNCEMENTS**

**(i) Apologies for absence**

Apologies were received from Councillors Doolan, Khan, Nicholls, Parker and Nick Ward. Apologies for lateness were received from Councillors Wayne and Gallagher.

**(ii) Order of Business**

The Mayor agreed to accept Item 11, The Council Tax Support Scheme for 2017/18, as an urgent item of business under Procedure Rule 10.2(n). This item was to be considered after Item 8, Questions from Members of the Council.

**(iii) Declaration of Discussion Items**

No items were declared.

**(iv) Mayor's Announcements**

The Mayor paid tribute to former Mayor and Leader of the Borough, Jim Evans, who had recently passed away. Jim was a well-known figure across Islington and had a key role in the council during a turbulent political time in the 1980s.

The Mayor passed on her commiserations to the residents and businesses affected by the recent flood on Upper Street and thanked the Emergency Services, staff from across the council and all of those involved in the response, including the Business Design Centre and The Steam Passage Tavern which had offered support to residents.

The Mayor praised the strong support for the Remembrance Day services in the borough and reported that the 2016 Poppy Appeal had been the most successful ever. The Mayor passed on the thanks of Islington Veterans Association.

The Mayor was enjoying the festive period; turning on multiple Christmas lights and had attending several carol services. The council had hosted a Christmas lunch attended by 100 pensioners in the Assembly Hall and the Mayor thanked all of those who had helped at the event.

The Mayor welcomed the Youth Council to the meeting and reported that she had attended an event celebrating the 60<sup>th</sup> birthday of the National Youth Theatre with the Young Mayor at Buckingham Palace. The council had recently had a successful Youth Council Takeover Day, with the Youth Council taking on the roles of Chief Executive, Leader and Executive Member for Children and Young People for the day.

Finally, the Mayor advised that the nomination deadline for the Civic Awards and Ben Kinsella Award was 20<sup>th</sup> January 2017.

**(v) Length of speeches**

The Mayor asked colleagues to do their utmost to keep speeches within the permitted length.

**122 LEADER'S ANNOUNCEMENTS**

Councillor Watts advised that this was the first meeting of the Council since central government had abandoned its Tenant Tax proposals which the council had strongly campaigned against. Councillor Watts thanked everyone who had contributed to the successful campaign. Councillor Watts advised that although he was delighted that the Tenant Tax would not be implemented, the campaign against the Housing and Planning Act continued, as the government's housing policies would reduce the already limited supply of affordable housing in the borough.

Councillor Watts thanked the Mayor and councillors who had visited the scene of the Upper Street flood and was grateful that nobody was seriously injured given the scale of the flooding. Councillor Watts also thanked the council staff, the staff of the Angel Business Improvement District, the Business Design Centre, the Steam Passage Tavern, and everyone who had offered support to businesses and residents. Councillor Watts emphasised that Islington was open for business and encouraged those present to shop in the Camden Passage area to support the affected businesses on the run up to Christmas. Matters related to the speed of response and investment in infrastructure would be raised with Thames Water.

Councillor Watts had recently visited Pentonville Prison with Councillor Hull and the Chief Executive. Councillor Watts acknowledged that residents living near Pentonville were concerned about security and emphasised that recent incidents of violence in the prison were not acceptable. Councillor Watts had been reassured that prison staff were doing their best, however significant cuts and underinvestment from central government had been detrimental to the safety of prisoners, staff and local residents. Councillor Watts called on the government to invest in the prison appropriately.

Councillor Watts was delighted that the Town Hall had flown the transgender flag on the International Day of Transgender Remembrance and thanked Councillor Gantly for his campaigning on the issue.

Councillor Watts congratulated and thanked Winston Douglas, the Station Manager of Islington Fire Station, who had retired after 32 years' service in the London Fire Brigade. Mr Douglas was Britain's longest serving black firefighter and had served at all of the major incidents in the local area during his service, from the Kings Cross fire to the Upper Street flood.

Finally, Councillor Watts thanked all of those involved in the Remembrance Day events and those who had attended the Pensioner's Christmas Lunch.

## **123 PETITIONS**

Councillor Russell presented a petition regarding the planning application for a Sainsbury's store on Blackstock Road.

## **124 QUESTIONS FROM THE YOUTH COUNCIL**

Question a) from Youth Councillor Mohamed to Councillor Watts, Leader of the Council:

What impact does Cllr Watts think the vote for Brexit will have on Islington as a London Borough and specifically to the employment, learning and training opportunities for Islington's young people?

Reply:

Thank you for your question. As a proud Londoner, British Citizen and European, I was heartbroken by the result of the referendum. The question now is how we respond to it.

Leaving the European Union presents massive risks and potential problems for this borough. There are over 30,000 EU citizens living in this borough and central government is refusing to say what their plans are for their future in this country. I think that is a disgrace. These people

have contributed to this country and the government should confirm that they have a future in Britain.

The impact on the economy could be very serious, but we don't know the potential consequences yet as the government has been unclear on its negotiating terms. However, if British companies lose the ability to competitively sell goods to the rest of Europe then that will mean job losses in Islington and the rest of the country. Brexit will also mean a loss of opportunities for young people. Schemes like Erasmus may come to an end. Young people may find it more difficult to study abroad, and we may not benefit from having European students study in this country.

The government needs to provide clarity to the tens of thousands of EU residents in this borough who feel uncertain about their future in this country, and clarify how businesses, universities, schools and colleges will be affected.

Question B) from Youth Councillor Venetia to Councillor Hull, Executive Member for Finance, Performance and Community Safety:

During the autumn Islington Youth Councillor and elected Member of the UK Youth Parliament Mohamed Abass co-ordinated the annual Make Your Mark ballot, which is the largest consultation of young people in the country. In Islington over 1,600 young people voted in 10 schools, City and Islington College, Lift and Platform youth hubs and other youth projects. In the top 5 issues young people voted for both nationally and locally, tackling racism and religious discrimination featured as concerns. How is the council tackling hate crime in the borough?

Reply:

Thank you for your question and thank you to Youth Councillor Abass for his important work co-ordinating Make Your Mark. Hate crime is a scourge in modern Britain; it divides communities and it harms cohesion. There has been a spike in hate crime following the EU referendum and in Islington this has particularly manifested itself as a rise in homophobia.

A new hate crime strategy was produced in October. This progressed through the Safer Islington Partnership, to ensure that all of the key players in community safety in the borough could contribute to the strategy. In producing the strategy we consulted the Independent Community-led Hate Crime Forum, which includes residents with an interest in tackling hate crime. The strategy was launched during a very successful Anti Hate Crime Week.

The Strategy has four strands. The first is to raise awareness of hate crime and to increase confidence to report; that means better communications, making more arrests, and then making sure that people hear about it. The second strand is focused on detecting and sanctioning more perpetrators, and this is helped by people being very specific when they report hate crime as this assists the Police. The third strand is supporting and safeguarding vulnerable victims; that means effective multi-agency work to manage risk. The fourth strand is working with the community; not only the Hate Crime Forum but also others.

It isn't good enough just to have the strategy; we have to take our work out into the community. I recently chaired a meeting at Finsbury Park Mosque on how to tackle hate crime; speakers included Jeremy Corbyn MP, the Borough Commander, representatives of a Polish community centre which had been targeted after the EU referendum, many other representatives of religious and minority groups, a representative of the Elfreda Society to talk about the hate crime faced by those with learning difficulties, the Chair of the Hate Crime Forum, and more. There were 200 people in attendance which I thought was a fantastic

display of solidarity by the people of Islington. This council takes hate crime very seriously and I hope that the Youth Council can make a contribution to this work.

Question C) from Youth Councillor Honey to Councillor Caluori, Executive Member for Children, Young People and Families:

Following the range of activities that took place in the summer organised by the IYC and partners and asked what it was like to be a young person living in Islington, what does Cllr Caluori think the next steps will be in making Islington an even better place for young people to grow up, live and learn?

Reply:

Thank you for your question. I've had many conversations with the Youth Council about youth provision, employment and education over the last year. These issues are very important to the council; that's why we decided to protect the funding of youth services. Islington hasn't made any cuts to youth funding, we've actually invested an additional half a million pounds a year in services for the most vulnerable young people.

We know that having funding isn't enough and we need to make that investment count. We've been meeting with young people about how youth funding should be spent, and I'd like to put on record my thanks to the Youth Council for helping to organise the consultation event at Lift Youth Hub where we heard the views of young people from across the borough. There are so many wonderful things to do at our youth hubs but too many people are missing out; it may be because they don't know about it, some don't want to travel, and others don't want to go to activities unless their friends are going. These views are going shape our future youth offer, so that there are more smaller activities going on closer to where people live, that can be a bridge to the activities we hold in our hubs; we are also looking at improving our communications, so young people can be ambassadors for youth services and tell their peers about what's available.

Following the important work of our Fairness Commission and Employment Commission, in the New Year we will launch the Islington Fair Futures Commission, which will focus on how to make Islington the best place to grow up for all young people. For those born into wealth Islington is one of the best places in the world to grow up, there are huge cultural, sporting and artistic assets in the borough; but for a lot of young people there are barriers to accessing those things which prevents them achieving their full potential. The Commission will listen to young people about what those barriers are and how we can remove them.

Question D) from Youth Councillor Tega to Councillor Caluori, Executive Member for Children, Young People and Families:

In October the Children's Society highlighted that Head Teachers have seen a noticeable shift in the underlying causes of mental health difficulties for children and their families; specifically caused by debt. The Children's Society highlights that the problem of debt is putting the mental health and well-being of children at risk.

How does Cllr Caluori think schools and colleges in the borough are encouraged to teach young people about managing money and avoiding debt as part of the curriculum for life?

Reply:

Thank you for your question. Anyone who has been in a family with serious debt knows the impact that can have health and wellbeing. At a consultation event I attended in the summer young people asked how they could access training on how to manage money; this is clearly

an important issue to a lot of young people. Financial education is mandatory in secondary schools, with pupils learning how to solve problems involving percentage changes and calculating interest. Our secondary schools should also teach career progression, personal finance, taxation, money management and enterprise as part of the PHSE agenda to better prepare students for adult life. In our primary schools, this strand is taught using schemes of work such as 'You, Me, PSHE' using materials that have been created for this purpose by our Health and Wellbeing Team, but this isn't compulsory.

I would find it really helpful if I could talk to the Youth Council about young people's experiences of financial education in schools and if you think this is being delivered in the right way. If it isn't working, then I think we need to have a conversation about how we can encourage our schools to do this better in future.

Question E) from Youth Councillor Tega to Councillor Burgess, Executive Member for Health and Social Care:

How does Cllr Burgess think that the Mental Health Charter will improve the mental health of children who are in families experiencing debt?

Reply:

Thank you. As part of our work to develop our local Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services (CAMHS) Transformation Plan, Islington Clinical Commissioning Group and its partners asked Islington young people to work with us to develop a Charter to set out how they think things should look by 2020 – This provides us with an indicator of what success in transforming CAMH services locally would look like to young people.

The Islington Mental Health Charter sets out very clearly what Young People want to see delivered by local CAMHS services; this is not just restricted to NHS provided services but by the voluntary sector, schools, youth provision and also recognises the important role that leisure services play in increasing the emotional health and well-being of young people in Islington.

The Charter has ten points and whilst it does not specifically focus on debt, what it does focus is on the need for increased access to services and support that is timely and responsive and able to be delivered in a range of ways. In particular young people have told us they want to feel able to talk to teachers and other school staff members and feel that they are knowledgeable and comfortable in talking about mental health.

Whatever the issue for young people in Islington, whether it's about debt or something else we need to ensure we have a trained and supported workforce across the whole system who are able to respond to the emotional health needs of young people and that young people are able to access that support at the right time. The charter sets out these aspirations which we are committed to delivering.

We are very aware of the impact of both poverty and debt as family risk factors for mental health, and these were highlighted in our Annual Public Health Report in 2015. The link to wider determinants such as debt is responded to partly through delivery of Mental Health First Aid training, which is available free of charge to all partner organisations and has been promoted through the Islington Debt Coalition. Other services that support families in debt would include welfare rights services, which are available in many children's centres, and the SHINE hub which offers support with bills and energy debt as well benefit checks.

The Youth Council presented a photograph to the Mayor to thank her for her support for the Youth Council.

**125 QUESTIONS FROM MEMBERS OF THE PUBLIC**

Question a) from Ernestas Jegorovas to Councillor Caluori, Executive Member for Children, Young People and Families:

With NUT and ATL predicting Government cuts of 10 per cent to schools in Islington over the next four years. How does the council plan to help schools balance their books so that the damaging impact of the cuts on student progress is minimised?

Reply:

This is something we are hugely worried about and have been talking about with our schools. We don't yet know the changes to the national formula, but we will be campaigning against this with other boroughs through London Councils. We are not alone in being worried about the impact that the proposed funding formula will have, which is set to redistribute money away from poorer inner-London areas to the shires. It is true that schools in London have achieved high levels of attainment and progress in very challenging circumstances because of the additional investment they have had; but instead of taking that money away and reallocating it elsewhere, for the amount of money used by the Government to fund the free schools and academies programme, they could lift the rest of the country up to the level we are at, which demonstrates the priorities that the Government has for education.

Locally, we will be working with our Schools Forum, which is comprised of governors, teachers, and local authority representatives, to discuss how we are going to deal with the implications of the school funding formula. It is important to consider that it is not only the amount of money which is reducing, but it is also the amount we can centrally retain for the collective activities that we do as a borough. The ability of local authorities and local authority schools to collectively decide what is important to invest in will be eroded by changes to the schools grant regulations.

Supplementary question:

Can the council make a commitment to reporting on school efficiencies in terms of how much energy is used by schools and their work in reducing their carbon footprint? Reducing schools' spend on energy would help to save jobs.

Reply:

I'm happy to do that. Perhaps this could be discussed in more detail at a future meeting of the Children's Services Scrutiny Committee.

Question B) Jane Taylor to Councillor Comer-Schwartz, Executive Member for Community Development:

Why has the council agreed to allow Fabric to keep its licence, subject to conditions, overturning its own licensing committee decision to revoke the licence and ignoring 200 pages of evidence recording five years of breaches of licence conditions, police warnings, licence reviews, resident complaints and the deaths of 6 young people?

Reply:

Thank you for your question. The council did not overturn the decision of the Licensing Sub-Committee. I want to thank the Sub-Committee members for their diligence in making their decision. The Sub-Committee reviewed Fabric's licence following the tragic deaths of two young people earlier this year, and the deaths of four other people since 2011. The Sub-Committee concluded that revocation of the licence was both appropriate and proportionate in light of the circumstances.

Fabric then exercised its legal right to appeal and a series of 'without prejudice' meetings were held. As a result of those meetings, Fabric offered many new additional conditions to be added to its licence, all of which are designed to ensure a zero tolerance approach to drug possession, consumption and sale within the club. Fabric has also developed a new and detailed ISO accredited Operations Manual setting out how compliance with the conditions is to be achieved. A key part of the process was Fabric's acceptance that there had been failures in its operation and a recognition that the Sub-Committee was within its rights to revoke its licence.

Given the commitment that its directors and management have shown by their development of the Operations Manual, acceptance of new conditions and changes to its management structure and accountability, the council was satisfied that the statutory licensing objectives may be met and the premises licence reinstated.

A statement setting out the measures to be implemented was agreed by the council and Fabric and the court accepted this. However, I recognise that this decision will not be popular with everyone, and want to reassure residents that there will be enhanced monitoring carried out by the Police and the council at Fabric. Fabric will also be subject to an external audit of compliance against procedures. We hope that these additional measures will make the club a safer place and a better venue within the community.

Supplementary question:

Fabric has been found in breach of its licensing conditions several times in recent years. What would the council's response be at the next criminal, antisocial or public safety incident?

Reply:

It is difficult to predict the future, however the licensing review procedures would be followed and any review would be considered with reference to its own circumstances and the available evidence.

Question C) Benali Hamdache to Councillor Caluori, Executive Member for Children, Young People and Families:

What percentages of schools in our borough taught a class on Firework safety for KS1, KS2 & KS3 this academic year?

Benali Hamdache was not present at the meeting and it was advised that the Executive Member would respond in writing.

Question D) question from a member of the public to Councillor Hull, Executive Member for Finance, Performance and Community Safety.

Does the Council understand how strongly local residents and shopkeepers feel about the possibility of another Sainsbury's store on Blackstock Road, when we already have a Sainsbury's Local 300 metres away on the same road, and a new store will reduce the diversity of our local area.

Reply:

Yes, we do understand how you feel. I've had residents raise this in my surgery. There was a lengthy discussion on this at the recent Highbury West Ward Partnership meeting. I've also spoken to my local shopkeeper about this. Please rest assured that your local ward councillors are well aware of the strength of feeling on this matter. It's important to state that the planning process is quasi-judicial and although ward councillors may raise objections due process must be followed when making the decision.

Question E) Gill Weston to Councillor Diarmaid Ward, Executive Member for Housing and Development:

The Kingwood Trust is the leading housing association for adults with learning disabilities and autism in the UK. It has developed guidelines for the design and building of residences for people with learning disabilities and autism have been adopted by several councils in England, as well as the whole of Wales and Canada. These guidelines make it clear that such residences should be single-storey, and certainly no more than two-storeys. Will the Councillors explain why they are not following these guidelines at Windsor Street, and what evidence it has that its proposed three-storey building will be safe, suitable and fit for purpose for adults with learning disabilities?

Reply:

Thank you for your question. As you will know I am acutely aware of the situation at Windsor Street and have visited the gardens that will be affected by the proposed building. I've had many queries of this kind and as you know we've had previous correspondence on this matter. I am not aware of the specific guidelines you reference, however will provide you with a written answer after the meeting.

Question F) question from a member of the public to Councillor Hull, Executive Member for Finance, Performance and Community Safety.

I represent a family-run business that has been operating on Blackstock Road for 35 years. The site of the Sainsbury's application is 100 yards from my store. Why is this application being considered again when the previous application was refused by the Planning Committee eight months ago? The minutes of the Committee meeting indicate the strong local opposition to the application at that time.

Reply:

It is being considered again as anyone is able to submit a planning application and we are duty-bound to consider those. It is a procedural matter and the council must give it due consideration, however as previously mentioned your local representatives are aware of the strong local feeling on this matter.

Question G) question from Lawrence Stubbs to Councillor Ward, Executive Member for Housing and Development:

I am resident of the Highbury Quadrant Estate and officer of the TRA. With regard to leaseholder service charges, our committee is very worried about incorrect block charges, including charges for works which did not take place. We are concerned about inaccuracies and inconsistencies in invoices, for example a charge for lift maintenance in a block without a lift. An equally concerning example is a resident who queried a series of visits which did not take place and received a refund in mid-October of this year, however nobody else in the block did. Is this satisfactory, professional or fair?

Reply:

Thank you for your question. From what you have said I am very concerned about that situation. For day to day repairs and capital works we use unique reference numbers which relate to every estate, block and property. This allows us to track how much money should be charged to leaseholders. I would be happy to look into the particular circumstances you mentioned.

Question H) from Keira Murphy to Councillor Webbe, Executive Member for Environment and Transport:

I am a healthcare professional living and working in Islington and regularly need to visit children in their homes. I am a cyclist but there is often no cycle parking available. Please can we have widespread dedicated bicycle parking on Islington Council housing estates?

Reply:

Thank you for your question. Islington Council fully supports cycling which is why we have dedicated resources to providing cycle parking. We already have in the region of 2,000 cycle parking facilities on our streets. On our estates we are investing in bespoke, enclosed, safe cycle parking facilities. We are also piloting different types of bike storage, such as bike hangars, which are in operation and I understand are doing well. If you feel that there is insufficient cycle parking in a certain area, you only have to ask and we will look to provide it.

Question I) from James Courage to Councillor Ward, Executive Member for Housing and Development:

In November 2015, former Islington Councillor James Murray promised a public pre-planning consultation meeting on the Windsor Street scheme. The meeting was to take the format of a drop-in session for all local residents in the St Peter's Ward including residents on the Gough, Turnbull and Popham estates. Over a year after this promise was made, the meeting still hasn't been set up. When will it be convened?

Reply:

I am well aware of the situation at Windsor Street. We had a meeting of residents in the Town Hall and I have spoken to many residents about the scheme. I am not aware of the particular meeting you are referring to but if you do wish to have a further conversation about the Windsor Street situation I am very happy to arrange that.

Question J) from Rosie Phipps to Councillor Hull, Executive Member for Finance, Performance and Community Safety:

My question relates to the Sainsbury's planning application. I would like to know, as a small business owner located 200 metres from the proposed site, why we have not been consulted about the application.

Reply:

I am not aware of exactly where the consultation has or hasn't reached, but I am aware that the consultation is ongoing and would encourage anyone who has strong views about this to make representations. As I have discussed with local residents, I would not worry about what is or is not a valid planning objection, but would encourage you to submit all of the reasons why you think the proposal is a bad idea and would leave this to the planning officers to consider.

Question K) from a member of the public to Councillor Ward, Executive Member for Housing and Development:

I speak on behalf of residents of the Ringcross Estate and my question relates to Ringcross Community Centre, which was transferred to Hyde Housing Association from the council in 2005. We are extremely concerned with Hyde's plan to relinquish their obligations as a social landlord, as they have said they can no longer subsidise the centre. At the time of the transfer agreement Hyde made assurances that it would manage the centre together with the local residents. We have raised our concerns with Hyde but they have been reluctant to engage with us in an open dialogue. What actions will the council take to ensure that Hyde keep their part of the transfer agreement; by keeping the centre open, and managing the centre together with the local community?

Reply:

Thank you very much for your question. I am absolutely livid with Hyde's behaviour over this. I take great issue with their choice of the word "subsidised". A social landlord does not subsidise local community facilities, a social landlord provides local community facilities. That's why I spent yesterday evening at the Ringcross Community Centre speaking to users of the centre and getting them to fill out surveys as part of the consultation so Hyde knows the strength of local feeling about this. I also take great exception to Hyde's figures. They are telling us it costs over £100,000 a year to run the centre, I simply don't accept that. We are happy to work with Hyde to try and resolve this and to keep the centre open. That's why myself and Councillor Comer-Schwartz as Executive Member for Community Development will be meeting with Hyde on Monday morning and we will keep all of the residents informed of the result.

Question L) from Ian Fearnley to Councillor Ward, Executive Member for Housing and Development:

Islington's planners advised housing and adult social services that the proposed design for the building on Windsor Street would not be permissible for use for general rent or as family housing because the apartments would not have dual-aspects and would have insufficient "amenity/defensible space". If the building is not deemed suitable for the general population what makes the council believe that it will be suitable as a long-term home for 14 adults with learning disabilities, does the council not care about their basic needs too and also their additional sensory and spatial needs?

Reply:

The council of course cares about the needs of all residents and this is why the council is building housing; providing social housing and supported housing is at the top of our agenda. In terms of Windsor Street, I have been directly involved in this process, I have met with residents, I have visited residents' gardens, and we are in the process of working with residents to create verified views of the buildings. Once we have those verified views we will see if we can progress to a planning application and all of these things can be addressed as part of the planning process.

Question M) from Zina Sullivan to Councillor Hull, Executive Member for Finance, Performance and Community Safety:

Regarding the proposed Sainsbury's development on Blackstock Road, Councillor Hull has said that he appreciates there is already a Sainsbury's store in the local area. I would like to clarify if he understands that if this application is granted there would be five Sainsbury's stores in the local area. This is a monopoly. Whose side are you on?

Reply:

You ask whose side am I on, and the answer is yours. I'm not on the Planning Committee, but your local councillors understand the strength of feeling of local residents.

Question N) from a member of the public to Councillor Webbe, Executive Member for Environment and Transport:

When will you share with us the results of the cycle hangar trial?

Reply:

Thank you for your question. This council is committed to enabling residents to cycle and to store their bikes safely; that's why we launched the cycle hangar pilot. I think the pilot has been successful and that's why before the pilot has even ended I have made clear that I want us to pursue as much external funding as possible so that we can secure the necessary resources to provide safe and secure bike storage wherever residents want them to be. I also want to make sure that the council provides different types of cycle storage, so that that storage is available in a manner that fits the places where people want them to be.

## **126 QUESTIONS FROM MEMBERS OF THE COUNCIL**

Question a) from Councillor Poyser to Councillor Ward, Executive Member for Housing and Development:

Could I congratulate the council on its swift action acting as honest broker in making available the empty Mount Carmel school to the nearby Whitehall Park Free School while the building work continues on the former Ashmount School site. As Councillor Ward is aware, there is now also the building of much-needed social housing taking place on that site. Would it be possible to give local residents, the parents of children at the school and the Islington people on our housing waiting list, some idea as to when the building on the site might be completed?

Reply:

We are told by the EFA that construction of the new school building is due to be completed on 10 February 2017. Provided that the February 2017 deadline is met the school should occupy the building from 20 February 2017, with the decant from Mount Carmel school taking place during the February half term break. The housing scheme which is being delivered by ISHA will be complete by July 2018. 46 new homes are being delivered. 24 homes will be for social rent and 11 would be shared ownership. The overall affordable housing offer therefore is 35 homes or 76% overall.

Supplementary question:

There is a lot of concern about this in our ward. Residents have contacted me to say that their properties are being damaged by the vibrations from the works, parents want the school to be built as quickly as possible, and we are all well aware of the need for social housing in our borough. Many great socialists have lived in Islington, even this year we unveiled a plaque for George Orwell. I wanted to know if you had any advice from the great socialists who have lived in Islington.

Reply:

In 'The Road to Wigan Pier' George Orwell wrote about the poverty in this country and one of the consequences of that book was the eventual creation of the welfare state by Attlee's Government in 1945 and a mass housebuilding programme. I am proud that this borough continues to build social housing for its residents.

Question B) from Councillor Jeapes to Councillor Watts, Leader of the Council:

The Social Mobility Commission has just produced a report that highlights low-income and middle-income families are being held back by deep social mobility problems in Britain. This problem is starkly evident in Canonbury ward, where council housing is situated cheek-by-jowl alongside million pound houses, which residents on the estates will never be able to afford.

The report describes the polarisation of the labour market where, "there are too few progression opportunities for workers, especially women, in the bottom half of the labour market", and that, "job growth in the British economy has shifted more towards low-skilled jobs compared with other European countries". The report goes on to say, "Professional employment is growing but the potential it contains for a social mobility dividend is hindered by talent being recruited from too narrow a social pool". So what hope is there for the poor, working class residents of Islington?

The report is an indictment in the failure of Conservative Government policies to help the poor. Could Cllr Watts give us reassurance that the council is taking appropriate steps to improve social mobility in Islington?

Reply:

You are absolutely right to ask about social mobility; the inequalities in income in Islington are very stark. We introduced the Fairness Commission because of the inequalities in our borough and because people's chances in life are too often determined by the income they were born into, and not because of their talents or hard work.

We are the 24<sup>th</sup> most deprived borough in the country with the 5<sup>th</sup> highest level of child poverty, but we are also the 5<sup>th</sup> highest on the government's social mobility league table. The chances of working class people getting into university is higher in Islington than almost anywhere else; that is not because of any individual policy, but it because we have made a commitment across this borough to make a difference for working people.

We invest heavily in early years and parenting support. We have high quality state nurseries that ordinary people can afford to go to. But the government is cutting the money we will have for those fantastic affordable nurseries. We provide free school meals for all children in the borough because we think that children shouldn't have their learning interrupted because they are hungry. Islington has made huge improvements to its schools and is now in the top 6 places in the country for GCSE results achieved by children on free school meals. That makes a massive difference to people's ability to go onto university or get a high-quality apprenticeship. At the same time, central government is taking money away from places like Islington and sending it to leafy counties where next to no one lives in poverty. The government thinks the best way to improve social mobility is to bring back grammar schools; which have on average 2.5% of their pupils on free school meals. This will be a disaster for social mobility, a disaster for education standards, and we will fight the reintroduction of grammar schools.

The government cut the education maintenance allowance which helped disadvantaged pupils to attend college; we brought it back as the Islington Bursary. The government is cutting apprenticeships while we are bringing them back, and most of all they are forcing us to sell genuinely affordable housing, reducing the amount of housing for disadvantaged people. Our approach could not be more different; we must fight the government's policies to improve social mobility in Islington.

Supplementary question:

The government's Social Mobility Commission recommends that the government work with local councils to introduce new high quality jobs and opportunities. Do you think we can trust this government to help working people?

Reply:

No.

Question C) from Councillor Turan to Councillor Ward, Executive Member for Housing and Development:

Housing is a hugely important issue for residents in my ward and I have received a great deal of correspondence from local people about how the Tenant Tax would have caused real problems. I was delighted to hear that, after significant campaigning by this council and others, the government will be dropping its planned unfair Tenant Tax, which would have affected people already struggling to make ends meet. There are many other parts of the Housing and Planning Act which will be damaging for Islington. Please can you tell me what the council will do to challenge the remaining parts of the government's legislation?

Reply:

The Tenant Tax would have penalised many of our tenants just for being in work. In campaigning against the Tax we worked with local residents and others across London to make representations to Gavin Barwell MP, Minister of State for Housing and Planning. We are still campaigning as the fight is not over. The end of lifetime tenancies and the sale of our council housing stock has the potential to turn the lives of ordinary people upside down. We

will continue to work with our residents and other local authorities across London, and we will continue to gather case studies from ordinary Islington residents of how this Act will affect their everyday lives. The lesson from the Tenant Tax victory is that when we organise we can win.

Question D) to Councillor Heather to Councillor Ward, Executive Member for Housing and Development:

Given that the former HMP Holloway site in Islington is public land, and that in the borough we have a severe shortage of council and social housing available at genuinely affordable rents, what can Islington Council do to ensure that this land is used for the benefit of the local community and is developed in partnership with the local community?

Reply:

Unfortunately we don't own the Holloway Prison site, but as you know we do have very robust local planning policies. We recently had a very successful meeting at Windsor Street Community Centre which was attended by Jeremy Corbyn MP, Mayor Kat Fletcher and others and the consensus was that we need social housing on the Holloway Prison site. The council is developing a supplementary planning document and that will go out for consultation early next year. I would encourage all residents to respond to the consultation and have their say on the future of this site.

Supplementary question:

I welcome your answer. This is more positive than the situation at the Mount Pleasant site, where a golden opportunity to provide genuinely affordable social housing was lost due to a decision by the former Mayor of London. Do you think there will be a change in tact by the current Mayor of London, to allow genuinely affordable social housing to be provided on that site?

Reply:

Thank you. I am pleased to say that the situation has entirely changed under the new Mayor of London. Previously developers who simply did not want to provide social housing would call things in to the Mayor. The tables have turned; we now have a friend at City Hall. The Mayor supports our aims and supports social housing.

Question E) from Councillor Andrews to Councillor Comer-Schwartz, Executive Member for Community Development:

Why has the council taken the unprecedented decision to overturn the Licencing Sub-Committee decision to revoke the Fabric licence and has failed to: a) consult local people who live in the area; and b) have shown no confidence in its Licencing Sub-Committee, when the regulations state when the Police bring a Review on Crime and Disorder grounds and the conditions have been breached then the Sub-Committee should revoke the licence?

Reply:

Thank you for your question. Hopefully your question was largely answered by my earlier response to a member of the public. I know this is an extremely important issue to you as a local councillor. I want to make it clear again that the decision of the Licencing Sub-Committee was not overturned. I know how hard the decision was for the members of the Sub-Committee, and I completely condemn the threats that some councillors received following that decision. Fabric had a legal right to appeal the decision, which they did, and a

series of without prejudice meetings were held between the council and Fabric, and the council and the Police. Fabric offered many new additional conditions to be added to its licence, all of which are designed to ensure a zero tolerance approach to drug possession, consumption and sale within the club.

I have every confidence in the council's Licensing Committee and the members who serve on it. Not every case is as high-profile as Fabric, but the Committee and its members treat all cases equally, giving them the same level of consideration. Thanks to the Sub-Committee's work, and the work of our Licensing and Legal Teams, we have been able to secure a safer and more responsible club in our borough.

Supplementary question:

Thank you for your reply. What I find incredible about this situation is not the decision that was taken, but that we seem to not have listened to the concerns of local people in this instance. I am concerned that we have now put the council on a slippery slope, where we will be challenged on every decision we make to revoke a licence. Now that we have reinstated a licence which the Sub-Committee had revoked, what is to stop others seeking the same outcome?

Reply:

The licensing process is quasi-judicial. Anyone can apply for a licence, and if the conditions on that licence are breached then that licence can be reviewed. Equally, if a revocation happens, then the licence holder has the right of appeal. Yes, this situation could happen again, but I'm not in a position to condemn the licensing and legal processes.

Question F) from Councillor Russell to Councillor Webbe, Executive Member for Environment and Transport:

Are you confident that Islington residents who use bikes for their job rather than a car have access to adequate on street cycle parking to enable them to carry out their work?

Reply:

Thank you for your question. In Islington we are committed to supporting cycling, and that means removing the barriers that prevent people from cycling. It is absolutely right that we help the people who live, work or visit Islington to cycle or walk, or use other means of travel other than driving to this borough. Therefore it is important that we provide the cycle storage that enables people to use bicycles; that's why we have around 2,000 cycle stands in this borough and why we are exploring other means of cycle storage. Seeing as it's Christmas, why don't we say that anybody who wants cycle storage in this borough in order to do their work, if cycle parking does not already exist, just tell us, and we will try to supply it.

Question G) from Councillor Russell to Councillor Ward, Executive Member for Housing and Development:

Are you confident that block charges for housing repairs are being allocated fairly?

Reply:

Yes. Each repair has a unique reference number which is allocated to each estate, block or property. This enables the council to identify exactly where and how much money has been spent and ensures that leaseholders are accurately re-charged their contribution in accordance with their respective lease. The same system is applied when carrying out capital

works. That said, I am very concerned by the issue that was raised by the local resident earlier on, and I am very happy to work with you and the resident to try and resolve that as soon as possible.

Supplementary question:

Will you work with me to make sure that residents do not have to undergo forensic detective work to uncover instances of erroneous charges? If a resident living in a block identifies that an incorrect charge has been made, it should not only be the complaint who is refunded, but everyone living in that block too.

Reply:

Yes.

## **127 URGENT ITEM - COUNCIL TAX SUPPORT SCHEME 2017/18**

Councillor Hull moved the recommendations in the report. Councillor Watts seconded.

The resolutions were put to the vote and **CARRIED**.

### **RESOLVED:**

- That the Council Tax Support Scheme for 2017/18 as contained in Appendix A to the report submitted be agreed;
- To retain the amendments to council tax agreed at the Council meeting on 3 December 2015. To be clear, this means that from 1 April 2017 the following will continue to apply:
  - 1) council tax exemption classes A and C will have a discount of 0% for all cases;
  - 2) council tax discount for second homes will be 0% in all cases;
  - 3) council tax discount for empty furnished lets will be 0% in all cases;
  - 4) a premium of 50% will be charged on the council tax of all properties that have remained empty for over 2 years in all cases.

## **128 CHIEF WHIP'S REPORT**

Councillor Alice Perry moved the recommendations. Councillor Gill seconded.

The recommendations were put to the vote and **CARRIED**.

### **RESOLVED:**

#### **1. APPOINTMENTS TO THE HEALTH AND WELLBEING BOARD**

- a) That Dr Helene Brown be appointed as the NHS England representative on the Health and Wellbeing Board for the remainder of the municipal year 2016/17 or until a successor is appointed be agreed.
- b) That Dr Hasz Sonigra be appointed as the substitute member for Dr Helene Brown on the Health and Wellbeing Board for the remainder of the municipal year 2016/17 or until a successor is appointed be agreed.

- c) That Finola Culbert be appointed as the substitute member for Carmel Littleton on the Health and Wellbeing Board for the remainder of the municipal year 2016/17 or until a successor is appointed be agreed.

**2. APPOINTMENT TO ISLINGTON COUNCIL'S COMMUNITY CHEST**

That Councillor Champion be appointed as a substitute member of Islington Council's Community chest for the remainder of the municipal year 2016/17 or until a successor is appointed be agreed.

**3. APPOINTMENT TO RICHARD CLOUDESLEY TRUST**

That Tanya Parr, Senior Commissioning Officer (Children's Services), be appointed as a Trustee on the Board of the Richard Cloudesley Trust for a period of four years or until a successor is appointed be agreed.

**4. APPOINTMENT TO FINSBURY PARK TRUST**

- a) That Councillor Heather be appointed as the Council's representative on the Board of Trustees of the Finsbury Park Trust for a period of three years or until a successor is appointed be agreed.
- b) That Councillor Shaikh be appointed as the substitute member for Councillor Heather on the Board of Trustees of the Finsbury Park Trust for a period of three years or until a successor is appointed be agreed.

**5. APPOINTMENT OF ISLINGTON READS CHAMPION**

That Councillor Andrews be appointed as Islington Reads Champion for the remainder of the municipal year 2016/17 or until a successor is appointed be agreed.

**6. AMENDMENT TO TERMS OF REFERENCE OF THE HOUSING SCRUTINY COMMITTEE**

That the amendment to the Constitution be agreed as set out in the report submitted.

**129 NOTICES OF MOTION**

**MOTION 1: 'COUNT THEM IN' CAMPAIGN**

Councillor Poole moved the motion. Councillor Ismail seconded. Councillor Russell contributed to the debate.

The motion was put to the vote and was **CARRIED**.

**RESOLVED:**

- To support and promote The Royal British Legion's call to include a new topic in the 2021 census that concerns military service and membership of the Armed Forces community;
- To call upon the UK Parliament, which will approve the final census questionnaire through legislation in 2019, to ensure that the 2021 census includes questions concerning our Armed Forces community.

## **MOTION 2: AFFORDABLE HOMES FOR TEACHERS**

Councillor Caluori moved the motion. Councillor Debono seconded.

The motion was put to the vote and was **CARRIED**.

### **RESOLVED:**

- To make further representations to the government concerning its purchase of Ladbroke House, proposing that the building is developed as genuinely affordable accommodation for teachers;
- To support the council to continue to build genuinely affordable homes in Islington across a range of tenures, to ensure that people, including key workers, can find a home in the borough;
- To request that the Executive ensures that sufficient school places continue to be planned for and provided by the council, meaning there is no need for the development of new mainstream Free Schools in the borough outside of those already in place.

## **MOTION 3: SCRAP GP FEES FOR DOMESTIC VIOLENCE VICTIMS**

Councillor Burgess moved the motion. Councillor Ngongo seconded. Councillors Russell and O'Halloran contributed to the debate.

### **RESOLVED:**

- To support the Scrap the Fee campaign;
- To call on the government to scrap this unfair and unjust charge, by bringing this service back under the NHS contract;
- That Cllrs Burgess and Ngongo write to the local press to raise awareness of this vital issue.

## **MOTION 4: SUPPORT THE MAYOR OF LONDON'S AIR POLLUTION PLANS AND PROMOTE HIS HEALTHY STREETS AGENDA IN ISLINGTON**

Councillor Russell moved the motion.

Councillor Webbe moved the amendment as set out in the additional despatch of papers.

The amendment was put to the vote and **CARRIED**.

The motion as amended was put to the vote and **CARRIED**.

### **RESOLVED:**

That the Leader and Executive be asked to:

- Respond positively to the Mayor's air pollution consultation that calls for the Ultra-Low Emission Zone to extend to the North and South Circular and to be brought forward from the previously proposed 2020 start date;
- Report back to Executive in due course on the outcome of the council's bid to Transport for London's Local Implementation Plan funding scheme;

- Continue to make representations to the Mayor of London to urge him to prioritise cleaner buses running on routes that use Islington's roads.

**MOTION 5: FIREWORK SAFETY IN ISLINGTON**

Councillor Russell moved the motion.

Councillor Hull moved the amendment.

The amendment was put to the vote and **CARRIED**.

The motion as amended was put to the vote and **CARRIED**.

**RESOLVED:**

- To continue to work with the police to keep fireworks out of the hands of under-18s and to ensure that 'Challenge 25' is being used in the case of all firework retailers.

The meeting closed at 9.40 pm

**MAYOR**