

LONDON BOROUGH OF ISLINGTON
COUNCIL MEETING - 7 DECEMBER 2017

MINUTES OF PROCEEDINGS

At the meeting of the Council held at Council Chamber, Town Hall, Upper Street, N1 2UD on 7 December 2017 at 7.30 pm.

Present:

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

The Mayor (Councillor Una O'Halloran) in the Chair

165 MINUTES

RESOLVED:

That the minutes of the Council meeting on 21 September 2017 be confirmed as a correct record and the Mayor be authorised to sign them.

166 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

None.

167 MAYORAL ANNOUNCEMENTS

(i) Apologies for Absence

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors Champion, Greening, Court, Clarke-Perry, Doolan, Parker and Convery.

Apologies for lateness were received from Councillors Gallagher, Kay and Poyser.

(ii) Order of Business

The Mayor advised that she had accepted an urgent motion under rule 10.2(n) of the Council's Constitution. The motion was to be considered under Item 12, Notices of Motion.

(iii) Declaration of Discussion Items

None.

(iv) Mayor's Announcements

The Mayor paid tribute to former Mayor of Islington, Candy Atherton, who passed away on 30 October 2017.

The Mayor said that attending Remembrance Sunday had been her greatest honour as Mayor, and thanked the armed forces, veterans, community groups, young people and different faith groups who took part in the service. The Mayor also thanked the council staff, police and emergency services who had worked to facilitate the event; Councillor Watts, Leader of the Council, and Councillor Poole, Armed Forces Champion. The Mayor commented that all Remembrance events in the borough were well attended by members of the public.

The Mayor had attended the Adult Community Learning Awards Ceremony and said it was a great pleasure to see so many adults accessing the service. The Mayor congratulated the learners on their achievements and noted how important it is for the council to support residents in this way.

The Mayor said that it was fantastic to see so many young people put themselves forward for the Youth Council elections and said that she was looking forward to working with the new Youth Councillors to help us make decisions which will affect all young people in the borough.

The Mayor reminded everyone present that the deadline to submit nominations for the Civic Awards and Ben Kinsella Award is Friday 19 January. The Mayor said that it was very important to recognise the residents who contribute so much to our communities.

(v) Length of Speeches

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

168 LEADER'S ANNOUNCEMENTS

Councillor Watts thanked the Mayor and said how pleased he was that they were both at the recent opening of the Cat and Mouse Library. Councillor Watts thanked the St George's, Holloway and Junction ward councillors, and all the others that supported the event. Councillor Watts was delighted that a new library had been provided in the borough alongside a new social housing development.

Councillor Watts said that it was great to see the launch of new social housing in the Kings Square development, and the many other social housing developments which are part of the council's new build programme. It was noted that the programme would deliver the most new affordable housing that the borough had seen for the past thirty years.

Councillor Watts reflected on the previous year and the horrific terrorist attack in Finsbury Park. Councillor Watts commended the incredible work of the emergency services, and noted how the community came together in the most difficult of circumstances. Councillor Watts said that he remained both touched and very proud of Islington's response.

Councillor Watts noted that the Finsbury Park attack came only a few days after the appalling fire at the Grenfell Tower, and that the council is prioritising residents' safety and continuing to work very closely with the Fire Brigade on a multi-million-pound programme of fire safety improvements across the council's housing stock to ensure all council homes and buildings are as safe as possible.

Councillor Watts thanked the many council staff who assisted Kensington and Chelsea Council in their response to the Grenfell Tower fire, and also commended staff for their response to the Finsbury Park terror attack, and the assistance given to Camden Council during the evacuation of the Chalcots Estate.

Councillor Watts said it was incredible to see the continued transformation of the borough's schools, noting that 2017 saw the best ever GCSE results achieved in Islington. In eight years Islington had progressed from one of the bottom 20 boroughs in the country to one of the top 20 boroughs in terms of the progress that young people make. Councillor Watts was very proud that more young people were getting the opportunities to go to a good university or get a good apprenticeship, and wished them the very best of luck and future success.

Councillor Watts mentioned Angelic Energy, the council's not for profit energy provider, which allows the council, on behalf of its residents, to challenge the commercial energy monopoly that is failing so many people, and thanked Councillor Webbe for her work in this area.

Councillor Watts referenced the ongoing housing crisis, and said that councillor surgeries were full of people whose lives had been ruined by the lack of social housing in the borough. Councillor Watts mentioned three cases he had seen personally in the last couple of months. The first was four children and two adults in a two-bedroom flat, where the overcrowding was causing condensation dampness that was affecting the family's physical and mental health and, as hard as the council was trying, there were simply no local properties available.

Councillor Watts mentioned an old age pensioner, who lived on the fourth floor of a block without a lift and who was increasingly frail and desperately needed a ground floor property, as he would not be able to access his home within the next couple of years. The pensioner wanted to stay in the local area near friends, their church and their community centre, but there were simply no properties available.

Councillor Watts also mentioned a family who had been evicted by their landlord with no notice, who the council had placed in temporary accommodation outside of London as there were no suitable properties available locally. This meant that the family could not visit their local GP who was familiar with the mother's mental health condition. The council was unable to offer any assurances to the family in regards to when a suitable property in the borough may become available.

Councillor Watts said that these were not exceptional cases; there were 10,000 families like this on the council's housing waiting list. Councillor Watts said that it was the job of councillors to speak up for vulnerable people who couldn't have their voices heard, and that

building new social housing was the top priority of the council. Councillor Watts said that the Council was due to have a number of conversations this evening about the merits of new social housing proposals, and whilst he completely understood the concerns of residents who were worried about development near their homes, the current administration was elected on a manifesto pledge to build more council housing, and anyone opposing the development of new social housing should ask themselves what they are doing for the 10,000 families on Islington's housing waiting list. Councillor Watts said that the Council would stand up for the voiceless and stand up for the homes that the people of Islington need.

169 PETITIONS

Councillor Russell presented a petition on behalf of residents objecting to the proposed relocation of services from the Sotheby Mews Day Centre.

Councillor Russell presented a petition on behalf of residents objecting to the Finsbury Central development proposals due to its impact on Burnhill House and the surrounding area.

Councillor Diarmaid Ward presented a petition on behalf of residents requesting a pedestrian crossing at the Holloway Road, Drayton Park and Palmer Place junction.

Rosalind Tyler presented a petition on behalf of Penderyn Way residents requesting that the council limit the height and length of extensions to properties in the street.

Councillor Russell presented a petition on behalf of residents on the Parkview Estate requesting that the council rectify damp issues on the estate.

170 QUESTIONS FROM THE YOUTH COUNCIL

The Mayor welcomed the newly elected Youth Councillors and congratulated their success in the recent youth elections. The new Youth Councillors signed a declaration that they would fulfil their duties to the best of their ability.

Question a) from Youth Councillor Iqra to Councillor Kaya Comer-Schwartz was asked by Youth Councillor Darey in Youth Councillor Iqra's absence:

What can be done to further foster and embed a culture of respect in the borough, so that males, females, trans, gender variant and questioning young people can feel safe at school and in the work place, free from inappropriate behaviour and reassured that any concerns will be taken seriously by those in a position of power?

Reply:

Thank you for asking this incredibly important question. I absolutely agree with you, we need a culture of respect, so that all people regardless of their gender, race or religion feel safe at school and in the work place.

The Council is bound by law under the Equality Act to eliminate discrimination, harassment and victimisation. The law also expects the same from the borough's businesses, organisations, schools, colleges and universities. Of course, we know that changing culture is a challenging and long process. We need to come together as a community, and foster relationships so we know that the concerns of all, but especially young people, are taken seriously.

Islington has shown through the many things we are doing that the future of young people of all genders is important to us. I am very proud that my colleague Cllr Osh Gantly was one of the first openly trans elected representatives in the UK. Proving that Islington Labour is committed to making sure that trans people are politically represented.

The council has just adopted our 'Supporting Trans Staff' policy, where we outline ways staff can help to create an inclusive and supportive working environment, so that trans staff are able to work to their full potential. We provide training to managers and also have an LGBT Staff Forum that offers a safe place to discuss issues and get support and advice.

Every year this Council reflects on and draws attention to the continued transphobic violence endured by the transgender community. We mark the Transgender Day of Remembrance by flying the flag at the Town Hall, we mark International Day Against Homophobia and Transphobia by wearing orange ribbons, we take part in LGBT History Month with a month-long annual observance of LGBT history, we work with the police and community groups to tackle hate crime, and we also have a zero tolerance approach to homophobic and transphobic bullying in our schools. We have also recently started Islington's Pride project, which is funded by the National Lottery, to create an LGBT archive. All of this work had led to Islington being chosen to host the UK's first exhibition of transgender people of faith at Islington Museum.

We want to make sure we send a message to the community that hatred is not tolerated in this borough. That being said, there is always more to do, and I would welcome any ideas from youth councillors on how we can improve things for young people in the borough.

Question b) from Youth Councillor Mohamed to Councillor Richard Watts:

We recently organised a "Careers Expo", working in partnership with a neighbouring youth council at Google's UK HQ. Over 150 young people attended and signed up to a variety of masterclasses focusing on employability skills. What impact does Cllr Watts feel the Employment Commission has made 2 years on, particularly on the lives of young people?

Reply:

Thank you for your question. The first thing I would like to say is thank you to the Youth Council for organising the Careers Expo, and thank you for everything you have done over the past two years. You have all done a tremendous job.

I think the Employment Commission has made a big difference. Over the last few years we have created stronger links between schools and businesses; businesses are now volunteering in our schools and teaching young people employability skills; over 700 young people have received mentoring and support through the Mentoring Works programme; we have brokered Saturday jobs with local employers for young people.

Over 25 council teams are delivering Get Ready for Work events for young people, teachers and parents to speed network with employers offering real jobs; TED-style talks are being held, and networking events are being held with successful young entrepreneurs.

We are supporting young unemployed people back into work through initiatives like the Aspire 2017 programme. This is a week of activities focused on giving young people the opportunity to meet employers currently recruiting.

Since 2014 when the Employment Commission started, the council has helped 3,800 unemployed local people into work, including 1,000 young people. We have also brought together over 60 organisations to form a network of those working to provide jobs for local

people. I think the Employment Commission has had a massive impact and I would like to thank you and your colleagues for the work you have done in this area.

Supplementary question:

Two years ago, the Youth Council asked a question about apprenticeships and how they are being advertised in schools. Since then, have you seen any changes to how apprenticeships are being advertised, and do you feel there could be any more improvement in this area?

Reply:

I'm sure there is more we could do, however, since then there have been changes to the council's apprenticeship scheme. What used to happen is council apprenticeships would start throughout the year as and when departments needed to recruit; we changed that so in the main apprenticeships now start at the end of the school year, which means we are better able to target opportunities at school and college leavers. This has made a difference to the number of school and college leavers accessing apprenticeships, but I'm sure we can do more to improve advertising in our schools.

Question c) from Youth Councillor Tega to Councillor Joe Caluori was asked by Youth Councillor Chikamso in Youth Councillor Tega's absence:

In September 2017, the Evening Standard printed an article stating that Londoners living in the borough of Islington find their lives the least worthwhile than almost anywhere else in the UK. How will the Fair Futures Commission help to change the lives of its young residents for the better?

Reply:

Thank you for your question. I saw that article too, but I think the headline was a bit misleading, because the survey also puts the happiness of our residents well ahead of those of neighbouring boroughs. But there is clearly a problem with how Islington is perceived; some people think that if you live in Islington you are rich, but we all know the reality is very different. The reason why we introduced the Fairness Commission and the Employment Commission is because we all know that Islington is a very divided society in terms of wealth and opportunity.

It's a tragedy that anyone would feel that their life lacks meaning or that it isn't worthwhile, everyone is born equal and all life is precious. So what we want to do with the Fair Futures Commission is look at four barriers that stop young people having the best possible upbringing and the best possible future. Growing up in Islington, you should have the best childhood and adolescence available, there are support services and a range of activities, but there are clearly barriers that stop young people from accessing those things.

We've been through a long process with the Commission so far and the Youth Council has been integral to that. The recommendations are in draft form at the moment and will be available in the New Year, but as a sneak peek, the Commissioners have been talking about how we can give guarantees to young people on what they can expect from the council and our partners, how we can have a better focus on work experience and opportunities so we can recreate some of the social capital that wealthy families have and that other families don't, and how we can make life skills and preparation for adulthood a reality. It has also come through really clearly that young people want housing options that allow them to pursue education and work and stay in the borough; it's so important that we keep our community together by providing them with that.

I do want to say in all sincerity that part of the reason why we wanted to set up the Commission in the first place is because, when the Youth Council came to a Children's Partnership Board meeting, the whole meeting turned into a session led by yourselves on your perspective on what's going on in the local area. That was one of a number of meetings where we realised that we need to look again at what we do, and better understand the perspective of young people. So thank you for your question and for your work.

Question d) from Youth Councillor Honey to Cllr Janet Burgess was asked by Youth Councillor Mohamed in Youth Councillor Honey's absence:

It's great that Islington is leading the next wave of projects funded by NHS Digital to get more young people using digital healthcare tools, with a focus on mental health. What support and help is there for young people who need to access help off-line, particularly those who are suffering from cyber bullying or would prefer to receive support face to face?

Reply:

Thank you for your question, it is very important that young people are able to access support. The Digital Healthcare Programme of work is looking at how we can support children and young people's mental health needs. It is important to give people the opportunity to use digital healthcare tools, and although it isn't the only answer, young people in Islington were very clear that they wanted a range of interventions available that included face-to-face options as well as digital solutions.

There are a range of services currently available including the Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services being delivered in all Islington schools alongside counselling and therapeutic services accessible through our youth hubs, Lift and Platform, which are delivered by Mind Connect and The Brandon Centre. Young people are also able to self-refer into our local Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services based at the Northern Health Centre if they do not want to be seen in school or do not attend a local school.

We are planning to look at developing a single point of access to mental health services with a broader range of options available because we recognise that the preferred type of service and how a service is accessed varies greatly amongst young people. We currently are planning to build on the services we already have, both digital and face to face, so that we can meet young people's needs. But none of these plans could have been put into place if young people did not tell us their needs and get involved in the conversation, so please keep letting us know because digital solutions are only one aspect of supporting young people to access better mental health services.

171 QUESTIONS FROM MEMBERS OF THE PUBLIC

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

I would like to propose that Islington Council ban all residents allowing the use of Air BnB and similar companies in their properties, but particularly the council estates that have a security gate system.

We never know who are using these properties, and whilst the tenant or leaseholder holds responsibility for the strangers on our estates, we do not feel safe that these strangers have access to our security fobs which they can pass around as they like.

There have been numerous reports of people abusing this system to have parties and cause disruption to the residents in neighbouring properties.

Security and safety should be paramount in our homes, and with a 'free for all' attitude to allow anyone free reign on our secure estates, this is not the case. Could Islington Council please say whether they would consider this ban?

Reply:

Thank you for your question. There are two aspects to this. The first is council tenants; tenants are not allowed to sublet their property, if it was found that a tenant was subletting their property, we would investigate and take immediate action. We recovered in the region of 70 properties last year as a result of subletting investigations. The second aspect is leaseholders; leaseholders own their homes and planning permission is required if they wish to let their property for more than 90 days in a calendar year. If they let their property without planning permission, then we are able to take enforcement action. That said, leaseholders are able to let their property so long as it is for fewer than 90 days in a calendar year. But, the council are taking this seriously, and we are establishing a registration scheme, so that any leaseholder who rents out their property on Air BnB is required to register with the council every year.

Supplementary question:

My question is not about subletting; it is specifically about Air BnB. It doesn't matter if they are council tenants or leaseholders, they are coming into our estates using security fobs and keys, we don't know who is in the property. If they are registered or not makes no difference; they let their rooms out and it causes problems on our estates.

Reply:

Letting your property on Air BnB is a form of subletting. I completely take your point and that is why we want to bring in the registration scheme. It will let us keep an eye on it, if they are operating unlawfully we will take enforcement action. You raise a very important point though; because these short term lets put up rents, and secondly it means there are less properties to let out to people who live in the borough. I think London should look at what Berlin and New York have done and place much heavier restrictions on this practice. The registration scheme is intended to keep a very close eye on the situation, including any nuisance or antisocial behaviour arising from it.

Question b) from Marianna Johnson to Councillor Ward, Executive Member for Housing and Development:

Can the Executive Member for Planning provide evidence that specifically demonstrates how the winning design for the development of the Finsbury Leisure Centre site has evolved since the public exhibition of 30th June to take into account and reflect all or any of the comments and concerns put forward by the Burnhill House residents and provide a full written rationale as to why they disagree with the points raised?

Reply:

Thank you for your question. The new Finsbury Centre is planned to deliver 120 new homes, 60 of them will be desperately needed council homes. The proposals include a new centre hosting all the existing leisure services in a brand new building, a new larger home for the City Road Medical Practice which will allow it to expand its patient lists, a community nursery

to provide affordable child care for the community, and a new home for an expanded Bunhill Energy Centre, widening our ability to address fuel poverty in the area.

The Council is committed to listening to the concerns that are being raised by the local community, in particular, neighbours to the proposed new buildings, like yourself. Since we met with the residents of Burnhill House in late June 2017, there have been three further meetings to discuss the proposals with stakeholders, including a meeting in early October which was dedicated to hearing the concerns of Burnhill House residents. Burnhill House residents were also welcomed at a meeting of the Bunhill Ward Partnership last month. Further meetings are planned to take place, and residents will be notified directly once dates for these meetings have been agreed.

The design process for the new 'civic centre' and the residential accommodation, including 60 brand new council homes, is still underway. Residents have asked for a meeting to discuss this and I have of course said yes. I look forward to the meeting.

Supplementary question:

I have contacted the Director of Property of our neighbours, the Diocese of London, and they have said they know nothing about this development. How can that be?

Reply:

That is very peculiar and I am surprised to hear that, I will look into that. There have been lots of concerns raised by residents in relation to the scheme, but instead of listing these now, come in and see me and we will have a chat.

Question c) from Benali Hamdache to Councillor Hull, Executive Member for Finance, Performance and Community Safety:

Residents on Whistler Street have raised concerns about crowding on Arsenal match days in the small passage onto Framfield Road. Residents have had to personally intervene to stop pushing and crushing, whilst stewards haven't been around to intervene. What is the council doing to ensure fans and residents are safe?

Reply:

Thank you for your question. Detailed discussions take place between Arsenal, the police and the council before every game and an individual policing and stewarding plan is developed from them. Council staff monitor the area around the Emirates to ensure that these plans are sufficient. Whistler Street has not featured as an area where disorder is occurring, however we will ensure that residents' concerns are fed into the planning meetings and that our staff carry out observations over the next home matches. If residents are concerned about disorder at any time, they must call 999. Police teams are in the area and will be able to assist. Meanwhile, let's hope for a win and no trouble at the Emirates tonight.

Supplementary question:

Can Councillor Hull provide details of the mitigating measures in place to deal with disorder, and if these have been implemented?

Reply:

A detailed policing and stewarding plan is developed for every game, although as I said, Whistler Street hasn't previously been featured. I'm happy to review the points you raise, and our staff will be observing levels of anti-social behaviour over the next few homes matches.

Question d) from Ernestas Jegorovas to Councillor Ward, Executive Member for Housing and Development:

What has the council done in the last 2 years to improve the environment and security of Islington housing estates?

Reply:

Thank you for your question. The Council has always been committed to making environmental and security improvements on our housing estates and we have always involved residents with that process. Ideas have been invited from resident groups and been shortlisted by a resident panel annually to the budgets we have made available.

Over the last two years the budgets for these improvements have been called the environmental improvement budget and the estate security budget. A combined annual budget of £750,000 has been made available by the council for this work from our landlord account. The improvements carried out have included new playgrounds, multi-use games areas, landscaping, planting, food growing initiatives, surfacing, fencing, estate lighting, door entry systems, CCTV systems, estate signage, notice boards and others.

Supplementary:

Thank you. The ward improvement budget is being scrapped; I am concerned that decisions on how these funds were spent were formerly made by a resident panel, but are now being made by councillors through ward partnership meetings. What are you going to do to make sure there is transparency and accountability in decision-making? And how are decisions going to be made when some ward partnerships have not met for a while?

Reply:

Residents will continue to be involved in how these funds are spent. Yes, the scheme is being changed, but by 2020 the core budget of the council will have been cut by 70%. We will continue to carry out improvements to estates through funds received through developer contributions, and residents will continue to have a say through ward partnerships.

Question e) from Sebastian Sandys to Councillor Hull, Executive Member for Finance, Performance and Community Safety:

What is the total sum, broken down by Executive Member responsibility, of projected revenue not collected in year to date ascribed to delayed decision making?

Reply:

Mr Sandys, thank you very much for your question. You asked how much projected revenue has not been collected this year due to delayed decision making by Executive Members, and the answer is none. The Council plans its budget, including projected income, as carefully as possible and we are clear that one of our responsibilities as members is to facilitate achieving the savings and income we have agreed in the budget by making the necessary decisions at the appropriate times.

We have had to find £194 million in savings over the last six years and we are in the middle of the really difficult process of identifying a further £32 million needed to balance the budget next year. If the world had been standing still for the last seven years, that would be difficult enough, but the demand for services is rising all the time.

We are very transparent about the budget pressures the council is facing and we published information about income which has not been achieved in our budget monitoring report last month. The same report lists the compensatory savings we are making and gives details of many other budget pressures. Income is just one element of the budget and the report gives a broad picture of the challenges we face; for example, we are spending an extra £3.7M this year to support vulnerable children and young adults, and that's just one example of increased demand for services.

The legislation requires us to balance the budget and we are making every effort to support the increasing numbers of vulnerable people in need of assistance and avoid cutting front line services. As I am sure you can imagine, after six years of government cuts and rising demand for services, there are no easy savings left. As a result, we are setting really challenging income targets for our services. We realise and accept that many of these are difficult to achieve, but we will continue to be ambitious and we will continue to do all that we can to ensure that, despite the government cuts, we can provide essential services to all the borough's residents.

Supplementary question:

Thank you. A recent budget monitoring item considered by the Policy and Performance Scrutiny Committee did describe an instance of delayed decision making. At the last Policy and Performance meeting it was requested that you meet with myself, Councillor Russell and members of the Green Party, so that we can feed in to your budget setting process. This would save a lot of time as we wouldn't have to amend absolutely everything that you propose.

Reply:

If you are asking if we will consider the views of councillors raised through the budget scrutiny process, then of course the answer is yes.

Question f) from Charles Humphries to Councillor Ward, Executive Member for Housing and Development:

Islington Council is considering a planning application for the extension of the Golden Lane Estate, to include a new 14 storey residential tower block with a single staircase - only four inches wider than the one at Grenfell Tower. Given that single staircase tower blocks are already banned in most other countries, and UK building regulations will be under review, is it right to be making fire safety compromises on new buildings at this time?

As Mr Humphries was not present, the following written response was sent subsequent to the meeting:

Fire safety is an absolute priority for this Council. Fire safety and evacuation routes are an essential part of all planning applications. The Council also has on-going Fire Risk Assessments programmes for all of its properties to ensure that the fire safety measures are in good order.

A single staircase serving a 14 storey block of flats is compliant with Building Regulation standards (Regulation B1) providing the appropriate fire safety protections are in place for flats, common stair, and the fire brigade has access to the upper floors.

As the building includes a floor more than 30 metres from the ground, a sprinkler system will also be required to meet Building Regulations standards.

The Council will respond to any changes in Building Regulations approved by the Government. At present, the Government has not yet approved any changes but the Council is monitoring the situation very closely.

It is not for the regulatory authority to specify specific or additional measures that go beyond current standards as there is no legal mechanism to do so, even in anticipation of future changes to Building Regulations.

The local planning authority seeks input from the London Fire Brigade as part of the planning application process when it is assessing planning applications for all buildings, in particular taller buildings. In some instances a planning condition has been imposed to seek a fire safety evacuation strategy before works begin on the site.

The LFB has responded to this particular application to say they are satisfied, providing the building complies with Building Regulations (specifically Approved Document B5).

A Fire Safety Strategy File note was submitted by the applicant in June 2017 which stated:

- o Non-combustible insulation is to be used.
- o The single stair is to also utilise extensive compartmentation, balcony approaches and ventilation to the firefighting lobby and stair.
- o Inclusion of a fire fighting lift shaft.
- o Inclusion of Automatic Water Fire Suppression system.

This means the proposals set out a fire evacuation strategy complies with Building Regulations. If the application is approved, the condition would also be required to be applied to the school and nursery so they meet LFB requirements.

As there was time remaining of the thirty minutes allocated for public questions, the Mayor accepted questions from the floor:

Question from Rosalind Tyler to Councillor Ward, Executive Member for Housing and Development:

I would like to know why council tenants are being allowed to build extensions on their properties. Surely this affects the fabric of the property, and potentially devalues Islington Council's assets.

Reply:

Thanks for your question. I am somewhat perplexed by your question; it would be very rare for us to authorise a council tenant to extend their home. Anybody can apply for planning permission, but whether or not we would grant permission as the landlord is another question. It would be very usual. I am concerned by this and will be looking into it. If it is found that works have been carried out without the necessary permissions, then we will take action.

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

We have submitted a petition with over 2,000 signatures asking to keep Sotheby Mews open. Will the council hold a debate on this topic?

Reply:

Thank you for your question. Myself and Councillor Burgess came to Sotheby Mews last week and met a number of service users. We want to make sure that the services offered at Sotheby Mews are protected; I know there are concerns that not all of the services will be accommodated at the new centre, so we want to keep on working with you on that.

The Mayor advised that a debate would be held as the petition had received the requisite number of signatures.

Question from Tim Sykes to Councillor Ward, Executive Member for Housing and Development:

Why is Norman Street not referenced on documentation related to the redevelopment of the Finsbury Leisure Centre?

Reply:

I am very sorry; I will take this up with the Planning team.

Question from a member of the public to Councillor Hull, Executive Member for Finance, Performance and Community Safety:

Now that the Sainsbury's planning application on Blackstock Road has been rejected, what is next for the site?

Reply:

We welcome the decision of the Planning Inspector. In terms of what's next, that's up to the building owner. If they need to apply for planning permission, then residents will be able to have their say.

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

Can Councillor Ward provide an update on the future of the Holloway Prison site?

Reply:

I want to thank all the residents of this borough who have campaigned alongside the council for the Holloway Prison site to have as much genuinely affordable housing as possible. We have had a range of responses from local people, but the vast majority want as much genuinely affordable social housing as possible. That is something this borough should be very proud of. We have asked the Ministry of Justice for 50% genuinely affordable housing; 70% of that should be for social rent, the remaining 30% should be some sort of intermediate housing option. We also want community facilities, including a women's centre on site. There is no justice without housing justice, and I hope the Ministry takes account of that.

172 QUESTIONS FROM MEMBERS OF THE COUNCIL

Question a) from Councillor Williamson to Councillor Webbe, Executive Member for Environment and Transport:

What are the average daily, weekly and annual passenger numbers for the council's own bus service, the plus bus?

Reply:

Thank you Councillor Williamson for your question about our wonderful plus bus. This runs a 30-minute service within Islington between 9.30am to 4.30pm on weekdays. The service is aimed at older and less mobile people who find it more difficult to use TfL bus services. 92% of the passenger trips in 2016/17 were made by Freedom Pass holders who are over 60. It serves residents living in Canonbury, St Peter's, St Mary's, Barnsbury, Clerkenwell and Bunhill wards, connecting them with shops, services and community activities at the Angel and various venues along the route.

The average number of daily passenger trips in 2017, up to August, was 76 trips. The average weekly passenger trips made in 2017, up to August, was 382 trips. The annual passenger trips for 2016/17 was 20,789 trips. I think this is value for money, it serves a community who do not often have their voices heard, and it meets the needs of the community. It is a service which can be improved, there is no doubt about that, but it is a good service and is here to stay.

Supplementary question:

Thank you for your reply. I am pleased to hear that the plus bus runs, as there is no way you can find this information on the internet. The council's website page has been down for at least a month; the HCT website containing the information is currently down; there is a Wikipedia page, but it does not tell you where the bus stops. Bearing in mind that there is little information about where the bus stops or where it goes, passenger numbers are not going to increase. Has the council looked at the cost benefit analysis of replacing the service with taxi cards for the individuals who use it most? This would offer a more flexible service to those who need it.

Reply:

I don't want to make any announcements about taxi cards and I'm not sure how that could be funded, but needless to say the 812 bus is a service we can rely on into the future. It is one that we have control over, one we can direct, one we can support, and one whose funding we will fight for. Very few councils have control over their bus services and I think that is a crying shame. We need to make sure that we have public transport, including buses, back into public ownership, into customer control. It is only through councils like our own, and other pioneering councils, that we will provide cleaner, more efficient, safer, more reliable and more accessible routes for those that need it. In regards to accessing the timetable; it is available on a number of travel apps.

Question b) from Councillor Poole to Councillor Watts, Leader of the Council:

With the centenary commemoration of the end of WW1 less than 12 months away, what progress has there been on securing the Memorial Arch at Manor Gardens and facilitating public access?

Reply:

Thank you for your question. You are absolutely right to raise this issue; the Memorial Arch is the old Metropolitan Borough of Islington's war memorial, and it marks the 1,307 Islingtonians who made the ultimate sacrifice in the Great War.

Since you asked me about this at a previous Council meeting we have written to the owners of the memorial, Bellway Homes, requesting them to restore the monument and allow public access. We are taking a 'carrot and stick' approach with Bellway; the 'carrot' is that we are very keen to work with them and support their application to the War Memorials Trust to seek funding for the work, indeed I have lobbied personally on this, but the 'stick' is that this is a planning enforcement case, as we believe they are in breach of their Section 106 agreement to maintain the memorial.

I share your strong desire to make sure the war memorial returns to the condition you would normally expect of such an important monument, in time for next year's commemoration of the end of the Great War. I would like to carry on working with you, Islington's Heritage Service and our Planning Service to make sure that Bellway fulfils its legal duty.

Supplementary Question:

Thank you for campaigning on this issue and for attending the commemoration of the Battle of Passchendaele earlier this year. The Memorial Arch is our own version of the Millennium Gate, it is a significant memorial for our borough, and it is important that Bellway gets this right. Will you deliver a Neville Chamberlain style ultimatum to Bellway Homes, and if they do not respond in the affirmative, issue an order to the Islington Veteran's Association to march?

Reply:

I think the ultimatum we issue should be more effective than that issued by Chamberlain, but yes, I will certainly take this issue up with Bellway Homes and I would be happy to work with Islington Veteran's Association on this. I hope the necessary improvements are made.

Question c) from Councillor Russell to Councillor Hull, Executive Member for Finance, Performance and Community Safety:

I note the cost of delaying the trampoline park to allow for an election count at the Sobell Centre in May 2017 was £200,000. Where will you hold future election counts and how much will it cost?

Reply:

Thank you for your question. As I am sure you are aware, where and when an election count takes place is not a decision for me or any other member, rather it is the decision of the Returning Officer, a statutory role which is independent of the Council, which ensures that elections are administered effectively.

I am aware that the Returning Officer has issued a letter to Party Agents setting out a timetable for the local elections in 2018, and also setting out when and where the election count will take place. The cost of elections, including the cost of count venues, are paid for by the institution or body on behalf of whom the election or referendum is being run. So national elections are funded by central government, London Mayoral and Assembly elections are funded by City Hall, and local council elections every four years and by-elections are paid for by the local authority.

Supplementary question:

Thank you for that answer. Local authority elections need a place to be held; we've lost the Sobell Centre, has the cost of those future election counts been factored in to the budget for the trampoline park, and if so, when will that project break even?

Reply:

The count for the local elections in 2018 will be held on Friday 4th May at the Sobell Leisure Centre. In terms of how much it costs, it depends on whether it is a daytime or evening count, because that impacts on how long the centre has to be closed for, but it normally costs in the region of £25,000 - £35,000.

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

Will you fix the damp in existing homes on Park View estate before the new build programme begins?

Reply:

Thank you for your question. We are aware of the issues on the Park View estate, which we believe is being caused by a leak. We are currently carrying out tests and once we've identified the cause of the leak we will carry out any remedial work as quickly as possible to resolve the problem; that will be alongside the new build works.

We are also aware of some instances of condensation at Park View. In these cases, we have made sure that there are no building defects contributing to the condensation and have given advice to residents about how to prevent and manage condensation issues.

Supplementary question:

Can you please clarify if these works will begin before the new build works?

Reply:

We are currently investigating what remedial works are required, and new build works are due to start around summer 2018.

173 COUNCIL TAX SUPPORT SCHEME 2018/19

Councillor Hull moved the recommendations in the report. Councillor Picknell seconded. Councillor Russell contributed to the debate.

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

RESOLVED:

- (i) That the Council adopt the Council Tax Support Scheme for 2018/19 as contained in Appendix A to the report submitted;
- (ii) That the retention of the amendments to council tax agreed at full Council on 15 December 2016 be agreed. This means that from 1 April 2018 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 will be charged at the maximum percentage allowed on the council tax of all properties that have remained empty for over 2 years in all cases.

174 LICENSING POLICY

Councillor Comer-Schwartz moved the recommendations. Councillor Williamson seconded. Councillor Russell contributed to the debate.

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

RESOLVED:

- (i) That the Council adopt the Licensing Policy 2018-2022, attached as Appendix A to the report submitted;
- (ii) That the Policy shall apply to all applications for a premises licence or club certificate submitted after 1 January 2018;
- (iii) That the continuation of the following cumulative impact policy areas for all activities licensed under the Licensing Act 2003 for a further 5 years be agreed:
 - Clerkenwell (paragraph 18)
 - Bunhill (paragraph 25)
 - Angel and Upper St (paragraph 41)
 - Holloway Road and Finsbury Park (paragraph 49)
 - Archway area (paragraph 58)
 - Kings Cross (paragraph 31);
- (iv) That the extension of the Kings Cross cumulative impact area north along Caledonian Road to Frederica Street as shown on the map in paragraph 38 of the Policy be agreed;
- (v) That the Council adopt a borough wide cumulative impact policy with respect to shops and other premises selling alcohol for consumption off the premises.

175 REPORT OF THE CHIEF WHIP

Councillor Gill moved the recommendations. Councillor Picknell seconded.

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

RESOLVED:

That Councillor Hull be appointed as a member of the North London Waste Authority with immediate effect.

176 NOTICES OF MOTION

MOTION 1: FURTHER PAUSE AND FIX THE ROLLOUT OF UNIVERSAL CREDIT

Councillor Hull moved the motion. Councillor Williamson seconded. Councillors Heather and Russell contributed to the debate.

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

RESOLVED:

- (i) To make further representations to the Government to urge them to pause the rollout of Universal Credit still further in order to fix the significant problems which remain with it, despite changes announced in the Chancellor's recent autumn budget, and which will impact local people badly if they are not addressed; and
- (ii) To protect council services which support local people in receipt of Universal Credit, or other out-of-work benefits, including particularly services that help them to find work.

MOTION 2: STANDING UP FOR LOCAL PEOPLE FROM OTHER EU COUNTRIES

Councillor Comer-Schwartz moved the motion. Councillor Poyser seconded.

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

RESOLVED:

- (i) To continue to make representations to urge Government to stop using our friends, family and neighbours as a bargaining chip in the Brexit negotiations by:
 - a. Immediately guaranteeing the full rights of all people from other countries in the European Union living in the UK, including those who have resided in the country for less than five years;
 - b. Guaranteeing that the rights of people from other countries in the European Union will not be affected in the event of no Brexit deal being agreed;
- (ii) To establish a dedicated advice page on the Council website, which residents from other countries in the European Union can visit for the latest information and advice.

MOTION 3: MAKING ISLINGTON COUNCIL DEMENTIA FRIENDLY

Councillor Burgess moved the motion. Councillor Gantly seconded. Councillor Russell contributed to the debate.

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

RESOLVED:

- (i) To further improve dementia diagnosis rates in the borough by encouraging earlier presentation and diagnosis in the borough;
- (ii) To work towards awareness raising within the wider community, encouraging all elected members to become a 'Dementia Friend' through the Alzheimer's Society's free Dementia Friends Programme, and to take this learning into their home communities;

- (iii) To apply the Council's principles of co-production when working with people affected by dementia when bringing in new policies;
- (iv) To work towards making council practices more dementia friendly, including commitments to make council run buildings dementia friendly;
- (v) To continue to run local risk reduction campaigns, including clear messaging in ongoing Public Health campaigns regarding exercise, alcohol, smoking or diet. The best prevention advice is that 'what's good for your heart is good for your head';
- (vi) To make information about local dementia services as accessible as possible, reviewing content on the local authority website and raising awareness among all Council staff.

MOTION 4: PROVIDING SAFE STREETS FOR PEOPLE WALKING AND CYCLING IS A MATTER OF SOCIAL JUSTICE

Councillor Russell moved the motion. Councillor Webbe moved the amendment circulated in the additional despatch of papers. Councillor Watts seconded the amendment.

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

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

RESOLVED:

- (i) To continue to work with the community to reduce traffic, reduce road danger and enable all residents to make local journeys safely and conveniently on foot, via public transport and by bike;
- (ii) To formulate a new Transport Strategy for adopting in Summer 2019, once the final Mayor of London's Transport Strategy is published, that seeks to continue to seek transport investment that improves local people's health and safety.

URGENT MOTION: ISLINGTON – NO PLACE FOR HATE CRIME

The Mayor gave consent for this motion to be considered under Rule 10.2(n) of the Council's Constitution.

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

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

RESOLVED:

- (i) To ask the Leader of the Council to write to the Chief Executive of McDonald's UK, requesting a formal apology be issued to the victim and to Islington as a community following this incident. The letter should also urge McDonald's to urgently retrain all staff (including sub-contractors) on hate crime awareness;
- (ii) To encourage individuals and organisations to sign up to the Islington Hate Crime Pledge.

The meeting closed at 9.40 pm

MAYOR