



COUNCIL

13 July 2023

SECOND DESPATCH

Please find enclosed the following items:

Item 10	Armed Forces Covenant - Annual Update – updated Appendix	1 - 4
Item 13	Updated Council Appointments Report	5 - 8
Item 14	Updated Motion on Diverse Councils Declaration	9 - 12

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Islington Armed Forces Community Covenant: Council's Commitment

On 29 June 2013 – Armed Forces Day – the Council signed up to the Islington Armed Forces Community Covenant. In doing so it recognised and pledged to promote the valuable contribution of and sacrifices made by the Armed Forces and to provide practical support to help serving and former members of the Armed Forces and their families living in Islington.

The Council already has in place a range of support services for residents, particularly for families on low incomes, disabled people, those with long term health conditions and vulnerable adults and children. Current and ex-serving personnel living in Islington will have access to the same services and support as other residents. This document sets out the commitments the Council has made, over and above the core offer, to support Armed Forces personnel and their families and recognise the contribution they make. We will honour our pledges in the community covenant through:

Financial support

The income of war widows and war disablement will be disregarded when calculating entitlement to:

- Housing Benefit
- Council Tax Support
- Access to financial support through the Resident Support Scheme
- Payments to veterans under the War Pension Scheme will be fully disregarded in the financial assessment for social care charging, with the exception of payments of Constant Attendance Allowance, which may be taken into account.

Access to council housing

Our housing allocations policy has been amended to support Armed Forces personnel and their families applying for council housing in the following circumstances:

- Service personnel will not be affected by residency restrictions if they have to live outside Islington as part of their service

- Welfare Category B is an award of 80 points and may be awarded in to bereaved spouses or civil partners of those serving in the regular forces where the bereaved spouse or civil partner has recently ceased, or will cease to be entitled, to reside in Ministry of Defence accommodation following the death of their service spouse or civil partner, and the death was wholly or partly attributable to their service
- Welfare Category C is an award of 40 points and may be awarded to applicants whose welfare needs are comparable to former members of the regular forces
- Medical Category A gives the maximum 150 points and will be awarded to serving members of the regular forces who are suffering from a serious injury, illness or disability which is wholly or partly attributable to their service

Employment and skills support

Ex-forces personnel who are facing challenges in securing employment will be eligible for support through council employment programmes. This could include support in developing new skills and in accessing local vacancies. The discipline, resilience and team spirit of armed forces personnel could be a considerable incentive to employers.

The Council provides employment and skills support to vulnerable groups and / or those facing significant barriers as part of its commitment to tackle poverty and inequality in Islington.

Support for health and social care needs

The Council will provide:

- Mental Health First Aid training to Armed Forces organisations / charities enabling them to recognise mental health issues and refer on to relevant support
- Alcohol awareness training to representatives of Armed Forces organisations / charities
- Support (both financial and practical) with housing adaptations – for those moving to private as well as council housing, and refer those with disabilities / longer term health conditions onto relevant support services

Appointment of an Armed Forces Champion

- Each year the Council will formally nominate a councillor to be the Armed Forces Champion, ensuring good relationships with Armed Forces organisations in the borough and promoting engagement activities and support. The current Armed Forces Champion is Cllr Marian Spall.

Formally recognising the contribution of the Armed Forces

- The Armed Forces Flag will be flown on the roof of the Town Hall each year on Armed Forces Day
- A Veteran or Cadet of the Year Award will be launched during Armed Forces Week 2014 to highlight the contribution of individuals

- Freedom of the Borough has been awarded to:
 - The Honorary Artillery Company in 2009
 - Colonel Brian Kay, the former Deputy Lieutenant in 2010

Supporting ‘Youth Organisations in Uniform’

Islington has a number of Air Training Corps, Army Cadets and Sea Cadets in the borough and the Islington Academy has just set up a Combined Cadet Force. The Council will support these positive activities for young people through:

- Active involvement of the Mayor in visiting and supporting the activities of the various cadet forces in Islington
- Access to funding for running costs and activities through the Council’s two small grants schemes – the Local Initiatives Fund and Islington Community Chest
- Chairing meetings of Youth Organisations in Uniform (YOU) which brings together various organisations - the Cubs, Scouts, Boys Brigade etc. – to identify opportunities for sharing help and resources

Promote the Community Covenants Grants Scheme

The government has established a Covenant Fund, with £10m available per year for projects across the country which support the priorities of local Armed Forces Community Covenants, and which bring together the civilian and Armed Forces communities to promote integration and raise awareness of the contribution and sacrifices made by Forces personnel.

The scheme is administered on a regional basis. Applications can be submitted by any part of the community, including voluntary and community sector organisations / charities, community interest companies (CICs), local authorities and schools. Projects should deliver tangible results and meet the overall aims of the community covenant.

The Council will promote the Covenant Fund through its links with local Youth Organisations in Uniform (YOU), other voluntary and community sector organisations, statutory sector partners, schools and local businesses. The Council will also, through the Armed Forces Champion, convene a local panel to act as the Local Covenant Partnership (comprising senior Armed Forces / Council representatives) to review and support local bids to the Covenant Fund.

Islington Council will work closely with Armed Forces organisations to increase understanding of, and address issues faced by, serving and ex-personnel and to maximise awareness and take up of the commitments made through this covenant.

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COUNCIL MEETING – 13 JULY 2023

COUNCIL APPOINTMENTS REPORT

MEMBER APPOINTMENTS:

1 EMPLOYMENT AND APPOINTMENTS COMMITTEE

- 1.1 The following appointments are to reappoint the existing members of Personnel Sub-Committee to the replacement Employment and Appointments Committee consequent to the amendments to the Council's Constitution.
- 1.2 To appoint the following members to the Employment and Appointments Committee, with immediate effect, until Annual Council on 16 May 2024 or until a successor is appointed:

Committee Members:

Councillor Anjna Khurana (Chair)	Councillor Janet Burgess MBE
Councillor Kaya Comer-Schwartz	Councillor Satnam Gill OBE
Councillor Diarmaid Ward	

Substitutes:

Councillor Jenny Kay	Councillor Dave Poyser
Councillor Jilani Chowdhury	Councillor Jason Jackson
Councillor Santiago Bell-Bradford	Councillor Rowena Champion
Councillor Roulin Khondoker	Councillor Michelline Safi Ngongo
Councillor Una O'Halloran	Councillor Nurullah Turan
Councillor John Woolf	

RECOMMENDATIONS:

- 1.1 That Councillors Khurana, Burgess, Comer-Schwartz, Gill and Ward be appointed as members of the Employment and Appointments Committee, with immediate effect, until Annual Council on 16 May 2024 or until a successor is appointed, be agreed.
- 1.2 That Councillor Khurana be appointed as Chair of the Employment and Appointments Committee, with immediate effect, until Annual Council on 16 May 2024 or until a successor is appointed, be agreed.

- 1.3 That Councillors Kay, Poyser, Chowdhury, Jackson, Bell-Bradford, Champion, Khondoker, Ngongo, O'Halloran, Turan and Woolf be appointed as Substitute members of the Employment and Appointments Committee, with immediate effect, until Annual Council on 16 May 2024 or until a successor is appointed, be agreed.

2 PENSIONS COMMITTEE

- 2.1 The following appointments are to reappoint the existing members of Pensions Sub-Committee to the replacement Pensions Committee consequent to the amendments to the Council's Constitution, with the exception of the appointment of Cllr Mackmurdie as a substitute, which is a new appointment.

- 2.2 To appoint the following members to the Pensions Committee, with immediate effect, until Annual Council on 16 May 2024 or until a successor is appointed:

Committee Members:

Councillor Paul Convery (Chair)	Councillor Satnam Gill OBE
Councillor Diarmaid Ward (Vice-Chair)	Councillor Michael O'Sullivan

Substitutes:

Councillor Jenny Kay	Councillor Ben Mackmurdie
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RECOMMENDATIONS:

- 2.1 That Councillors Convery, Ward, Gill and O'Sullivan be appointed as members of the Pensions Committee, with immediate effect, until Annual Council on 16 May 2024 or until a successor is appointed, be agreed.
- 2.2 That Councillor Convery be appointed as Chair and Councillor Ward be appointed as Vice Chair of the Pensions Committee, with immediate effect, until Annual Council on 16 May 2024 or until a successor is appointed, be agreed.
- 2.1 That Councillors Kay and Mackmurdie be appointed as Substitute members of the Pensions Committee, with immediate effect, until Annual Council on 16 May 2024 or until a successor is appointed, be agreed.

OFFICER APPOINTMENTS:

3. APPOINTMENT OF HEAD OF PAID SERVICE

- 3.1. To note that Linzi Roberts-Egan, Chief Executive and Head of Paid Service, will officially leave the council on 30 July 2023, and is taking leave from 15 July onwards.
- 3.2. To note that Stephen Biggs, Corporate Director – Community Wealth Building, will be deputising for the Chief Executive from 15 – 30 July.
- 3.3. To appoint Stephen Biggs, Corporate Director – Community Wealth Building, as Acting Head of Paid Service, with effect from 31 July 2023 until further notice.
- 3.4. To note that the substantive post of Corporate Director – Community Wealth Building, is being covered through the following acting up arrangements with effect from 4 July 2023 until further notice.

Caroline Wilson, Director of Inclusive Economy and Jobs will lead on :
Community Financial Resilience
Corporate Landlord: Facilities Management, Corporate Asset Management,
non-residential Capital Delivery and Futureworks
Corporate Procurement and Supply
Inclusive Economy and Jobs

Karen Sullivan, Director of Planning and Development will lead on:
Climate Change and Transport
New Homes Programme and PMO
Planning and Development
Corporate Health & Safety

RECOMMENDATIONS:

- 3.5. That that Linzi Roberts-Egan, Chief Executive and Head of Paid Service, is officially leaving the council on 30 July 2023, and is taking leave from 15 July onwards be noted.
- 3.6. That Stephen Biggs, Corporate Director – Community Wealth Building, will be deputising for the Chief Executive from 15 – 30 July be noted.
- 3.7. That Stephen Biggs be appointed as Acting Head of Paid Service with effect from 31 July 2023, until further notice, be agreed.
- 3.8. That the acting up arrangements to cover the role of Corporate Director – Community Wealth Building from 4 July until further notice, be noted.

**4. APPOINTMENT OF DIRECTOR OF LAW AND GOVERNANCE /
MONITORING OFFICER**

- 4.1. To appoint Alison Stuart as the Council's Director of Law and Governance / Monitoring Officer, following a selection process led by Personnel Sub-Committee.
- 4.2. To note that, subject to the above, Alison is expected to start in post in October 2023.

RECOMMENDATION:

- 4.3. To appoint Alison Stuart as the Council's Director of Law and Governance and Monitoring Officer, with effect from her contractual start date.

Updated report authorised by:

**Marie Rosenthal
Interim Director of Law and Governance & Monitoring Officer
11 July 2023**

Full Council July 2023 – Motion: Diverse Councils Declaration

Proposed by: Cllr Valerie Bossman-Quarshie

Seconded by: Cllr Sheila Chapman

This Council notes:

- Councillors represent their community, and it is important that they reflect the diversity within their communities, particularly in respect of social class and protected characteristics under the Equality Act (age, disability, gender reassignment, marriage and civil partnership, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief, sex, sexual orientation).
- The work of the Co-operative Party in developing a Declaration for councils aimed at increasing diversity in local government.
- A report by the Fawcett Society and Democratic Club showed that a staggering 95% of local councils are male dominated. This means that only 18 of 382 local councils have achieved at least parity in gender representation.
- The analysis by the Fawcett Society showed that just 36% of the UK's 19,212 councillors are women, which is a similar split to representation of women in the House of Commons, which currently stands at 35%.
- Islington Council are proud to have a diverse group of councillors with the Labour Group consisting of 53% women, with the majority of the Council Executive team being women.
- The Leader of the Council, Cllr Kaya Comer-Schwartz, was elected as Islington's first Black, Jewish woman council leader.
- The standing orders of Islington Labour Group notes that the Council Executive should reflect the diversity of the area represented by the authority as far as possible.

This Council further notes:

- In last year's local elections, most of Islington Labour candidates were women, for a second set of elections in a row.
- In May last year, Islington Labour also had 12% of candidates identifying as LGBTQ+, 20% identifying as having a disability and 47% identifying as coming from Black and Minority Ethnic backgrounds. 55% of candidates identified as coming from a working class background.
- In 2014, Labour's first openly trans councillor, Cllr Osh Gantly, was elected.
- Islington Council was the first Council in London to appoint a Women and Girls Champion.
- The council's open and welcoming culture to all, promoting the highest standards of behaviour and conduct. This is demonstrated through the various training provided for Members when they are first elected and throughout their term in office, as well as making meetings and the role accessible for all councillors, making adjustments where a need has been identified.

- It made a commitment to work towards the standards for member support and development as set out in the LGA Councillor Development Charter and are progressing through the year three process, in which we are currently in year one.
- The Members Allowance Scheme includes a carers allowance paid at London Living Wage, a Broadband Allowance, and a range of other allowances. This was benchmarked against a number of other London Councils.
- Former Islington Labour Councillor Alice Clarke-Perry led the campaign for Parental leave policy for councillors, setting out members' entitlement to maternity, paternity, shared parental and adoption leave.
- Our commitment to demonstrate a duty of care for councillors by:
 - Providing access to the Employee Assistance Programme, a counselling service available to all councillors
 - Having regard for the safety and wellbeing of councillors whenever they are performing their role as outlined in the advice and guidance developed specifically for councillors by Emergency Planning and Health & Safety.
 - Taking a zero tolerance approach to bullying and harassment of members including through social networks

This Council resolves to:

- Adopt The Co-Operative Party's Diverse Councils Declaration to increase diversity in our local government
- Provide a clear public commitment to improving diversity in democracy
- Set out a local Diverse Action Plan ahead of the next local elections, including:
 - Appoint Diversity Ambassadors for each political group on the council to work with each other and local party associations to encourage recruitment of candidates from under-represented groups.
 - Encourage and enable people from under-represented groups to stand for office through the provision of activities such as mentoring and shadowing programmes and information and learning events for people interested in standing as official candidates.
 - Proactive engagement and involvement with local community groups and partner organisations supporting and representing under-represented groups.
 - Encourage all members and candidates to complete a candidates' and councillors' survey distributed at election time.
- Provide flexibility in council business by
 - Regularly reviewing and staggering meeting times
 - Supporting remote attendance at meetings where it is lawful
 - Agreeing recess periods to support councillors with caring or work commitments

- Continue to encourage members to take up allowances and salaries to which they are entitled, particularly any reimbursement for costs of care, so that all members receive fair remuneration for their work and that the role of member is not limited to those who can afford it.
- Ensure that councillors from under-represented groups are represented whenever possible in high profile, high influence roles.

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