



ISLINGTON

For a more equal future

COUNCIL

12 December 2024

SECOND DESPATCH

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- Proposed amendment to Motion 1: Winter Fuel Allowance
- Proposed amendment to Motion 2: Reduce, Reuse, Recycle

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Meeting: Council
Meeting Date: 12 December 2024
Agenda item: 7 – Petition Debate

Subject: Petition response

Substantive response to the ‘Islington Council - Divest Now!’ petition from Cllr Paul Convery (Chair, Pensions Committee) and Cllr Diarmaid Ward (Executive Member for Resources)

Introduction

As the conflict across the Middle East continues, we are horrified by the violence inflicted upon the people of Gaza. We hope for peace in the region and, whilst acknowledging the deep pain felt following the massacre of October 7th 2023, believe Israel should immediately cease the humanitarian catastrophe which has unfolded.

In December 2023, Islington Council unanimously passed a motion calling for a ceasefire and the release of all hostages and political prisoners. We have also supported calls for an embargo on the sale of offensive weapons for this conflict, an investigation by the International Criminal Court into alleged breaches of international law and to begin a political process for permanent peace based on a 2 state solution to the conflict: a viable Palestine and a safe Israel.

The full Council meeting in September received a petition signed by more than 2,000 people. It presents 5 principal requests regarding the Council's pension fund and banking services contract. This statement responds to that petition.

1. **Disclose the Pension Fund's holdings**

Islington's Pension Fund is valued at £2 billion and this generates revenue to pay the pensions of our former employees and safeguards the future pensions of our current staff.

The Pensions Committee must have regard to its fiduciary duty to maximise the financial

return of the fund so it is able to pay the current and future pensions of fund members. Regulations and Statutory Guidance say the Fund may consider non-financial concerns in its investment decisions but these are subject to conditions. Such decisions must not cause significant financial detriment to the Fund and the Committee must be assured that pension scheme members share the ethical concern.

The Pension Fund is a responsible investor and has an investment strategy where "environmental, social and governance considerations are an integral part of the Fund's strategy and objectives". We are committed to full transparency of the Fund's investments and **we shall therefore publish a list** of all the Fund's equity (shares) and bond holdings, quarterly, starting with Q4, 2024.

2. **Divest from companies which are weapons suppliers to the current conflict**

The Fund does not directly own any shares in any companies. Instead we own units of large pooled funds in which multiple other investors are co-owners and these funds are managed at arms length by professional fund managers in a number of financial institutions. We cannot sell shares in specific companies without all other investors and the fund managers' agreement and this is an unlikely outcome.

The Pension Fund's indirectly held pooled equity funds represent nearly half the Fund's total investments. Of these, about half is held on the London Collective Investment Vehicle (LCIV) platform; the other half is held in a "passive" pooled fund managed by Legal and General and is valued at around £460mn. Over the course of the past 3 years, the Pensions Committee has consolidated several holdings into this single fund which tracks the Solastic ESG Paris Aligned Global Equities Index. This means the pooled fund has very low exposure to fossil fuels or to companies that have poor ESG ratings.

The petition names companies that are 'asterisked' in a list published by the American Friends Service Committee (AFSC) at <https://afsc.org/divest> and cited in the petition. As of Q4 2024, the Islington Pension Fund **will not have holdings** in those companies in its LGIM Fund. However, on the LCIV platform, there is one company which is on the AFSC list - Valero Energy. It is a pooled fund held by the LCIV through a further third party manager in its Sustainability Equity Fund (RBC). We have asked the LCIV to explain why a sustainability themed fund contains the USA's largest oil and gas refining company.

3. **Divest from the UNHCHR list of companies**

Under a mandate of the UN Human Rights Council, the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights (UNHCHR) in 2020 listed 112 companies as having commercial interests in the illegal occupation of the Palestinian territories. In early 2024, we identified that we indirectly owned shares of 10 companies on the UNHCHR list worth in total about £2.6 mn. These are held in the ESG Paris Aligned Global Equities Fund

and are companies in the banking, IT, travel and tourism sectors. Our investment has reduced to 9 firms and our exposure is now around £2.4 mn.

Because the Pensions Fund doesn't directly own these shares, the Pensions Committee explored a possible mechanism to "de-pool" our holding in the ESG Paris Aligned Global Equities Fund and to create a customised fund that excluded the 9 companies. The Committee took extensive financial and legal advice and concluded that the **technical risks and cost of doing so was disproportionate** and might be judged unlawful.

Of these 9 companies almost a half of the value is accounted for by 3 travel and tourism companies, AirBnB, Expedia and Booking.com and there is a prospect those companies may become compliant and therefore be removed from the next iteration of the UNHCHR list. If so, the value of our exposed holdings will drop to about £1 million. That's a fiftieth of one percent of the Pension Fund's value.

We shall therefore work with the Local Government Pension Fund Forum (LAPFF) to engage and challenge the legality and probity of those companies' involvement in the Occupied Palestinian Territories. It's worth noting that LAPFF began engagement in 2020 with 17 of the original 117 companies on the UNHCHR list. These 17 are the ones that UK local authority pension funds have holdings in. By 2023, the 17 companies had been reduced to 10 and LAPFF is scheduling further engagement with these.

Local authority pension funds are likely to be significantly restructured very soon. The Government will shortly legislate to pool all the assets of 84 individual LA pension funds into 8 "mega funds". This means that, as a London Borough, all our equities will be consolidated on the LCIV platform by March 2025. Whilst the LCIV will invest our funds in line with our investment strategy it is very unlikely that a single customised fund would survive the consolidation. So, even if we overcame the technical, financial and legal complexities and risks of creating a customised fund, it might last only for a few months before our equities were consolidated into the LCIV pools. However, as we transition into the mega-pool, we will press LCIV to offer us a pooled fund that meets our ethical criteria and does not include controversial companies and will make a *financial* case for this.

4. **Update the Investment Strategy**

The petition asked us to update the investment strategy to say we shall divest from companies that profit from human rights violations. We have **recently revised the strategy** to the maximum extent that we believe is legally possible. The statement now says: "As a responsible institutional investor, the Fund will use its influence to encourage the promotion and protection of human rights around the world. The Fund will regularly review its exposure to companies which raise human rights concerns."

5. Barclays banking services

Islington Council has a banking service contract with Barclays. We used to bank with the Co-op but the Co-op some years ago decided to stop providing services to local authorities. As a result we tendered for a new supplier from amongst the financial institutions that are capable of meeting Islington's requirements. Barclays won the contract. We have discussed a number of Environmental, Social and Governance (ESG) matters directly with Barclays, including two meetings with the Bank's Global Chief Executive.

The contract is up for re-tendering in 2025. The petition calls on us to simply exclude Barclays from the tendering process. We are advised that **there is no lawful basis to exclude Barclays** from the tendering process. However, we are determined to incorporate robust criteria around adherence to human rights, international law and environmental commitments into our tendering process. A cross-party councillors' working group has met to set these criteria.

Response authorised by:

Cllr Paul Convery, Chair of Pensions Committee
Cllr Diarmaid Ward, Executive Member for Finance and Performance

Date: 11 December 2024

Meeting:	Council
Meeting Date:	12 December 2024
Publication:	Open
Council Priority:	Empowering People
Wards:	All
Report of:	Leader of the Council

Subject: Islington Armed Forces Community Covenant – annual update

1. Recommendations

The Council are asked:

- 1.1. To note the activity over the past year to celebrate and support Armed Forces personnel, veterans, and their families.

2. Report summary

- 2.1. Islington Council and its partners signed the Islington Armed Forces Community Covenant in June 2013, and the council backed this up by committing to a package of measures to celebrate and support Forces personnel in the borough. Details are set out at Appendix A and on our [website](#). This report summarises the various ways that Islington has support the armed forces community in the past year.
- 2.2. Over the past year, the Council has led, organised and supported a wide range of activities to celebrate and commemorate the Armed Forces in Islington. And although evidence indicates that the number of ex-Forces personnel in Islington is lower than average, with little demand for support, it is nonetheless important that we demonstrate our commitment and gratitude to veterans by maintaining that package of support should they ever need it.

3. Details

- 3.1. The Armed Forces Covenant is a national agreement which sets out the relationship between the nation, the state and the Armed Forces. It recognises that the whole nation has a moral obligation to members of the Armed Forces and their families and establishes how they should expect to be treated. It applies to both current and ex-Forces personnel and their families, with a view to redressing the disadvantages that the Armed Forces community faces in comparison to other citizens and recognising the sacrifices they have made.
- 3.2. The government has also established the Covenant Fund, with £10 million a year available for projects across the country to support the ambitions of the Armed Forces Covenant.
- 3.3. In addition to the national Covenant, the government has encouraged local authorities, their partners, and military organisations to sign their own Armed Forces Community Covenants, setting out how they will work together to celebrate and support the Armed Forces community within their areas.
- 3.4. The commitments set out in our Armed Forces Covenant send an important message that the Council and its partners recognise and celebrate the achievements and sacrifices of our Armed Forces and can offer practical support to veterans and their families in Islington in times of need to help them adjust to and resettle into civilian life.

Military presence

- 3.5. Islington is home to the Honorary Artillery Company (the oldest military organisation in the UK), and to 1,707 veterans according to the 2021 census.
- 3.6. Islington is home to the Honourable Artillery Company, the second-oldest military organisations in the world. It was established by Royal Charter in 1537 and has occupied its current site in the south of the borough since 1641. The HAC is a registered charity whose purpose is to support the defence of the realm. It supports the HAC Regiment (the oldest regiment in the British Army), a detachment of the City of London Special Constabulary, plus several other charitable activities. The Company consists of 2,500 members, around 400 of whom are actively serving with the HAC regiment or the detachment of Special Constabulary. The remainder are veterans of the HAC Regiment or other military or police services.

Resident population

- 3.7. According to data from the 2021 Census, approximately 1,707 veterans live in Islington. This figure represents a small portion of the local population, with around 1% of Islington residents identified as veterans, compared to 3.8% of the population nationally. This is also below the London average of 1.4% of residents being veterans. Among these, 970 served in the regular armed forces, while 680 were in the reserves.

- 3.8. According to the January 2021 School Census data, there are fewer than 5 service children in Islington schools.

Street population

- 3.9. The Greater London Authority (GLA) publishes data on rough sleeping across London. Information is derived from the Combined Homelessness and Information Network (CHAIN), a multi-agency database, managed by St Mungos, which captures data on people seen rough sleeping in each borough by outreach teams. People are categorised as rough sleeping if they have been encountered by an outreach worker bedded down on the street or in an open space 'not designed for habitation'. The reports do not include 'hidden homeless', for instance, those who are 'sofa surfing'.
- 3.10. Figures from 2023/2024 show that in Islington, 10 people were seen rough sleeping who had been in the armed forces. This is a decrease from 2021/2022 when the figure was 17. This can be seen in Appendix B

Islington Armed Forces Covenant – Summary of commitments

- 3.11. The commitments set out by the Council to honour the Islington Armed Forces Community Covenant focus upon:
- Recognition, celebration and remembrance: championing the Armed Forces, formally marking important events and celebrating achievements and sacrifices
 - Grants for local projects and organisations
 - Support for veterans and their families: financial support, access to council housing, employment and skills support, and help with health and social care needs
- 3.12. An update on activity in each of these areas is set out below.

Championing the Armed Forces

- 3.13. An update on activity in each of these areas is set out below.
- 3.14. Each year, the Council nominates an elected councillor as its Armed Forces Champion. The current champion is Cllr Marian Spall. Her role includes attending meetings of the Youth Organisations in Uniform (YOU) forum and celebration and commemorative events, and championing and supporting Armed Forces and veterans in Islington.

Making and commemorating key events

- 3.15. Key events attended by the Mayor, Leader, or other Members and officers included:

Cllr Heather, Mayor of Islington for 2023/24, Deputy Mayor Cllr Khurana and Mayoress Cllr Tricia Clarke

Date	Who Attended	What was the event
04-Jul-23	Mayor	Islington Veterans' Association Meeting
21-Jul-23	Mayor and Mayoress	Islington Armed Forces Veterans Breakfast Club
10-Sep-23	Mayor	Wreath Laying Ceremony on the 55th anniversary of the unveiling of the Polish Air Force Memorial Plaque
12-Oct-23	Mayor	Rep DL Youth Cadet Certificate Event
16-Oct-23	Mayor and Mayoress	329 (Finsbury) Squadron RAFAC AGM
20-Oct-23	Mayor and Consort	Islington AFVBC
28-Oct-23	Mayor	Islington RBL Poppy Appeal Launch
09-Nov-23	Mayor and Mayoress	ICCS Service of Remembrance
10-Nov-23	Mayor	City Hall Service of Remembrance
12-Nov-23	Mayor and Mayoress, Deputy Mayor and Consort	Islington Green Service of Remembrance
12-Nov-23	Mayor and Mayoress	Spa Green Service of Remembrance
12-Nov-23	Mayor and Mayoress, Deputy Mayor and Consort	Manor Gardens Remembrance Community event
09-Dec-23	Mayor and Mayoress	IVA's annual Christmas lunch

06-Feb-24	Mayor and Mayoress	Islington Veterans' Association AGM
26-Feb-24	Mayor and Mayoress	Lunch at Royal Hospital
15-Mar-24	Mayor and Mayoress	Islington Armed Forces Veterans Breakfast Club
28-Mar-24	Mayor	IVA visit to the Town Hall
18-Apr-24	Mayor and Mayoress	Poppy Appeal Fundraising Presentation
19-Apr-24	Deputy Mayor and Cllr Spall	Islington Armed Forces Veterans Breakfast Club
25-Apr-24	Deputy Mayor and Cllr Jason Jackson	IVA's Gallipoli Day commemoration
Cllr Khurana, Mayor of Islington for 2024/25 and Consort Micky Khurana, Deputy Mayor Cllr Jackson and Consort Tatiana Jackson		
04-Jun-24	Mayor and Consort	Islington Veterans' Association Meeting
06-Jun-24	Mayor and Consort	80th D Day Anniversary wreath laying in the Town Hall
22-Jun-24	Mayor and Consort	IVA D Day Parade
22-Jun-24	Deputy Mayor and Consort	IVA D Day Dinner
24-Jun-24	Mayor	Armed Forces Week Flag Raising
29-Jun-24	Mayor and Consort	Armed Forces Day 2024 - Islington Veterans' Association event
16-Jul-24	Mayor	Cadet Certificate Presentation event

19-Jul-24	Deputy Mayor	Islington Armed Forces and Veterans' Breakfast Club
20-Sep-24	Mayor and Consort	Islington AFVBC
23-Sep-24	Mayor and Consort	Annual General Meeting of 329 (Finsbury) Squadron RAFAC
06-Oct-24	Deputy Mayor	Islington Poppy Appeal fundraiser
20-Oct-24	Mayor and Consort	Remembrance Service and Wreath Laying on the 56th Anniversary of the unveiling of the Polish Air Force Memorial Plaque - wreath required
02-Nov-24	Mayor	Islington Poppy Appeal collection
07-Nov-24	Mayor and Consort	ICCS Service of Remembrance
10-Nov-24	Mayor and Consort; Deputy Mayor and Consort	Remembrance Sunday Commemorations
11-Nov-24	Mayor	Armistice Day Commemorations, followed by refreshments in CR1
07-Dec-24	Deputy Mayor and Consort	IVA Christmas Function
20-Dec-24	Mayor and Consort	Islington AFVBC

Exhibitions and memorials

- 3.16. During the past year, our Libraries and Heritage Service have organised a range of activities to celebrate and commemorate the bravery and sacrifices of the Armed Forces during the two world wars.
- 3.17. Islington Museum has a temporary exhibition 'Our Islington: Art of the Borough' featuring two paintings by refugee artist Käthe Strenitz, who was evacuated from Prague at the beginning of World War II, and painted Islington and King's Cross throughout her career.

- 3.18. Islington Museum also has a permanent display in the museum highlighting the World Wars, spotlighting the home front efforts.
- 3.19. Prior to last year, our programming included:
- 2018 – Museum exhibition: Raids, Rations and Rifles: Islington during the First World War
 - 2016 – Museum exhibition: The Battle of the Somme – Searching for Hugh Victor Hember
 - 2015 – Heritage education project: The Streets They Left Behind Mapping Project
 - 2015 – Heritage education project: Finsbury Rifles in Gallipoli

Grants and Funding

Local Initiatives Fund

- 3.20. The Local Initiatives Fund is a pot of funding available to Islington Councillors to support events and projects in their wards or across Islington. The majority of the funding is allocated to local voluntary sector and community groups. These small amounts of money can make a huge difference to residents and communities.
- 3.21. In 2023-24, Local Initiatives Funding has been awarded to:
- Islington Veterans Association were also awarded £1214.38. This money will be used to host events to recognise and support veterans in Islington in partnership with the council and local businesses. These include events marking;
 - Armed Forces Week and Armed Forces Day (June)
 - Merchant Navy Day and Battle of Britain Day (Sept)
 - Trafalgar Day (Oct)
 - Armistice Day
 - Remembrance Sunday (Nov).
 - They also hold monthly membership meetings, attend other local festivals and launch the Poppy Appeal in October.
 - Funding is also used to pay for an armed forces breakfast, a brass band on Armed Forces Day (24 June 2023), annual insurance, software, newspaper adverts and internet costs.

Islington Community Chest

- 3.22. The Council also works in partnership with the Cripplegate Foundation to provide small grants through the Islington Community Chest.

Armed Forces Community Covenant Grants Scheme

- 3.23. Each year, the Government sets aside £10 million for the Armed Forces Covenant Fund, which supports initiatives that contribute towards the delivery of the Armed Forces Covenant. The Covenant Fund includes a Local Grants Programme, which

awards grants of up to £20,000 for projects that tackle community integration and delivery of local services.

- 3.24. There have been no applications from Islington organisations or for Islington-based projects in recent years. Details about the Covenant Fund, and how to apply for the Local Grants Programme, can be found at <https://www.covenantfund.org.uk/>.

Supporting veterans and their families

Financial support

- 3.25. The Council's Benefits Processing team provides financial support for vulnerable residents facing hardship in the form of Housing Benefit, Council Tax Support, Social Care, and Resident Support Scheme.
- 3.26. There are currently:
- Three residents receiving Housing Benefit
 - Five residents receiving Council Tax Support
 - No veterans or their families have requested support through our Resident Support Scheme over the past year.

Employment and skills

- 3.27. Armed Forces veterans and their families are a priority group for employment support through the Council's iWork team and the new Islington Working partnership. The service records whether a client has links to the Armed Forces when they are registered. Similarly, veterans are also a priority group for our Adult Learning Service. However, neither service has received any requests for support from veterans or their families over the past year.
- 3.28. Islington council Employment teams helped a veteran secure a permanent role in a hospital.

Health and social care needs

- 3.29. Data on whether a client has links to the Armed Forces is not routinely recorded. However, our Adult Social Care service does support some people who were previously in the Armed Forces, although the numbers are extremely low.
- 3.30. Social care records show that there are currently no residents who have an army or war pension with Islington provided social care needs.
- 3.31. Camden and Islington Mental Health Trust refer veterans through two specialist Veterans services, both commissioned by NHS England:
- NHS Veterans' Mental Health Transition, Intervention and Liaison services (TILs)
 - NHS Veterans' Mental Health Complex Treatment Service (CTS)

4. Other options considered and the reasons for recommending this proposal

4.1. Not applicable

5. Key impacts and risks of the proposal

5.1. Not applicable

6. Contribution to the Islington Together 2030 Plan

6.1. The note contributes to the vision to make Islington a fairer place. We believe everyone should have access to the same opportunities, whatever their background or situation.

6.2. Those that have served in the armed forces may require additional needs such as to return to work, and so our services and work aims to support them with their needs.

7. Consultation and community engagement

7.1. The past year has seen several significant anniversaries related to the Armed Forces, over and above the annual commemorations. The Council has played an active role in both planning and attending these important occasions to recognise the achievements and sacrifices of our Armed Forces.

8. Implications

Financial Implications

8.1. The £1,214.38 contribution Islington Council makes to the Islington Veterans Association is part of the Local Initiative Fund Budget of £238,000, part of the wider Voluntary Community Service budget of £2,173,200 which sits within the Community, Strategy and Change directorate.

8.2. There are no financial implications from the above report, and current contributions are within the core funded budget.

8.3. If there are any changes to contributions above the core budget funding, this will need to be agreed in a subsequent business case.

Legal Implications

- 8.4. The Armed Forces Act 2021 introduced a requirement for local authorities to pay due regard to the principles of the Armed Forces Covenant when carrying out specific public functions in the areas of housing, healthcare, and education.
- 8.5. The core principles of the Covenant are that all organisations (as defined in s.343AA (3) of the Armed Forces Act 2006 as amended) should have regard to:
- The unique obligations of, and sacrifices made by, the armed forces.
 - The principle that it is desirable to remove disadvantages arising for service people from membership, or former membership, of the armed forces.
 - The principle that special provision for service people may be justified by the effects on such people of membership, or former

Climate Change and Environmental Implications

- 8.6. Islington Council and its partners signed the Islington Armed Forces Community Covenant in June 2013, and the council backed this up by committing to a package of measures to celebrate and support Forces personnel in the borough.
- 8.7. The report is not procuring any new services, simply summarising the various ways in which LBI has helped armed forces and their families over the last year.

Equalities Impact Assessment

- 8.8. The council must, in the exercise of its functions, have due regard to the need to eliminate discrimination, harassment and victimisation, and to advance equality of opportunity, and foster good relations, between those who share a relevant protected characteristic and those who do not share it (section 149 Equality Act 2010). The council has a duty to have due regard to the need to remove or minimise disadvantages, take steps to meet needs, in particular steps to take account of disabled persons' disabilities, and encourage people to participate in public life. The council must have due regard to the need to tackle prejudice and promote understanding.
- 8.9. An Equalities Impact Assessment Screening was completed on the 11th of November and a full Equalities Impact Assessment is not required in relation to this report, because no negative impact was identified.

9. Timetable for implementation

- 9.1. Not applicable

Appendices:

- Appendix A: Islington Armed Forces Community Covenant

Relevant decisions / reports: N/A

Background papers: N/A

Report approval:

Authorised by: Leader of the Council

Date: 09/12/2024

Responsible Officer: Max Edgington

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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
- Chiring 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



COUNCIL MEETING – 12 DECEMBER 2024

Updated Council Appointments Report

1. APPOINTMENTS TO COUNCIL COMMITTEES AND BOARDS

- (i) To note that Councillor Weekes has stood down from the Corporate Resources and Economy Scrutiny Committee, and to appoint Councillor Nanda as their successor, for the remainder of the municipal year, or until a successor is appointed.
- (ii) To note that Councillor Staff has stood down from the Health, Wellbeing and Adult Social Care Scrutiny Committee, and to appoint Councillor Gallagher as their successor, for the remainder of the municipal year, or until a successor is appointed.
- (iii) To note that Councillor O'Halloran has stood down from the Pensions Board, and to appoint Councillor Gallagher as their successor for the remainder of the municipal year, or until a successor is appointed.
- (iv) To note that Councillor Gill has stood down from the Environment, Climate and Transport Scrutiny Committee, and to appoint Councillor Nanda as their successor for the remainder of the municipal year, or until a successor is appointed.
- (v) To note that Councillor Weekes has stood down as Chair of the Licensing Committee, and to appoint Councillor Staff as their successor for the remainder of the municipal year, or until a successor is appointed.
- (vi) To note that Councillor Chowdhury has stood down from the Employment and Appointments Committee, and to appoint Councillor Gill as their successor for the remainder of the municipal year, or until a successor is appointed.
- (vii) To appoint Councillor O'Halloran to the Employment and Appointments Committee for the remainder of the municipal year, or until a successor is appointed.
- (viii) To appoint Councillor Weekes as a substitute member of the Employment and Appointments Committee for the remainder of the municipal year, or until a successor is appointed.
- (ix) To appoint Councillor O'Halloran as a member and the Chair of the Health and Wellbeing Board for the remainder of the municipal year, or until a successor is appointed.

- (x) To note the vacant Healthwatch Islington post on the Health and Wellbeing Board and to appoint Laura Saksena, Chief Executive of Healthwatch Islington, to the Health and Wellbeing Board for the remainder of the municipal year, or until a successor is appointed.
- (xi) To note that Councillor Weekes has stood down from the Environment, Climate and Transport Scrutiny Committee, and to appoint Councillor Potts as their successor, for the remainder of the municipal year, or until a successor is appointed.
- (xii) To note that Councillor Weekes has stood down as a substitute member of the Children and Young People Scrutiny Committee and that a successor will be appointed;
- (xiii) To note that Councillor Weekes has stood down from the Licensing Committee, and to appoint Councillor Turan as their successor, for the remainder of the municipal year, or until a successor is appointed.
- (xiv) To note the vacancy on the Grievance Appeals Committee and that a member will be appointed;
- (xv) To note the vacancy on the Investigating and Disciplinary Committee and that a member will be appointed;

RECOMMENDATION:

- (i) That Councillor Nanda be appointed to the Corporate Resources and Economy Scrutiny Committee for the remainder of the municipal year, or until a successor is appointed.
- (ii) That Councillor Gallagher be appointed to the Health, Wellbeing and Adult Social Care Scrutiny Committee for the remainder of the municipal year, or until a successor is appointed.
- (iii) That Councillor Gallagher be appointed to the Pensions Board for the remainder of the municipal year, or until a successor is appointed.
- (iv) That Councillor Nanda be appointed to the Environment, Climate and Transport Scrutiny Committee for the remainder of the municipal year, or until a successor is appointed.
- (v) That Councillor Staff be appointed as the Chair of the Licensing Committee for the remainder of the municipal year, or until a successor is appointed.
- (vi) That Councillor Gill be appointed to the Employment and Appointments Committee for the remainder of the municipal year, or until a successor is appointed.
- (vii) That Councillor O'Halloran be appointed to the Employment and Appointments Committee for the remainder of the municipal year, or until a successor is appointed.

- (viii) That Councillor Weekes be appointed as a substitute member of the Employment and Appointments Committee for the remainder of the municipal year, or until a successor is appointed.
- (ix) That Councillor O'Halloran be appointed to the Health and Wellbeing Board, and be appointed as Chair of the Board, for the remainder of the municipal year, or until a successor is appointed.
- (x) That Laura Saksena, Chief Executive of Healthwatch Islington, be appointed to the Health and Wellbeing Board for the remainder of the municipal year, or until a successor is appointed.
- (xi) That Councillor Potts be appointed to the Environment, Climate and Transport Scrutiny Committee for the remainder of the municipal year, or until a successor is appointed.
- (xii) To note that Councillor Weekes has stood down as a substitute member of the Children and Young People Scrutiny Committee and that a successor will be appointed;
- (xiii) That Councillor Turan be appointed to the Licensing Committee for the remainder of the municipal year, or until a successor is appointed.
- (xiv) To note the vacancy on the Grievance Appeals Committee and that a member will be appointed;
- (xv) To note the vacancy on the Investigating and Disciplinary Committee and that a member will be appointed;

2. APPOINTMENTS TO OUTSIDE BODIES

- (i) To appoint Councillor O'Halloran to the London Councils Leaders' Committee;
- (ii) To appoint Councillor O'Halloran as a council appointee to the Local Government Association General Assembly;
- (iii) To appoint Councillor O'Halloran as the council appointee to Central London Forward;
- (iv) To appoint Councillor O'Halloran as the council appointee to Dame Alice Owens School Foundation Advisory Committee;
- (v) To note that the Camden and Islington NHS Foundation Trust has ceased to exist and has been replaced by the North London NHS Foundation Trust. The Council may appoint an Executive Member representative to the Board of the Trust and this appointment will be formalised at the next Executive meeting.

RECOMMENDATION:

- (i) That Councillor O'Halloran be appointed to the London Councils Leaders' Committee for the remainder of the municipal year;

- (ii) That Councillor O'Halloran be appointed to the Local Government Association General Assembly for the remainder of the municipal year;
- (iii) That Councillor O'Halloran be appointed as the council appointee to Central London Forward until May 2026;
- (iv) That Councillor O'Halloran be appointed as the council appointee to Dame Alice Owens School Foundation Advisory Committee for the remainder of the municipal year;
- (v) To note that the Executive will make an appointment to the North London NHS Foundation Trust.

3. TERM OF OFFICE OF INDEPENDENT PERSONS AND CO-OPTTEES

- (i) To note that the Independent Persons appointed for Standards matters, and the Independent Co-Opted Members of the Audit and Risk Committee, were appointed for a term of office expiring on 31 December 2024.
- (ii) The Council has re-opened nominations for these positions and is in the process of evaluating the applications received.
- (iii) To allow for a full recruitment process to be carried out to these positions, the Council is asked to approve an extension to the terms of office of the current postholders until the end of the municipal year, or until successors are appointed.

RECOMMENDATION:

- (i) That the terms of office of the Independent Persons appointed for Standards matters, and the Independent Co-Opted Members of the Audit and Risk Committee, be extended to the municipal year, or until successors are appointed.

COUNCIL MEETING – 12 DECEMBER 2024

AMENDMENTS TO MOTIONS

Proposed Amendment to Motion 1: Winter Fuel Allowance

Amendment moved by: Cllr Diarmaid Ward

This Council notes:

- With deep concern the removal of automatic Winter Fuel Payments for those not on mean-tested benefits. ~~Millions of Pensioners, including many in Islington, who should be on, or just miss out on qualifying, means-tested benefits are at risk as a result of this measure.~~
- Islington Council's campaign to save the Household Support Fund, which the Council has used to support low-income pensioners.
- The Labour government's commitment to provide £1 billion for the continuation of the Household Support Fund in the October 2024 budget.
- At the October 2024 Executive Meeting, Islington Council committed to helping pensioners who are not in receipt of pension credit but who are in receipt of other low-income benefits of housing benefit or council tax support with an award of £300.
- ~~That it is predicted that energy prices are set to rise and the change of policy could affect the health of two million pensioners (source: Age UK).~~
- The energy price cap will rise by 1% to £1,738 in the first quarter of 2025, and is expected to fall by 1% in the second quarter of 2025.
- Pensioners living in Islington are automatically eligible for the SHINE service whereby service users can get energy advice on how to reduce energy usage, food bank vouchers, fuel vouchers, water discounts, installation of small energy saving measures through the Energy Doctor service, access to retrofit grant schemes to install insulation measures (for owner occupiers and private rented sector) and boiler servicing and repairs (for low-income owner occupiers).
- The Council has provided financial support over the last three years to enable additional provision of warm spaces over the winter months.

- According to Caroline Abrahams CBE, Charity Director at Age UK: "We strongly oppose the means-testing of Winter Fuel Payment (WFP) because our initial estimate is that as many as two million pensioners who badly need the money to stay warm this winter will not receive it and will be in trouble as a result – yet at the other end of the spectrum well-off older people will scarcely notice the difference – a social injustice."
- The winter fuel payment was introduced by the Labour government under Tony Blair's in 1997, and expanded to all pensioners from 2000. However, after the last 14 years of Tory austerity, the current Labour government has had to make difficult decisions to plug the ~~The reason given by this Labour government for removing automatic Winter Fuel Payments is a~~ £22bn funding black hole. ~~but HMRC has admitted it is unable to recover £19bn unpaid tax.~~
- The State of Equalities in Islington 2023 report, states that 34% of Islington's 60+ population are living in income deprived households. This is the 4th highest proportion of people over 60 living in income deprived households relative to all other London Boroughs and the 5th highest nationally.
- The Government has written to all pensioners in receipt of Housing Benefit who are potentially eligible for Pension Credit to encourage them to claim, something which the last Conservative government failed to do.
- The Labour Government has continued the Pension triple lock. The state pension also increased by £900 this year, and is set to increase by over £400 in 2025/26.

This Council further notes:

- That through the SHINE programme it has been endeavouring to reduce fuel poverty and help people stay warm and healthy. However, as the State of Equalities in Islington 2023 report states, "we know there is more we [the council] can do to support this highly valued group."
- The older persons discount on council tax bills which the council retained despite the financial challenges we face, meaning all pensioners receive a minimum £100 off their council tax bill.
- Despite The Labour government's difficult decision to end universal winter fuel payments, this council has been driving take up of pensioner benefits like pension credit for several years. Islington pensioner households claim £2.75m in pension credit, which increases to £3.7m of additional income when factoring in other benefits and awards helped to claim. ~~targeting of pensioners as unfair and unnecessary and strongly opposes the continuation of austerity.~~
- This year, the council piloted a data-driven Attendance Allowance campaign for pensioner households, resulting in 69 successful claims and an additional £320k in annual benefits. The estimated lifetime value of these claims is £2.1m, with more households being assisted.
- Our IMAX team helped residents claim £6.2m of annual benefits last financial year and this year we are on course to top that figure. This included supporting

878 pensioner households in 2023/24 and 1,302 pensioner households in 2024/25 to date.

This Council resolves to:

- ~~Request the Council Leader to w~~Write to the Government Chancellor of the Exchequer and the Prime Minister indicating the council's concern regarding the removal of Islington's strong belief that automatic Winter Fuel Payments and urge they should be reinstated, as soon as it is economically viable.
- ~~Ask the Council Leader to w~~Write to both all Islington MPs, asking them to commit their public support to a review of the reinstatement of the winter fuel payments where economically viable, and highlight the range of support provided by the council to continue support pensioners in low-income households who may be affected by the decision.
- Continue to Work to promote the take up of Pension Credit to Islington residents through our brilliant IMAX team ahead of the 21st December deadline.

The amended motion would read as follows:

Amended Motion 1: Winter Fuel Allowance

This Council notes:

- With deep concern the removal of automatic Winter Fuel Payments for those not on mean-tested benefits.
- Islington Council's campaign to save the Household Support Fund, which the Council has used to support low-income pensioners.
- The Labour government's commitment to provide £1 billion for the continuation of the Household Support Fund in the October 2024 budget.
- At the October 2024 Executive Meeting, Islington Council committed to helping pensioners who are not in receipt of pension credit but who are in receipt of other low-income benefits of housing benefit or council tax support with an award of £300.
- The energy price cap will rise by 1% to £1,738 in the first quarter of 2025, and is expected to fall by 1% in the second quarter of 2025.
- Pensioners living in Islington are automatically eligible for the SHINE service whereby service users can get energy advice on how to reduce energy usage, food bank vouchers, fuel vouchers, water discounts, installation of small energy saving measures through the Energy Doctor service, access to retrofit grant schemes to install insulation measures (for owner occupiers and private rented sector) and boiler servicing and repairs (for low-income owner occupiers).
- The Council has provided financial support over the last three years to enable additional provision of warm spaces over the winter months.

- According to Caroline Abrahams CBE, Charity Director at Age UK: "We strongly oppose the means-testing of Winter Fuel Payment (WFP) because our initial estimate is that as many as two million pensioners who badly need the money to stay warm this winter will not receive it and will be in trouble as a result – yet at the other end of the spectrum well-off older people will scarcely notice the difference – a social injustice."
- The winter fuel payment was introduced by the Labour government under Tony Blair's in 1997, and expanded to all pensioners from 2000. However, after the last 14 years of Tory austerity, the current Labour government has had to make difficult decisions to plug the £22bn funding black hole.
- The State of Equalities in Islington 2023 report, states that 34% of Islington's 60+ population are living in income deprived households. This is the 4th highest proportion of people over 60 living in income deprived households relative to all other London Boroughs and the 5th highest nationally.
- The Government has written to all pensioners in receipt of Housing Benefit who are potentially eligible for Pension Credit to encourage them to claim, something which the last Conservative government failed to do.
- The Labour Government has continued the Pension triple lock. The state pension also increased by £900 this year, and is set to increase by over £400 in 2025/26.

This Council further notes:

- That through the SHINE programme it has been endeavouring to reduce fuel poverty and help people stay warm and healthy. However, as the State of Equalities in Islington 2023 report states, "we know there is more we [the council] can do to support this highly valued group."
- The older persons discount on council tax bills which the council retained despite the financial challenges we face, meaning all pensioners receive a minimum £100 off their council tax bill.
- Despite The Labour government's difficult decision to end universal winter fuel payments, this council has been driving take up of pensioner benefits like pension credit for several years. Islington pensioner households claim £2.75m in pension credit, which increases to £3.7m of additional income when factoring in other benefits and awards helped to claim.
- This year, the council piloted a data-driven Attendance Allowance campaign for pensioner households, resulting in 69 successful claims and an additional £320k in annual benefits. The estimated lifetime value of these claims is £2.1m, with more households being assisted.
- Our IMAX team helped residents claim £6.2m of annual benefits last financial year and this year we are on course to top that figure. This included supporting 878 pensioner households in 2023/24 and 1,302 pensioner households in 2024/25 to date.

This Council resolves to:

- Write to the Government indicating the council's concern regarding the removal of automatic Winter Fuel Payments and urge they should be reinstated, as soon as it is economically viable.
 - Write to both Islington MPs, asking them to commit their public support to a review of the reinstatement of the winter fuel payments where economically viable, and highlight the range of support provided by the council to continue support pensioners in low-income households who may be affected by the decision.
 - Continue to promote the take up of Pension Credit to Islington residents through our brilliant IMAX team ahead of the 21st December deadline.
-

Proposed Amendment to Motion 2 – Reduce, Reuse, Recycle

Amendment moved by: Cllr Rowena Champion

This Council notes:

- In June 2019, Islington Council declared a climate emergency and committed to working towards a target of net zero carbon by 2030.
- ~~For 2022/2023 the average Islington household produced 350.1kg of waste every year, of which 27.7% is recycled, the lowest rate for fifteen years. Two thirds of all the carbon emissions relating to Islington residents and businesses, 1.4m tonnes, are related to the manufacture, transport, consumption and disposal of consumer goods outside Islington.~~
- For 2023/2024 the average Islington household produced 331.4kg of waste that was not recycled every year, Islington's lowest figure, and recycled 30.4%, which is better than the average for NLWA Boroughs and for all inner London Boroughs, but we can and should do better.
- Islington Council has a target of recycling 40 per cent of the household waste it collects and 75% of the commercial waste by 2030.
- Research from the LGA and YouGov found that 71 per cent of people believe supermarkets and retailers use too much packaging and that 85 per cent of people think companies should be required by Government to reduce the amount of packaging used.
- That our efforts to increase recycling rates and reduce waste have included a wide range of initiatives including a £2m investment in improving recycling on estates, making recycling sites more accessible, expansion of food waste collections to all purpose built blocks of flats, delivering a food waste recycling campaign, trials to improve recycling, including food waste, for flats above shops and a programme of community reuse and repair events.

This Council further notes:

- The Packaging Extended Producer Responsibility (EPR) will see manufacturers charged a levy for the cost of recovering packaging material from 2026, with a goal to reduce unnecessary packaging.
- That former Islington Labour Councillor, Mary Creagh, the new Environment Secretary, announced that the delivery of the EPR system will now be “co-produced” by producers and manufacturers.
- Lots of London boroughs have moved to ending weekly non-recyclable waste collections. ~~with Lambeth recently approving fortnightly collections to meet net zero targets.~~

- ~~The 15~~ Many London boroughs that have implemented fortnightly collections to meet targets set in the Mayor of London's environment strategy — which all London councils are signed up to — ~~saw~~ have seen increases in their recycling rates.
- Research and trials by WRAP have found that weekly separate food waste collections alongside fortnightly residual collections have been shown on average to collect more food waste than those aligned to weekly residual collections.
- That the Council introduced a scheme for charging for garden waste, for £75 a year.
- As a Labour-run Council we have implemented a Reduction and Recycling plan 2023-2025 to 'explore the feasibility of collecting residual waste fortnightly, with weekly collections of recycling, food and garden waste'.
- The Labour manifesto commitment, which outlined our pledge to invest in new recycling facilities on estates, which has seen 40 recycling site improvement projects since the 2022 election.

This Council resolves to:

- Explore the possibility to scope a trial for fortnightly collection of non-recyclable residual waste in selected neighbourhoods to measure impact on recycling and savings made.
 - ~~Work with the Local Government Association and request~~ Work with our new Labour Government to defend and strengthen the Packaging Extended Producer Responsibility scheme, the Deposit Return Scheme, simpler recycling, a ban on disposable vapes, and developing a circular economy.
 - Work with the Local Government Association, NLWA and constituent Boroughs and request that as part of the government's commitment to moving towards a circular economy, EPR is expanded so that it creates economic incentives for producers to design out waste and use materials that are recyclable.
 - Publish a review on the ~~impact~~ implementation of a subscription service for ~~of charging for the collection of~~ green waste, including ~~green collection rates and unintended consequences like dumping and burning.~~ any proposals for improving the service.
 - Continue working with the Government to secure funding to fulfil the Islington Labour manifesto commitment to have food waste recycling services to all domestic properties provided by our Labour-run Council.
-

The amended motion would read as follows:

Amended Motion 2 – Reduce, Reuse, Recycle

This Council notes:

- In June 2019, Islington Council declared a climate emergency and committed to working towards a target of net zero carbon by 2030.
- For 2023/2024 the average Islington household produced 331.4kg of waste that was not recycled every year, Islington's lowest figure, and recycled 30.4%, which is better than the average for NLWA Boroughs and for all inner London Boroughs, but we can and should do better.
- Islington Council has a target of recycling 40 per cent of the household waste it collects and 75% of the commercial waste by 2030.
- Research from the LGA and YouGov found that 71 per cent of people believe supermarkets and retailers use too much packaging and that 85 per cent of people think companies should be required by Government to reduce the amount of packaging used.
- That our efforts to increase recycling rates and reduce waste have included a wide range of initiatives including a £2m investment in improving recycling on estates, making recycling sites more accessible, expansion of food waste collections to all purpose built blocks of flats, delivering a food waste recycling campaign, trials to improve recycling, including food waste, for flats above shops and a programme of community reuse and repair events.

This Council further notes:

- The Packaging Extended Producer Responsibility (EPR) will see manufacturers charged a levy for the cost of recovering packaging material from 2026, with a goal to reduce unnecessary packaging.
- That former Islington Labour Councillor, Mary Creagh, the new Environment Secretary, announced that the delivery of the EPR system will now be “co-produced” by producers and manufacturers.
- Lots of London boroughs have moved to ending weekly non-recyclable waste collections.
- Many London boroughs that have implemented fortnightly collections to meet targets set in the Mayor of London's environment strategy — which all London councils are signed up to — have seen increases in their recycling rates.
- Research and trials by WRAP have found that weekly separate food waste collections alongside fortnightly residual collections have been shown on average to collect more food waste than those aligned to weekly residual collections.
- That the Council introduced a scheme for charging for garden waste, for £75 a year.

- As a Labour-run Council we have implemented a Reduction and Recycling plan 2023-2025 to 'explore the feasibility of collecting residual waste fortnightly, with weekly collections of recycling, food and garden waste'.
- The Labour manifesto commitment, which outlined our pledge to invest in new recycling facilities on estates, which has seen 40 recycling site improvement projects since the 2022 election.

This Council resolves to:

- Explore the possibility to scope a trial for fortnightly collection of non-recyclable residual waste in selected neighbourhoods to measure impact on recycling and savings made.
 - Work with our new Labour Government to defend and strengthen the Packaging Extended Producer Responsibility scheme, the Deposit Return Scheme, simpler recycling, a ban on disposable vapes, and developing a circular economy.
 - Work with the Local Government Association, NLWA and constituent Boroughs and request that as part of the government's commitment to moving towards a circular economy, EPR is expanded so that it creates economic incentives for producers to design out waste and use materials that are recyclable.
 - Publish a review on the implementation of a subscription service for the collection of green waste, including any proposals for improving the service.
 - Continue working with the Government to secure funding to fulfil the Islington Labour manifesto commitment to have food waste recycling services to all domestic properties provided by our Labour-run Council.
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