

LONDON BOROUGH OF ISLINGTON
COUNCIL MEETING - 21 SEPTEMBER 2017

MINUTES OF PROCEEDINGS

At the meeting of the Council held at Council Chamber, Town Hall, Upper Street, N1 2UD on 21 September 2017 at 7.30 pm.

Councillors present:

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

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

153 **MINUTES**

RESOLVED:

That the minutes of the Council meeting on 29 June 2017 be confirmed as a correct record and the Mayor be authorised to sign them.

154 **DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

The Mayor advised that all members of the Council had a disclosable pecuniary interest in Motion 2 'End the Public Sector Pay Pinch'. The Monitoring Officer had granted a dispensation to all members to allow them to speak and vote on the motion.

As members of the GMB Union had an additional personal interest in the motion, the Mayor asked that members of the GMB Union declare their interest before speaking on the motion.

155 MAYORAL ANNOUNCEMENTS

(i) Apologies for Absence

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors Doolan, Diner, Kaseki and Spall.

(ii) Order of Business

No changes were proposed to the order of business.

(iii) Declaration of Discussion Items

None.

(iv) Mayor's Announcements

The Mayor advised that she had attended many great events over the summer months. The Mayor highlighted the Angel Canal Festival, and thanked the organisers who had worked hard to make the event a success. The Mayor was pleased that the festival would continue in future years.

The Mayor had attended the Islington in Bloom awards ceremony the previous week. The Mayor said that it was important to celebrate the work of the local community to make the borough greener, especially as there was so little green space in Islington. The Mayor also noted the recent Eid Al Adha celebration at the Town Hall, which was very well attended. The Mayor thanked the local Muslim community, who had generously donated food for the evening.

The Mayor had been pleased to host a celebration for one of the council's longest serving officers, Maureen Collins, who had retired after 50 years of caring for Islington's elderly. The Mayor thanked Maureen for her dedication to the borough.

The Mayor had also been pleased to host a Thank You Tea for staff in recognition of their hard work following the Grenfell Tower fire. The Mayor commented that staff in Housing were working hard to reassure residents and to make sure that the council's housing stock was safe. The Mayor also thanked Councillor Diarmaid Ward, the Executive Member for Housing and Development, for his hard work.

The Mayor reminded all members that the Remembrance Sunday Parade and Inter-Faith Service would be taking place on Sunday 12 November. The Mayor also announced that the Mayor's Annual Charity Dinner would be taking place on Tuesday 5 December.

(v) Length of Speeches

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

156 LEADER'S ANNOUNCEMENTS

Councillor Watts thanked the Mayor for her work in representing the borough at many events held over the summer.

Councillor Watts advised that the housing crisis was the most pressing issue affecting the borough, and a priority of the council was to build more genuinely affordable housing.

Councillor Watts said that the housing crisis was ruining lives, and commented that residents at his most recent ward surgery had the worst set of housing cases he had ever known. Given that Islington had 10,000 residents in serious housing need, Councillor Watts was particularly concerned that the Mount Pleasant site had been sold for 565% of what the site was valued at when Royal Mail was privatised and expressed disappointed that a public asset could be undervalued so significantly, as the proceeds from a more accurate sale value could have been used to fund essential public services. Councillor Watts was also disappointed that the residents of Clerkenwell had been denied much needed new affordable housing at the site. Councillor Watts noted a study that indicated that the site could have included 75% more affordable housing and still be a viable commercial housing scheme. Councillor Watts said that the former Mayor of London, Boris Johnson, had denied hundreds of people a home by only agreeing to a minimal amount of affordable housing on the site.

Councillor Watts said that difficult conversations were needed about where to site genuinely affordable council housing, but was clear that developing more council housing was a priority. Councillor Watts said that the council would work to solve the housing crisis by tackling rogue private landlords, making sure people with disabilities and learning difficulties had access to secure sheltered housing, and building more council housing.

Councillor Watts was proud that in 2017/18 the council would deliver more new council homes than in any year over the previous 30 years. Councillor Watts emphasised that the current Labour administration was elected on a manifesto which prioritised delivering council housing and that is what the council would focus on.

Councillor Watts also spoke of the issues affecting EU citizens. Councillor Watts said that the government was playing politics with the lives of the 30,000 EU citizens residing in the borough. Councillor Watts thanked Councillor Comer-Schwartz for her work in supporting EU citizens, helping them to access legal advice and support. Councillor Watts said it was not good enough for the government negotiate with Brussels on the lives of our European neighbours and friends. Councillor Watts called on the government to act now to guarantee the rights of EU citizens after Brexit and said that the council would continue to campaign on this issue over the coming months and years.

Councillor Watts said that although he was a supporter of freedom of movement and cultural exchange, he recognised that 20,000 FC Köln fans arriving in the borough for the club's Europa League fixture with Arsenal was problematic. Councillor Watts thanked council staff for quickly cleaning up Highbury Fields and other areas. Councillor Watts said that the vast majority of FC Köln fans were not violent, however there were some instances of anti-social behaviour which were not acceptable. Councillor Watts was very grateful to Arsenal FC for agreeing to meet the council's additional costs associated with the clean-up.

Councillor Watts commented on the recent allegations of historic abuse of children in the care of Islington Council. Councillor Watts said that the abuse of children in the council's care was the biggest single failing in the council's history. Councillor Watts would re-iterate the council's apology to the victims of the abuse at the next meeting of the Executive. There was no doubt that the abuse was real and that the victims of the abuse were still suffering as a result. Councillor Watts said that the Executive would also agree a partial re-opening of the White Report review in light of the allegations made in the Islington Gazette about a former Mayor of Islington. Councillor Watts said that it was important to the victims of abuse that justice is done and is seen to be done.

157 PETITIONS

Councillor Greening presented a petition on behalf of residents of the Harvist Estate objecting to the new housing development.

Alastair Hazell presented a petition objecting to the use of barbeques on Highbury Fields.

158 QUESTIONS FROM MEMBERS OF THE PUBLIC

Question a) from Margaret Wolfe to Councillor Burgess, Executive Member for Health and Social Care:

Please inform us if you are aware that, as a consequence of this Council's decision to close Sotheby Mews Day Centre, a charge of indirect age discrimination and indirect disability discrimination could be brought against the Council because you have requested Highbury Roundhouse to accommodate the users of Sotheby Mews Day Centre at the new multi-purpose Highbury Roundhouse Community Centre on Ronalds Road; a location which for the majority of our users is impossible to access because the consequences of their age or disability. This is not the case for the majority of other users of the new Highbury Roundhouse Centre.

Reply:

Thank you for your question. In 2011, Age UK decided that they were going to pull out of providing services at the Sotheby Mews Day Centre. The Highbury Roundhouse Association agreed to provide services for older people at Sotheby Mews, but this was always going to be an interim arrangement.

The arrangement for HRA to run these services while the site at Ronald's Road was being built was a temporary solution for service users at both Sotheby Mews and Ronald's Road; indeed, approximately 15 clients of the old Highbury Roundhouse Centre made the move to Sotheby Mews. HRA were provided with funding under the proviso that this funding would move with the provider from the Sotheby Mews site to Highbury Roundhouse's new site at Ronald's Road when that was ready.

We have all been working very hard to ensure that services are relocated to Ronald's Road. The lunch club will continue, it will be as it is now, but it will be able to expand because the space at Ronald's Road is bigger. I can refute a rumour that there will be no kitchen at Ronald's Road, there will be.

We are working to resolve the issue of transport although I understand we haven't quite cracked that one yet. I will finish by endorsing the words of Councillor Watts about housing. Earlier this week I had the case of a family of six, two adults and four children, sharing a flat with one double and one single room. We cannot allow this kind of housing to continue, and I support this council's priority for housing. Councillor Ward will be saying more on this later.

However, I can assure you all that one of my major priorities is to ensure that your services continue, because they are wonderful services. I promise I will do all I can to make sure they continue.

Supplementary question:

I would like to give a short example of indirect disability discrimination. Sotheby Mews Day Centre has a very popular art room. At Sotheby Mews this is on the ground floor. At the new

centre it will be on the first floor. The majority of Sotheby Mews users cannot use of the stairs; they will have to use the lift. The majority of the general public, however, will be able to use the stairs. This difference between these two groups raises a serious question. In case of a fire, how would mobility impaired users evacuate from the first floor room?

Reply:

Thank you Margaret. I do not believe that moving services from one location to another is age discrimination or disability discrimination. With regard to the art room, this will be fully safety compliant, and I am sure that all of the points you raised will be covered. The building will be built well, and will not present a risk to people with disabilities.

Question b) from Jackie Noone to Councillor Ward, Executive Member for Housing and Development:

We have been told by Janet Burgess, that no plans have been made for the Sotheby Mews site, despite an Islington media centre release to the contrary.

Why have no innovative options been considered to support both social housing and continued use of the community centre? For example, the front car park could be used for housing and also keep the centre in use.

Reply:

Thank you very much for your question. The first thing to say is that this council administration is dedicated to delivering more genuinely affordable housing; it is the right thing to do. But, we do appreciate that this change will affect the users of Sotheby Mews. I can assure you, and the other users, that the services are moving to a brand new centre at Highbury Roundhouse. We are working very hard to make that happen, and we are meeting with Highbury Roundhouse next week.

Although there is the intention to look at the development of social housing on the site once the centre is closed, there is no viable proposal at the moment. We will of course consult residents prior to any planning application. Unfortunately, providing the maximum number of genuinely affordable homes and continuing to provide services at the site is not possible. We are in a housing crisis and we must deliver as much genuinely affordable housing as possible. But, if we can achieve this, whilst also delivering a brand new Highbury Roundhouse with existing services continuing, then that is a good outcome, and we are working very hard to make that happen.

Supplementary question:

Thank you for your response. The users of Sotheby Mews Community Centre do not object to social housing. We commend the council for looking at this issue. But, will you investigate solutions that will enable the Sotheby Mews lifeline community centre to remain open, and if so, if housing can co-exist on the Sotheby Mews site?

Reply:

Madam, I believe that there is a solution that will benefit everybody. We can build genuinely affordable social housing on the Sotheby Mews site, and the services that exist there can move to a brand new centre, and I will work with you to help make that happen.

Question c) from John Dear to Councillor Ward, Executive Member for Housing and Development:

Can the Councillors explain why the actual users of Sotheby Mews Day Centre were not consulted about its closure and why no mention of closure of Sotheby Mews had been in evidence until Feb this year when the "New" Highbury Roundhouse received further funding from Islington Council; particularly as residents and associations close to the New Highbury Roundhouse have been engaged since 2011. Was this a quick budgetary "kneejerk", a glaring mistake or lack of respect to the elderly users?

Reply:

Thank you very much for your question. As Councillor Burgess has already said, when the council commissioned the Highbury Roundhouse Association to provide services to older people from the Sotheby Mews site, this was on the proviso that it was an interim arrangement, and the services would move with Highbury Roundhouse Association, back to the new site.

We are sorry that this hasn't been as well communicated as it should have been. It was hoped that the Highbury Roundhouse Association would engage with service users and communicate this change, and also explain the opportunities here, the exciting and energetic new opportunities presented by a brand new site. We do believe in our priority to deliver more genuinely affordable housing, especially given the housing crisis that we face. As Councillor Watts pointed out earlier on, there are 10,000 people in dire need. However, we can achieve that, whilst also ensuring that the services from Sotheby Mews move to a brand new centre.

Supplementary question:

Thanks for your response. The users are appalled that they haven't been consulted about these changes, and they should have been. Will you commit to come and visit Sotheby Mews and actually learn what we value about the site?

Reply:

Absolutely, sir. I have already been to Sotheby Mews and I would visit again.

Question d) from Hannah Staab to Councillor Greening, Chair of the Policy and Performance Scrutiny Committee and the Pensions Sub-Committee:

I am a member of the group Fossil Free Islington. We're part of a wider campaign calling on public and private institutions to freeze new investments in fossil fuels, and divest from direct ownership or co-mingled funds which include fossil fuels within 5 years. This is vital to protect the pension fund from the carbon bubble and to send a strong public statement that the world is rapidly moving away from fossil fuels and towards a greener economy.

We appreciate that Islington pensions sub-committee has made some steps towards reducing the carbon footprint of the pension fund, in particular moving passive equities investments into low carbon funds. Please can you provide an update on the current status of this decarbonisation process - has this money been moved? What are your plans to further reduce the pension fund's exposure to climate risk and what concrete targets do you have for the coming year?

Reply:

Thank you for your question. The Pensions Fund has made a commitment to reduce its exposure to carbon intensive companies and assets and decided to change both the UK equity index benchmark for the Fund's internally managed passive equities and also the

global equity index benchmark for externally-managed passive assets, to low carbon variants of the standard index. As a result of these changes, the Fund has a very much lower carbon footprint than a 'normal' equity portfolio, and therefore a low carbon footprint at the Total Fund level.

These changes have enabled us reduce the carbon footprint on equities by 45%. However, we are now looking at the other assets the fund holds, for example property, in order to similarly investigate how the carbon footprint can be further reduced.

Supplementary question:

Thank you. Other London boroughs including Waltham Forest and Southwark have fully divested from fossil fuels. Are you willing to meet with your counterpart at Southwark Council by the end of this year to discuss how they are putting their policy into practice?

Reply:

I am certainly happy to meet with colleagues in Southwark and Waltham Forest. The issue I think where we differ from the divestment campaign is that we think there is some value in engaging with oil companies, for example, in order to get them to change their behaviour. We are also reducing our financial risk by moving away from those companies, and I think we are having the effect that the campaign wants to see, but I am not personally convinced, and the Sub-Committee is not convinced, that simply exiting the deal and allowing supporters, for example, of President Trump to be the owners of these organisations will actually result in a positive difference. But the example of Southwark that you cited is certainly of interest to us, and I would be happy to meet them.

Question e) from Roderik Gonggrijp to Councillor Webbe, Executive Member for Environment and Transport:

How many metres of protected cycle lanes has Islington Council installed since May 2014?

Reply:

Thank you for this question, it is very important. Islington is a pro-cycling borough. We have done a great deal in recent years to improve cycle safety; we are the first borough to implement the 20 miles an hour limit; we have campaigned for the removal of some very dangerous gyratories at Archway, Old Street, Highbury Corner, Kings Cross and Nags Head; and we have recently completed works to open up Archway to the public, to make it much safer for pedestrians and much safer for cyclists. We want more people to cycle, and we won't rest until every road is safe. We stand with those working hard for change.

We are working with Transport for London, who hold the funds for cycling in London. We are actively working for safer cycle routes, we want people to cycle away from dangerous roads, away from the main dangerous roads, and cycle on quieter roads. We are working hard to improve those around accident hotspots and sensitive junctions. In terms of actually how much segregated protected cycle lane we have installed since May 2014, we have installed five kilometres of cycle quiet-way, including 170 metres of widened segregated cycle lanes, and 20 metres of fully segregated lanes. We have also made Owen Street, a private road by Goswell Road, legally open to be used by cyclists and pedestrians.

We've also got further measures in the pipeline, including three new footway extensions to allow us to move the give way line at junctions and improve the position of waiting motor vehicles, and we also have many more cycle routes in the pipeline, including around Old Street and Clerkenwell, where we want to make those areas fully safe as well. We are

working hard with our neighbours, working hard with Transport for London, working hard with the Mayor of London to attract the necessary resources, and to really realise our ambitions we are working with Cycle Islington as well.

Supplementary question:

Thank you Madam Mayor. In light of the tragic death of Ardian Zagani three weeks ago, who was cycling to work as a school caretaker, will you now contact TFL and ask them to progress plans for segregated cycle lanes around Nags Head gyratory?

Reply:

As I indicated, we are working hard on those gyratory removals, we do believe they are dangerous to cyclists. Because of the fact that we have been campaigning hard, we have got five gyratories on TFL's agenda. We have been able to deliver one of those in Archway. We've got approval to go ahead with Highbury Corner and Old Street. We are working hard to get the consultation happening at Kings Cross, and we are working just as hard in relation to Nags Head. Admittedly, we haven't yet got to the point of consultation, but the reality is we are working hard with TFL, we haven't taken it off the table.

Our hearts go out to the family of the cyclist who lost his life. It shouldn't have happened, we are working very hard to make the necessary changes so that cyclists and pedestrians can operate freely in boroughs like ours and across London, and get from A to B without a fatality, without any dangers. It is vitally important that cyclists and pedestrians and everyone is able to move around this city safely and without fear of accident, injury, or fatality. This is our vision, that is our goal. We will not rest, we will stand with you as cycle activists, and with people who want to cycle, because we know there are more people in London who want to cycle. Thank you.

Question f) from Michael Kuhn to Councillor Watts, Leader of the Council:

Please tell us when faced with swingeing cuts in funding, whether the Council gives equal priority to housing the homeless and maintaining Islington's open spaces?

Reply:

Thank you Mr Kuhn. Firstly, let me agree with your analysis about swingeing cuts. The council has seen a 70% cut to its budget from the government, the biggest cut ever in its history, approaching something like the cash spending power of £200 million a year in cuts over the course of this decade. However, as I said at the beginning of the meeting, the Council was elected in 2014 on a manifesto that clearly prioritised housing, jobs, and helping our residents with the cost of living. We also maintained how vital it was to protect good quality services on the kind of tight budgets we are seeing after the government cuts, and also the importance of protecting our residents' quality of life.

Although we have universal public spaces for all of our residents to enjoy, in such a densely populated borough only one in six or seven of our residents are fortunate enough to have their own garden, and therefore for the vast majority of Islington residents the parks are effectively their garden, and we should value them as a publicly owned democratic spaces for residents of our borough to enjoy.

Supplementary question:

Why does the council spend scarce funds on failing to abate the nuisance on Highbury Fields? We estimate that the council has spent £60,000 so far, and will now have to spend a good deal more on legal action brought by the Highbury Fields campaign.

Reply:

As you are threatening legal action I am not going to address the issue about public nuisance in order to protect the council's position, however, I did ask the Environment and Regeneration department today what the marginal cost of clearing up after barbeques this year was. The costs were met this year by staff who were already scheduled to be clearing up litter, and therefore the net cost to the public purse this year was zero, and there was no trade-off between barbeques and the housing crisis.

Question g) from Joanna Greatwich to Councillor Watts, Leader of the Council:

Are you, the members of our elected council - charged to protect all the inhabitants of the London Borough of Islington from:

- a) unnecessary harm,
- b) preventable- or potentially preventable ill health resulting from unnecessary and controllable actions of its inhabitants or visitors, and
- c) any unnecessary hazards and nuisances that it has the authority to prevent?

Yes or no?

Reply:

Thank you for your question. The council has various statutory duties to protect residents, particularly in relation to child protection, children with disabilities, protecting vulnerable adults, and duties of care under housing legislation.

We also have a wide range of ways to enforce these protections where the health and safety of residents or visitors is put at risk by the action of others, for example food safety, anti-social behaviour and statutory nuisances.

Supplementary question:

Thank you. Perhaps some explanation may help you in relation to my question. From your own scientific reports, current research suggests there is no safe level of exposure to PM2.5, which is emitted from barbeques. This particle is likely to cause the most serious health effects. Speaking as someone who has lived around Highbury Fields for 19 years as a council tenant, why are barbeques an exception to protecting the residents of Islington from the potential causes of ill health, what scientific evidence have you used to ensure that this is a completely safe exception in terms of the long term health of residents, and if there is such evidence, could it be put on the website please?

Reply:

Thank you very much. I need to be quite careful on this as Mr Kuhn has just threatened legal action and I can't do anything to prejudice the council's position. It is always regrettable when people threaten legal action as it curtails public debate on important issues like this. I'm afraid all I can say in response to your question, and I accept that this may get a further hearing

elsewhere, is that there is a test for statutory nuisance as the council is very clear on its position that barbeques on Highbury Fields do not meet it.

159 QUESTIONS FROM MEMBERS OF THE COUNCIL

Question a) from Councillor Court to Councillor Shaikh, Executive Member for Economic Development:

What is the council policy around Islington's Heritage Plaques, and does the executive member share my concerns over multiple voting distorting the awarding of Heritage Plaques?

Reply:

Thank you for your question. As Councillor Court knows, Islington People's Plaques is an important scheme that allows our residents to recognise and celebrate our heritage. We do this through an open and democratic process. IPP votes come from two sources – online voting and printed voting cards in council buildings including all Islington libraries and the Municipal Offices at 222 Upper Street.

However, we are aware that there is potential for voting irregularities, especially with online voting. When the scheme originally went live in 2010 the system was set up to only allow one vote from any device, using the IP address as the limiter. But we did see a large number of complaints from public bodies, such as schools and libraries, because it stopped people who didn't have their own device from voting. The system also asked for a post code, but this breached data protection so it was removed.

Since 2011, the IPP public vote system has been that the IP address is no longer the limiter and people can vote more than once on a single device. This allows families and devices in public institutions and communal areas to be used more than once. But, to control any irregular multiple voting, at the end of the voting period the votes are analysed. So any block voting, or over use of particular IP addresses, is picked up and removed from the final numbers. This means that all multiple voting is scrutinised and any possible issues are picked up and corrected. I hope this provides some reassurance to Councillor Court that the Islington People's Plaques do indeed reflect local views.

Supplementary question:

I would like to thank Councillor Shaikh for her answer. I think many councillors know the history of the performing arts and theatres this wonderful borough has. Still currently, we have the Almedia, Sadler's Wells, Park Theatre, our cherished Chickenshed, The Kings Head, The Old Red Lion. We have champions even within this chamber, our Arts Champion is Councillor Khan.

What people may not know, is that Islington's first theatre was indeed in Clerkenwell. The Red Bull was just by St John's Street. It was set up in 1605 as a rival to Shakespeare's Globe. This theatre deserves recognition, one of my constituents is even willing to put their own money into this, but unfortunately I am told this is not allowed. I myself would be willing to allocate my Local Initiatives Fund money, and I hope Councillor Shaikh and the rest of the Council can support the recognition of this great theatre.

The Mayor indicated that Councillor Shaikh may wish to take up this matter with Councillor Court outside of the meeting.

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

With the centenary of the end of WW1 fast approaching what progress has the Council made on securing the memorial arch at the site of former Royal Northern Hospital, and facilitating public access?

Reply:

Thank you for your question. I was lucky enough a few years ago to actually go inside the arch before it was closed up. It is a fantastic tribute to the 1,307 Islingtonians who made the ultimate sacrifice in the First World War. It is vital for our collective memory, and to pay due respect to those who gave their lives, that such memorials are kept in the best possible condition.

The memorial is located on a private housing estate at what once was the entrance to the old A&E department of the Royal Northern Hospital, and I am aware that many complaints have been raised about its state and its upkeep. Frankly, I think the standard it is in is a disgrace, and the owners – Bellway Homes – who are responsible for its upkeep should be ashamed of themselves. They have a legal duty, and frankly a moral duty, to maintain the memorial to a high standard.

The council wrote to Bellway Homes last year and they are now working with the council's Heritage Service to conserve and restore the war memorial.

However, I am currently writing again to the Chair of Bellway Homes to express my disappointment at the lack of progress and ask them to invest what is for them a small amount of money, so that the Memorial is fully restored before the centenary of the end of World War One next year.

I want to give you my assurance that we will continue to chase this as it is a serious matter, and would suggest that if we do not receive satisfaction from this angle, then I would be very happy to join Cllr Poole and the Islington Veterans Association in person to take the issue directly to Bellway Homes' office.

Supplementary question:

Thank you Councillor Watts. I would like to put on record my thanks to you. This is not the first time I have raised this issue of war memorials in this chamber, and you gave personal considerable energy and commitment to restoring the Islington Green memorial. Thank you for your response, and I will certainly wish to be involved in any meeting with Bellway Homes. The question I wish to ask is, presumably when the hospital site was given over to the developers, Section 106 money would have been forthcoming. Was Section 106 money in place to enshrine this memorial, and if so, have the developers followed through on that commitment?

Reply:

Thank you. The development on that site is at least 20 years old and I don't know the precise legal position on what commitment has been made, however, my clear understanding is that Bellway Homes have a legal and moral duty to maintain that memorial. I am not sure if this is through a Section 106 agreement or some other agreement, but they do have a duty.

Question c) from Councillor Poole to Councillor Webbe, Executive Member for Environment and Transport:

Will the Council offer free parking for members of the Armed Forces who are home on leave or visiting relatives in Islington?

Reply:

Thank you for your question. The Council is supportive and appreciative of the sacrifices the members of the Armed Forces make. Your question is a good example of how the council could support members of the Armed Forces. But I think there is an issue about setting a precedent, and I think based on the evidence available, there is not sufficient demand to justify a specific Armed Forces permit. I am very happy to have a conversation with you to look in more detail if there is in fact further evidence that the council has not yet considered. As you know, residents can already purchase unlimited amounts of visitor parking vouchers, and council officers are able to use their considerable discretion and grant waivers on a case by case basis. I think it is probably better, given the fact that every Armed Forces member will have individual needs, to look at this on a case by case basis. I would personally advocate speaking to the parking team, so they are mindful of these exceptions and expectations.

Supplementary question:

Thank you. This is a real issue that came to me as Armed Forces Champion from a resident of Islington, whose daughter was giving birth and her partner was home on leave from service, and who had considerable difficulty getting to the property where his child was about to enter the world. Members of the Armed Forces, by nature of their work, are not necessarily routed in any one area, they are sent all around the world at short notice, but still face bureaucracy on their return to the United Kingdom. What I would hope that we could do as a council, is at least make our parking regulations explicit, to contain a principle that members of the Armed Forces returning to visit relatives in the borough, where there is a genuine local connection, are offered free parking.

Reply:

I think you make an excellent point. But I think that the issue you highlighted is an example of where we were able to use discretion. I know the case well, if I recall, the returning Armed Forces member had a permit for another zone, but that wasn't enough for his needs. But we used our discretion, which enabled him to visit his partner. I think we should make decisions on this case by case basis.

One concession we do offer for Armed Forces members is free parking at the time of the Poppy Appeal for those carrying out Poppy Appeal duties. I would be happy to have a conversation with you on what more we could do to supported Armed Forces members in Islington.

Question d) from Councillor Wayne to Councillor Webbe, Executive Member for Environment and Transport:

The stretch of Essex Road between Essex Road Station and the Balls Pond Road is a busy main road that divides Canonbury Ward in half. There is no dedicated safe cycle crossing point on this stretch of Essex Road. Will the Executive member for Transport confirm that a dedicated safe cycle crossing point along Essex Road is something that she supports, and that she will seek external funding from TFL for this crossing?

Reply:

Thank you for your question. What you propose is something we ought to welcome in terms of ensuring that people cycle safely. I am very pleased to be able to confirm that I support that request wholeheartedly. I would be keen to see necessary research for us to know exactly what is required, and then the necessary detail for us to transform that crossing. The council is already working in partnership with TFL on a programme of cycle improvements, we are also working with our neighbours in Hackney to make cycle improvements around our border. The council will seek the necessary funding to take this forward, and I would be happy to work with you to make sure we improve cycling in the borough.

Supplementary question:

I am very grateful for the support of Councillor Webbe, and I am very grateful for the work of Councillor Webbe in promoting cycling in the borough. The best way to ensure that the maximum number of our residents cycle is to ensure that there is safe storage for cyclists. In Canonbury we have secured funding to install a bike hangar along the New River Green Estate which is free of charge for our most deprived residents. Will you seek funding from the Mayor's Office and from TFL to ensure there is affordable, secure cycle storage for our most deprived residents?

Reply:

Thank you Councillor Wayne. Safe and secure cycle storage does encourage more people to cycle. I have previously stated my commitment to installing many more cycle stores on our highways, using car spaces where necessary. In terms of our estates, we have started a programme of providing secure cycle storage and I want that to continue. I want our Environment and Regeneration department to work with Housing to make sure that we increase the amount of safe cycle storage on our estates.

I was pleased to see the cycle storage on the New River Green Estate, I want more of that, and I am also pleased with the tremendous response that we received to the pilot of cycle storage in the St George's and Tollington wards, because without advertising that generated 600 requests for cycle storage. I hope we will not wait too long for funding from TFL, but in any case, I want us to make sure we install cycle storage sooner rather than later.

Question e) from Councillor Ismail to Councillor Watts, Leader of the Council:

In terms of BAME officers working in the Council in the last year there have been some positive increases, but we have long way to go yet. The breakdown of internal promotions by ethnicity for the year 1st June 2016 to 30th May 2017, shows that of those members of staff being promoted 52.36% were White, 42.93% BAME, 3.66% in the 'any other' category, with 1.05% failing to declare.

Can you share with Full Council how long those people who have been promoted have been in post for before their promotion; whether they have been promoted to senior staff or corporate management team positions; and what the breakdown of those people being appointed to such positions is by ethnicity and gender.

Reply:

Thank you for your question. You will forgive me for not going into the individual detail of everyone who has been promoted, but Cllr Hull and I are happy to meet you to discuss this in more detail. What I do want to say, is that the council has made progress on recruiting BAME staff, although we do have more work to do. Of the seven staff recently recruited to senior

management positions, six were women, and two were BAME. Tracking this data is more difficult, because of data protection laws give the council a deadline for deleting this information, and also because the council has an anonymised recruitment policy. It is only when someone is offered an interview that their name, gender and other details are revealed. This is to ensure that all candidates get a fair chance of being interviewed, regardless of what their background is.

We are currently exploring what we can do to get more equalities data out of our HR system, and we are also looking at what we can do to give staff from BAME backgrounds a helping hand on the career ladder, as we know it is important that our senior staff, as well as our junior staff, genuinely reflect the borough.

Supplementary question:

Thank you. I would be glad to meet you and Cllr Hull. I am sad to be asking again a question about equalities in this chamber; it is depressing for young people in the borough, especially as part of our work on the Fairness Commission was to consider the views of young BAME people. My question is, have you made any plans to replace the former Assistant Chief Executive (Strategy and Community Partnerships)?

Reply:

I understand your point of view, and in one sense you are completely right, there are inequalities in our borough. Information from the Office of National Statistics tells us that people of the Muslim faith are less likely to get a well-paying job nationwide. I know there are issues.

You will recall that there was a senior level restructure in the council, a number of people left and a number of people were recruited into new posts. At that time two senior BAME staff members left, and two senior BAME staff members were recruited. The people who were recruited were both at more senior grades than the people who left, so there was actually a net improvement in the position as a result. In terms of the replacement of individuals, we have previously discussed in detail that the restructure did delete certain posts, but did create other similar jobs elsewhere in the council.

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

How does the Council promote and prepare training for BAME staff with potential to take on leadership and corporate management positions, and what plans for the current financial year does the council have to promote BAME staff and staff identifying in the 'any other' ethnicity category?

Reply:

Thank you Councillor Ismail. Before I talk about how we support existing BAME staff, I would like to mention how we recruit our staff in the first place. Recruitment is anonymised before the interview stage, as Councillor Watts mentioned, and has been since 2013, with levels of anonymity increased since 2015. In exceptional cases we do target certain media, such as The Voice, by way of positive action, and in a forthcoming advertisement for Shared Digital we will focus on women, with three senior women featured with quotations in the advert itself.

But, in terms of progression, we have the Inspiring Leadership Programme. The council introduced the Inspiring Leadership development programme in 2014. The programme aims to help high potential employees from under-represented groups to develop the skills and

confidence to move to a more senior level. The programme is promoted through information sessions; written communications including publicity on Izzi, in IC Bulletin and the Manager's Update and posters; and at senior management team meetings as well.

A second cohort of 8 members of staff commenced the programme in 2016 and will run throughout the current financial year. This intake was open to disabled employees in addition to employees from ethnic groups under-represented in senior management positions. The programme is designed to develop participant's leadership capability and promote their readiness for progression.

The programme assists participants to develop core skills including self-awareness, knowledge and self-confidence to better position them to progress. A range of development opportunities are also available to all employees, including courses to move into management roles and to support career development. Data indicates BAME employees access slightly higher levels of training in comparison to the overall workforce profile. We also have active Staff Forums. Members of the Corporate Workforce Development Team attend staff forums, including the BAME Forum, to promote awareness and encourage participation in development activities.

In the end, appointment to jobs within the council must be secured through the normal recruitment process and will be based on merit, as is required by the law. Currently, about a fifth of the council's top 5% of earners are BAME.

Question g) from Councillor Russell to Councillor Burgess, Executive Member for Health and Social Care:

Councillor Hull was quoted in Government Business on 3rd November 2015 saying "no-one should have to do a hard day's work – whether for the council, a local business, football club, or charity – for less than they can live on. Every employer in Islington should do the right thing, pay the Living Wage and stop using zero hours contracts"

The Islington Tribune on the 1st of September reported that GLL staff working at the Sobell Centre on zero hours contracts would lose pay for two weeks during the construction of a wall dividing the sports hall. Is it fair that people working as sports coaches in Islington Council sports facilities have so little job security?

Reply:

Thank you for your question, I am delighted to have this opportunity to set the record straight. During the week of the sports hall closure, a small number of affected casual staff were offered alternative hours at the Sobell in the ice rink, the holiday programme, the studios, outdoor pitches and soft play. This was in addition to hours offered at other centres.

GLL's staff who were advised of these arrangements in person and with more than two weeks' notice. 20 staff were affected and 14 worked on other activities. The majority were fully understanding of the temporary situation, and staff were also offered extra hours beforehand to make up for any lost hours.

We are confident that the long-term benefits to the borough of the new trampoline park will significantly outweigh the short-term disruption. The new trampoline park will create seven new permanent jobs, including two apprenticeship roles and around 15 - 20 casual posts. Additionally, the junior programme has grown significantly, offering more hours than ever before.

In 2016, 59% of the workforce in Islington was made up of local people from within the borough. This will increase as the services increase at Sobell. This year GLL has employed more staff in Islington than ever before. They have also tried to turn casual roles into full time permanent positions, giving local people more opportunities to choose the career pathways most suited to them.

Casual contracts are a key component of how the Leisure industry delivers its services. Staff on casual contracts do not have to work exclusively for GLL, nor do they have to accept the hours offered. For many people – carers, parents, students - casual contracts offer a flexible employment option, they don't have to accept work if it does not suit them, and they are not penalised if they do not want that particular shift. Also, of course, all staff are paid the London Living Wage. Not only that, but casual staff are paid for four weeks' holiday – this is done by paying extra, above the London Living Wage, to cover the relevant cost.

Supplementary question:

I'm just amazed that in Islington Council we have workers in our sports centres who are described as 'casual workers'. We know the precarious situation that so many workers are in. Will you ensure that sports coaches employed by GLL are not employed on zero hours' contracts?

Reply:

I'm absolutely delighted to say that this is not the situation. Zero hours' contacts are when you have to work for only one particular company, you have to turn up and hope there's work there, otherwise you don't get paid. These are not zero hours' contracts. In addition, Unison recognise workers like this, and have a special category for them.

As the 30 minutes allocated for questions from members of the Council had elapsed, the Mayor advised that the remaining question would be responded to in writing. The following response was issued subsequent to the meeting:

Question h) Councillor Russell to Councillor Watts, Leader of the Council:

At the last Full Council meeting we passed a motion on Fire Safety, resolving to:

- To make public all existing fire safety risk assessments of high rise towers in Islington;
- To reassure residents in Islington about fire safety and work with local residents to hear and address any concerns;
- To assist London level efforts to support the victims of the Grenfell Tower.

What progress has been made since 29th June on each of these three commitments?

Written reply:

The Council agreed to make public all existing fire risk assessments (FRAs) of high rise towers in Islington. I am pleased to confirm that the FRAs for Islington's 49 blocks that are 10 storeys or over have now been published on the Council website, which can be viewed at <https://www.islington.gov.uk/about-the-council/emergency-planning-and-business-continuity/fire-safety-in-islington/fire-risk-assessments>

Uploading the FRAs for all 126 blocks of 6 storeys or over will take slightly longer and these are expected to be available on the Council website by the end of December this year. While this is later than I would prefer, the scale of the task in processing and redacting information where necessary is considerable. The FRAs involve entering residents' homes, taking

photographs and recording personal information, which legally cannot be shared with the public as it would be a breach of the Data Protection Act. The Council's priority is to be transparent and make its residents feel safe, so rushing to upload information that may be incomplete or inaccurate would be neither sensible nor responsible. However, I have been advised by officers that the Council's progress in publishing its FRAs is ahead of many other landlords, both local authorities and those in the private sector.

Since the tragic Grenfell Tower fire, both in the immediate aftermath and beyond, the Council has been working hard to reassure Islington residents about fire safety and listening to and addressing their concerns. In the case of Braithwaite House, where ACM type cladding was found on the sides of the building on Wednesday 22 June, a letter was immediately sent to residents and 24-hour fire patrols were installed and are still in place. A digital information board was installed on the estate to provide live information on the progress of the works and fire safety advice. Cllr Diarmaid Ward, Executive Member for Housing and Development, and I attended two resident meetings on Friday 23 and Tuesday 27 June to reassure residents and answer their questions, as well as take away concerns that required follow-up. Work to remove the cladding on Braithwaite House began on Monday 26 June and has now been completed. Cllr Ward and local Bunhill ward councillor Cllr Troy Gallagher revisited Braithwaite House on Sunday 2 July to knock on every door and ensure that all residents were informed.

Two other council properties, the Harvist Estate and Brunswick Estate, were tested for ACM type cladding but were found to be non-flammable. Residents were kept informed both of the fact that testing was being conducted and the results of the tests.

Letters have also been sent to all tenants, resident leaseholders and tenants of leaseholders to inform them of their safe plan of action in the event of a fire, provide safety advice and instruct how to report fire safety concerns to the Council. This week, letters were sent to non-resident leaseholders to remind them of their responsibilities as landlords.

Regarding private properties, ACM type cladding has been found at the Guinness Trust Buildings at Hungerford Road and Percival Street. The Trust has installed 24-hour safety patrols at both sites and we are continuing to liaise with them about these buildings. I am disappointed that student providers have not been more forthcoming in providing information about their buildings and we will continue to pressure them to share this with us. We are also in the process of identifying privately-owned high rise residential accommodation to check that fire safety measures have been reviewed and cladding tested following the Grenfell Tower fire.

The Council has set up a dedicated fire safety email address, Firesafety@islington.gov.uk, so residents can easily report concerns or ask questions. Regular social media activity, primarily through the @IslingtonBC Twitter account, directs followers to our fire safety pages, which can be viewed at: <https://www.islington.gov.uk/housing/repairs-and-estate-management/home-safety/fire-safety>

An FAQ document, which aims to provide as much information and reassurance as possible to residents, is also available on our website at:

<http://www.islington.gov.uk/~media/sharepoint-lists/public-records/housing/information/adviceandinformation/20172018/20170706firesafetyfags.pdf>

We recognise that our fire safety information must be accessible to all our residents. To this end, the Council is providing tailored information to deaf residents. This includes a signed meeting with Cllr Ward and officers at the Town Hall on Thursday 5th October and a fire safety update produced as part of the Summer Signpost British Language magazine, which can be accessed at <https://www.islington.gov.uk/accessibility/bsl>

Since the tragic Grenfell Tower fire, Cllr Ward has spoken at 12 fire safety meetings and is keen to continue meeting with other residents who have concerns. I am also very grateful to the Council's emergency planning team and officers (LALO), who have been a constant presence, visiting Islington properties and neighbouring boroughs, including at weekends, to support fire safety efforts.

I am heartened by the extensive levels of support the Council has given to the victims of the Grenfell Tower fire. A number of our staff were relocated to Kensington and Chelsea following the fire and many are still there providing much-needed support. Our Service Director for Housing Needs and Strategy, Maxine Holdsworth, has been working with the Grenfell Response Team since July and will be until the end of September. Two workers from our Adult Social Care team have been stationed in Kensington and Chelsea since the week after the fire to provide practical and emotional support. Adult Social Care and Children's Services also staffed the family and friends support centre at Kensington and Chelsea for a week and the Emergency Planning team helped to run the emergency centre in the days after the fire.

The Council has also been playing its part to ensure that victims are rehoused as soon as possible. At the end of July, a family who had lost their home in the fire moved into a decorated and furnished flat in Islington, provided by the Council's housing stock. Wherever possible, we of course wish to see victims rehoused in their own home borough. Three officers from housing needs attended Kensington and Chelsea for two weeks following the incident to give assistance and housing advice. Housing Operations staff have been working with Kensington and Chelsea to conduct viewings at properties and work with families, and a specific request was made for one of our staff members to return there for a month, as the victims specifically asked for him.

The safety and security of our residents is an absolute priority and we will continue to do all we can to reassure residents, be transparent and take action wherever necessary in our community. I hope my response addresses your concerns. Please do not hesitate to contact me if I can provide further information.

160 RESOLUTION TO EXTEND 6 MONTH RULE - SECTION 85 LOCAL GOVERNMENT ACT 1972

Councillor Gill moved the recommendations. Councillor Picknell seconded. The Mayor passed on her best wishes to Councillor Doolan.

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

RESOLVED:

That in accordance with Section 85 of the Local Government Act 1972, Councillor Gary Doolan's non-attendance at meetings be approved until the end of the municipal year on the grounds of continued ill health and that the Council's best wishes be conveyed to him.

161 CONSTITUTION UPDATE

Councillor Gill moved the recommendations. Councillor Picknell seconded.

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

RESOLVED:

- (i) That the amendments to the Islington Code of Conduct for Members as set out in the appendix to the report submitted be approved;
- (ii) That the Director of Law and Governance be authorised to make any consequential amendments to the Constitution considered necessary.

162 REPORT OF THE CHIEF WHIP

Councillor Gill moved the recommendations in the revised report set out in the additional despatch of papers. Councillor Picknell seconded.

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

RESOLVED:

1. APPOINTMENTS TO THE HEALTH AND WELLBEING BOARD

- (i) That Jennifer Kent be appointed as the Healthwatch Islington substitute member on the Health and Wellbeing Board for the remainder of the municipal year 2017/18 or until a successor is appointed.
- (ii) That Siobhan Harrington be appointed as The Whittington Hospital NHS Trust member of the Health and Wellbeing Board for the remainder of the municipal year 2017/18 or until a successor is appointed.
- (iii) That Carol Gillen be appointed as the substitute member for Siobhan Harrington on the Health and Wellbeing Board for the remainder of the municipal year 2017/18 or until a successor is appointed.
- (iv) That the above appointments also be made to the Haringey and Islington Health and Wellbeing Boards Joint Sub-Committee.

2. APPOINTMENTS TO THE PLANNING COMMITTEE

- (v) That Councillor Picknell be appointed as the Vice-Chair of the Planning Committee for the remainder of the municipal year 2017/18 or until a successor is appointed.
- (vi) That Councillor Convery be appointed to the Planning Committee for the remainder of the municipal year 2017/18 or until a successor is appointed.

3. APPOINTMENT TO OUTSIDE BODY

- (vii) That Councillor Hamitouche be appointed as a trustee of the St Luke's Trust for a one year term from 5 December 2017.

4. OTHER APPONTMENT

- (viii) That Councillor Hamitouche be appointed as Recycling Champion for the remainder of the 2017/18 municipal year or until a successor is appointed.

163 QUARTERLY MONITORING REPORT

Councillor Gill moved the recommendations in the revised report set out in the additional despatch of papers. Councillor Picknell seconded.

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

RESOLVED:

That the decision on Innovation Project Funding detailed in the report submitted be noted.

164 NOTICES OF MOTION

MOTION 1: PROTECTING PRIVATE RENTERS

Councillor Donovan-Hart moved the motion. Councillor Clarke-Perry seconded. Councillor Russell moved the amendment circulated in the additional despatch of papers. Councillor Convery contributed to the debate.

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

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

RESOLVED:

- (i) To back the Labour Party's campaign for stronger regulation of the private sector in order to protect renters.
- (ii) To make representations to Government to urge them to introduce further regulations to ensure proper protection of renters' rights, including preventing letting agencies imposing rip-off fees by introducing a Tenants' Fees Bill that is properly enforced.
- (iii) To continue to use all powers available to it to identify and fine bad landlords and letting agencies who are breaking the law and endangering tenants, and ensure they are prosecuted where possible.
- (iv) To encourage private renters to report unscrupulous landlords and letting agencies to the Council so their concerns can be followed up where appropriate.

MOTION 2: END THE PUBLIC SECTOR PAY PINCH

Councillor Gantly declared an interest as a member of the GMB Union and moved the motion.

Councillor Heather declared an interest as a member of the Communication Workers Union and seconded the motion.

Councillor Watts declared as interest as a member of the GMB Union and conveyed the Council's thanks to Councillor Doolan, who campaigned on public sector pay and supported the motion.

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

RESOLVED:

To support the GMB's campaign to end the public sector pay pinch, and call on the Government to commit to:

- Real-terms pay increases for all public sector workers, fully funded by Central Government;
- Proper funding for public services;
- Restoration of independence for the Pay Review Bodies;
- A real Living Wage of at least £10 an hour for all public sector workers.

The meeting closed at 9.15 pm

MAYOR