

**LONDON BOROUGH OF ISLINGTON**  
**COUNCIL MEETING - 6 DECEMBER 2018**

**MINUTES OF PROCEEDINGS**

At the meeting of the Council held at Council Chamber, Town Hall, Upper Street, N1  
2UD on 6 December 2018 at 7.30 pm.

**Present:**

Bell-Bradford	Gill	O'Halloran
Burgess	Graham	Poole
Caluori	Hamitouche	Poyser
Chapman	Heather	Russell
Chowdhury	Hull	Shaikh
Clarke	Ismail	Smith
Comer-Schwartz	Jeapes	Turan
Convery	Kay	Watts
Cutler	Khurana	Wayne
Debono	Klute	Webbe
Fletcher	Lukes	Williamson
Gallagher	Nathan	Woolf
Gantly	Ngongo	

**The Mayor (Cllr Dave Poyser) in the Chair**

**27    MINUTES**

**RESOLVED:**

That the minutes of the previous meeting held on 20 September 2018 be confirmed as a correct record and the Mayor be authorised to sign them.

**28    DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

None.

## 29 **MAYORAL ANNOUNCEMENTS**

### **(i) Apologies for Absence**

Apologies for absence were received from councillors Khondoker, Woodbyrne, Champion, Mackmurdie, Spall, O'Sullivan, Clarke-Perry, Hyde and Ward.

### **(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 led a minute's silence for former councillor Edna Griffiths, who passed away on 19<sup>th</sup> October 2018. Edna was a former mayor of Islington and served two terms on the Council in the 1990s, representing residents in the Holloway ward.

The Mayor thanked all of those who attended the Remembrance events. It was an honour to attend the wreath laying at Islington Green, Spa Green and Manor Gardens. The events were very well attended by local residents and representatives of all of Islington's communities; the Islington Green service was an Inter-Faith Service, attended by a Rabbi, an Imam, a Vicar, representatives of the Buddhist and Hindu faiths, and presided by a Baptist.

The Mayor had also attended a wreath laying service for veterans at Camden and Islington Cemetery and a special centenary beacon lighting ceremony at Dartmouth Park. The Mayor thanked the council staff, the emergency services, the Islington Veterans Association, Cllr Poole as Armed Forces Champion, the Pageant Master Peter McCafferty, Reverend Nigel Williams and David Dade from the Poppy Appeal for their work in supporting the Remembrance events. The Mayor personally thanked Islington Veterans Association and the Deputy Lieutenant for encouraging him to wear the First World War military cross that belonged to his grandfather, Leonard Oscar Parkes. The Mayor also thanked the many Islington residents who supported the events, including those who knitted the hundreds of poppies which were displayed outside the Town Hall.

The Mayor had recently attended local libraries to take part in the Islington Reading Challenge. The Mayor thanked the Library Service and Councillor Clarke, the Council's Reading Champion, for supporting the events.

The Mayor thanked everyone who attended the charity dinner at Fish Central on Tuesday of the same week. The event raised £1,500 for the Mayor's charities. The Mayor highlighted the work of one of his charities; the CARIS Cold Weather Shelter which provides homeless people with shelter in a local church, an evening meal and

breakfast. The Mayor thanked all of those who give their time to support homeless people, particularly those who offer support over the Christmas period.

The Mayor noted that Islington Town Hall was a Food Bank collection point and encouraged everyone present to donate generously to help those in need.

The Mayor reminded everyone that nominations for the Mayor's Civic Awards had opened. This included the Ben Kinsella Award which recognises the positive contribution that young people make to the local community.

### **(v) Length of Speeches**

The Mayor asked all members to be mindful of the timer and keep within the permitted length for speeches.

## **30 LEADER'S ANNOUNCEMENTS**

The Leader congratulated Cllr Sara Hyde and her partner on the birth of their twins and Cllr Ward and his partner on the birth of their daughter.

The Leader expressed his disappointment at the government's delay in publishing the local government finance settlement. The settlement was due to be published on 6<sup>th</sup> December 2018 however had been delayed until after Parliament's 'meaningful vote' on the Prime Minister's Brexit deal. It was not known when the final settlement would be published, however the Leader expected more cuts, more misery for Islington residents, and more challenges for the council to overcome. The Leader said that delaying the settlement added insult to injury by not allowing councils sufficient time to prepare their budgets for the next financial year. The Leader urged the government to tell councils how bad the settlement would be as soon as possible.

The Leader and Cllr Burgess had visited Highbury Leisure Centre today. The Centre was affected by a major fire in September 2018 and the Leader thanked all of the staff who had evacuated the Centre within 90 seconds for their professionalism. The fire was very serious and the fact that there were no injuries should not be taken for granted. The damage to the pool building was very substantial and the timetable for repairing the damage would not be known until next year, however the council was committed to getting the pool back up and running. The Leader was pleased that the adjoining gym suite, the most popular local authority gym per square metre in the country, would reopen the following week. A lot of work had been carried out to make the gym areas operational and it was fantastic news that the gym was able to reopen only a matter of months after such a serious incident.

The Leader and Cllrs Lukes, Burgess and Comer-Schwartz had attended a Safe Passage event to commemorate the 70<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Kindertransport, which rescued young Jewish children from the horrors of the Nazi regime. The actions of those who did so much to safeguard those children were incredible. The Leader was proud that Islington was only one of three councils in the country to accept Safe Passage's challenge to take in 100 more refugee children over the next ten years, to

give them the same hope that the Kindertransport gave children 70 years ago. The council was now waiting for the government to announce that it would be properly funded and that the council had permission to take in unaccompanied asylum children at all, given that the previous scheme was abruptly and wrongly ended the previous year.

The Leader said he would never forget taking his son to school and seeing a Syrian family taking their child to the school for the first time in their first week in the country. The Council had made a real difference by agreeing to take 30 Syrian families under the Syrian Vulnerable Person Resettlement Programme; this was life-changing for those families who had previously been in refugee camps and the Council should be proud of its work in supporting refugees.

The Leader noted that the report of the Sarah Morgan QC review had been published. The review focused on the serious allegations reported in the Islington Gazette that a former councillor was a supporter of paedophile rights organisations in the late 1970s and 1980s. The Leader encouraged all councillors to read the report's contents and significant conclusions. The investigation was carried out independently and the council had no influence over the report's findings. The Leader said that the council's biggest ever failing was its failure to protect children in its care in the late 1970s, 1980s, and early 1990s and apologised on behalf of the council. The Leader was clear that the council would do as much as it could to right the wrongs of the past by providing support survivors of the abuse now. The council had put in place a significant scheme of support for survivors of abuse including housing and welfare advice, psychological support and counselling. The council had allocated more than £2million in compensation for survivors to date and was looking forward to working with the Islington Survivors Network to ensure that there was a compensation scheme that was fit for purpose. Keeping children safe was the council's highest priority, however the council failed in its duty in the past and it was the council's responsibility to make sure this is put right. Sarah Morgan's report had been sent to IICSA, the independent inquiry into child sexual abuse. The council would support any investigations that IICSSA want to make into abuse in Islington. The report had also been sent to the Police to review if would assist criminal investigations into anyone involved at the time.

At the last Leader's Question Time event, the Islington Survivors Network asked the Leader to make a promise to protect the support services that survivors were accessing. The Leader confirmed that the council would protect those services going forward, as well as the other work to ensure there is justice for the victims of abuse that the council failed to protect in the past.

## **31 PETITIONS**

Ann Devine presented a petition objecting to a licensing application for Nag's Head Covered Market.

**32 QUESTIONS FROM MEMBERS OF THE YOUTH COUNCIL**

Question (a) from Youth Councillor Arkan to Councillor Caluori, Executive Member for Children, Young People and Families:

This autumn, we asked young people to vote for issues which matter to them. I am really pleased to say that 2,594 Islington young people voted. Tackling knife crime and serious youth violence was the number one issue with which over 800 young people voted for. As YCllrs we were very disappointed by London Mayor saying recently that it would take 10 years to tackle this problem, what is the council doing to reduce both knife crime and the fear of knife crime in the borough?

Response:

Thank you for your question. First of all, I think it's incredible to reflect on the fact that the turnout in the Youth Council elections is higher than it is for our elections. You have a bigger mandate than we have!

On knife crime, we are taking an early intervention approach, what we are also trying to do is further understand the kind of trauma that young people experienced early on in life that leads them to more violent behaviour as they get older. We have some training in our primary schools at the moment to help teachers work with young people, even really young children, to learn how to self-regulate and manage anger, so we don't have kids getting excluded from school, going down a bad pathway and picking up a knife.

Our Integrated Gangs Team is doing some great work, involving Health colleagues and partners from the voluntary sector. There is also great work from the Ben Kinsella Trust and Victim Support. We have loads of people working together to try and keep young people safe. I'm not going to read out all of the statistics I've been given, but the statistics in Islington are moving in a better direction than they are in other boroughs, which I think is due to the approach we have taken and the investment we have made. But it is still a real problem. You know that when you go out on the street there are young people around you carrying knives, and for me the real question is; how can we get to a situation where it's not normal for young people to pick up a knife? How can we get to a situation where that is not an acceptable thing to do? I think to get to that point it will require us to understand more and listen more to young people about the reasons why they take knives out with them, because we all know if you carry a knife you are more likely to be a victim of knife crime. We need to get that message across. We need to work together to understand the reasons why young people carry knives so we can address it properly.

Question (b) from Youth Councillor Tsedenia to Councillor Shaikh, Executive Member for Inclusive Economy:

With less than 114 days to Brexit, what plans have Council Leaders made to ensure that young peoples' employment and training opportunities are not adversely

effected. Can the Cllr please reassure young people who may be worried about their future career opportunities that Islington Council will do all that it can to maximise their opportunities.

Response:

Thank you for your question. I am really pleased that the Youth Council are looking at the impact Brexit, as we know that it is a real concern for young people, and lots of other people about the impact that Brexit might have.

I can assure you that we are taking the impact Brexit may have on the council, and Islington as a whole, very seriously. In addition to our work calling for EU Citizens who live in the borough to have their rights guaranteed by the Government, we have also been doing work to anticipate the impact Brexit may have on our local economy. Unfortunately, we are anticipating that Brexit will lead to staff shortages in most key employment sectors, for example construction, hospitality and health and social care. We are currently developing a new skills strategy that will seek to anticipate the effects of Brexit on our local jobs market and how we can best mitigate against any harmful effects.

As you know, the council's has already been doing a lot to help young people access the careers and jobs that they want. The council's focus is on ensuring that young people are supported to make informed choices about their future careers, and that they are given full information about the range of options available to them, including apprenticeships. To support our young people to compete in any labour market, before and after Brexit, we have committed to ensuring that all Islington young people should experience at least 100 hours' experience of the world of work by the time they finish Year 11.

We are also working with our business communities and schools and colleges to design a quality careers advice offer for young people, and at the same time we are continuing to source apprenticeships and entry level roles for our young residents. For example, some of you might be aware of our Aspire event last week, where we brought together a whole range of creative industries to meet with young people. We act as a broker and a network to connect our creative industries to our young people. It was really popular, really successful, and we managed to link young people to careers in TV, video and music production, a range of off-stage roles; we want to do more of that in the future, we want to help our young people get the contacts that they need with employers.

I was pleased to report to the Environment and Regeneration Scrutiny Committee this week that, since 2014, the Council has supported 1,500 young unemployed people into work, and we have helped over 600 people start apprenticeships both with the Council and with external employers.

I can assure you that Islington Council is on the side of our young people, and we will do all we can to ensure everyone has the opportunities to get on in life and achieve their potential.

Question (c) from Youth Councillor Jackie to Councillor Ward, the Executive Member for Housing and Development:

In the consultation, homeless was the third most important issue young people were concerned about. What is the council doing to tackle homelessness particularly among young people? We would like to council to provide young people who are doing apprenticeships with accommodation similar to that provided to university students to support independent living and in a safe space.

As Councillor Ward, the Executive Member for Housing and Development, was not present, the question was answered by Councillor Watts, the Leader of the Council:

Thank you for your question. I am sorry that Cllr Ward is not present to answer your question, as he is much more of an expert on housing issues than I am. Firstly, can I welcome the fact that young people in Islington are so concerned about homelessness. Homelessness is a stain on our society and its rise over the last few years is a genuinely shocking consequence of Conservative austerity and the cuts and damage this government has done to our social infrastructure. It's unacceptable that anybody is forced to sleep on our streets, even for one night; it's not just a failure of one particular service, it's a sign of a society coming apart at the seams.

We take an approach to homelessness which looks to prevent people becoming homeless in the first place. One of the biggest causes of homelessness is eviction from the private rented sector; we have a lot of support for tenants who are at risk of eviction, we intervene with landlords, provide advice, provide support, try to provide people with secure accommodation if their tenancy has ended. We work closely with charities, health colleagues, the Police and others to support people who find themselves homeless. We have rehoused over 700 families in temporary accommodation who had become homeless and have priority needs. The Outreach Team continue to work with rough sleepers all the way across Islington, in fact we are looking at ways to expand that outreach work at the moment given the clear and pressing need.

The Council has pioneered new approaches to addressing homelessness in hotspots, like the area around the Stroud Green Road Bridge, where the council has supported more than 30 people in to more sustainable housing. It's a constant challenge because the complex problems people face mean that whenever you support some people into housing, you have others replace them.

Importantly we are trialling a Housing First approach, which has been trialled by a few other councils, that is where instead of saying that homeless people need to get a job and sort out the other problems they have before we get them a house, we get them housing first and then use that as a secure base which allows them to put down roots and address other challenges in their lives. This is having a really good impact at the moment and is something we would like to expand if we can.

You raise an interesting point about student-style housing for council apprentices. Any apprentice currently facing homelessness has the opportunity to access all of the services I already outlined, but I would say I am a bit nervous about student-style housing for apprentices. We can certainly look at affordable housing, but we have very limited space in the borough so need to provide more permanent kinds of housing, like council housing. I worry that student housing is quite expensive, is quite short term, and is not the sort of thing that people would actually find helpful. I am happy to commit Cllr Ward to have a further conversation about it.

Question (d) from Youth Councillor Lydia to Councillor Caluori, Executive Member for Children, Young People and Families:

We are really pleased that young people are being actively encouraged to have a say about services which are aimed at them. An example includes the newly created Service User Group at TYS/YOS called "You Lead". We think young people should be consulted and involved in all services and aspects of Islington Council to create a fairer borough. How can this approach be embedded more widely?

Response:

Thanks for your question. I think one thing that was really central for us was the work of the Fair Futures Commission. We spent a year listening to young people and what we are doing now is rolling out the Commission's recommendations throughout the council. What this means is that bits of the council that did not previously have a focus on children and young people, like parks and greenspace and other services outside of Children's Services, will think about what they are doing for children and young people, and use those recommendations to drive what they do.

I also think it's pushing us to listen more to young people and one thing we have been doing recently is holding Ward Partnership meetings for young people; I held one in my ward for six to twelve-year-old kids. To hear what they have to say about their local area is fascinating and is different to what you hear from older children.

We are looking at other ways to listen and involve young people; what is happening with Youth Offending and Targeted Youth Services is a great example of how a service which traditionally has not been centred around listening to the voices of young people, which previously had a top-down approach, has been re-tooled; we are listening to the experiences of young people and use what they tell us to make the service more effective. We have learned from other authorities including Leeds who have used that really well in the past. I think we can do loads more in future, if you keep challenging us then hopefully I can keep on giving you examples of that over the year.

**33 QUESTIONS FROM MEMBERS OF THE PUBLIC**

Question (a) from Gill Weston to Councillor Ward, Executive Member for Housing and Development:

Regarding Islington Council's scheme for a large building on Windsor Street to accommodate adults with learning disabilities: In 2014 council officers calculated that the scheme would cost £1.98 million; in September 2015 the costs had risen to 2.72 million; there was then a further increase in September 2016 to £3.2 million; and by December 2017 costs had climbed to £4.12 million. Will the Council please share the latest calculated/estimated costs of this scheme and explain the year on year increases at a time of austerity?

As Gill Weston was not present, a written response was sent after the meeting, as follows:

In Islington, we believe that it is vitally important that as many of our residents with additional needs are able to live in Islington, close to friends and families and where they can benefit from personalised support from Social Services, who have statutory responsibilities for them wherever they may be placed in the country.

National and local best practice has for many years shown that local accommodation services, which offer alternatives to out-of-area residential care, improve outcomes by offering greater independence, more choice and control and offer better value for money through access to Housing Benefit and other entitlements. The development at Windsor Street will help us provide homes within the borough for people who need them, and I am very proud of the Council for delivering this project.

The last review of the costs of this project was undertaken in July 2017 by the quantity surveyor on the project. This was quoted in the financial appraisal, as requested by residents in 2017, despite a financial appraisal not being required for planning on this scheme.

At the time of the July 2017 cost plan review, the scheme had not yet been subject to a Design Review Panel. This took place in September 2017, and the recommendations of the Panel resulted in further changes to the design and materials used in the scheme in order to ensure a greater likelihood of planning approval.

Incorporating the recommendations of reports, such as the fire safety strategy, had also not been included in the July 2017 cost plan. All of these changes resulted in additional costs to the developing project.

Since planning permission has been achieved, further, more detailed work has been done on the design, learning disabilities commissioner requirements, and in conjunction with other services required for the project have been further specified. These changes have also contributed to the increase in costs of the project.

In addition, since July 2017, tender prices have also risen by 11 %. These factors taken together have all contributed to the increase in build costs from £3,459,000 as detailed in the July 2017 cost plan to £3,836,000 in July 2018. This figure will not include the other development costs such as additional consultant fees which would form part of the total development costs.

The proposed Windsor Street development is a key part of our strategy to improve the lives of people with learning disabilities in Islington, and to ensure we meet our duties under the Care Act to meet the needs of vulnerable people with care and support needs. It will offer much needed high quality accommodation to adults with learning disabilities who need support to live independently. As a 'supported living' scheme it will offer people security of tenure, with support and care tailored to their individual needs.

Our aim is to ensure people with learning disabilities can live fulfilling lives in our local community, and I look forward to the new homes on Windsor Street contributing to this worthy goal.

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

Will the Council please explain why, when supported living accommodation is such a scarce resource in this borough and Council budgets are said to have been slashed, did it turn down the offer by Hyde and Partnership to build several new apartments at Packington Square for adults with learning disabilities?

As Ian Fearnley was not present, a written response was sent after the meeting, as follows:

I am pleased to assure you that Islington Council has not turned down any offers from Hyde to build new apartments at Packington Square for adults with learning disabilities. The Council works with many partners to secure new properties to be used as supported living for adults with learning disabilities. New accommodation is sourced to meet identified demand and all viable options are explored on an ongoing basis.

Question (c) from Benali Hamdache to Cllr Webbe, Executive Member for Environment and Transport:

How will Islington Council be ensuring residents are fully consulted on the Islington transport strategy?

As Benali Hamdache was not present, a written response was sent after the meeting, as follows:

Islington Council is developing a new transport strategy for the next two decades until 2041. This follows the publication of the Mayor's Transport Strategy earlier this year, which sets out ambitious policies and targets, including to promote healthier

lifestyles by encouraging people to walk and cycle, to make streets safer and more secure, to increase the use of public transport and reduce car use, and to clean up the air that we breathe.

The Council's transport strategy will build on this strong foundation and will set the policy framework for streets, public spaces, neighbourhoods and transport services that will improve the lives of all in Islington, including the most vulnerable and those on lower incomes. As this strategy will affect everyone living, working or studying in Islington or visiting the borough, we will develop this strategy together with local people. I have been having conversations with the local pedestrian and cycling groups as key transport stakeholders to develop key walking and cycling principles that will underpin our aspirations and policies. However, there is an opportunity for everyone to get involved during a comprehensive two-month public consultation where we invite comments on our draft transport strategy.

The consultation will be widely publicised, including through the Council's usual media channels and on the Council website. There will be drop-in sessions, workshops and focus groups with a number of key groups and communities, including: disability groups; Somali women's group; young people through a youth centre; a Special Education Need school; and transport stakeholders (eg Living Streets and Cycle Islington). There will also be an opportunity for residents to ask questions at ward partnership meetings held during the consultation period. I will listen to the ideas, concerns, questions and suggestions from all Islington's communities so that Islington's final transport strategy represents and protects the interests of all.

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

How successful was Islington Council's bid for Young Londoners Fund?

Response:

Thanks for your question. We as a council did not directly put in a bid to the Young Londoners Fund, instead we worked with the voluntary sector in Islington to support local organisations in getting their bids together. We're really pleased; we did incredibly well out of that. Across the borough we will benefit from around £1.3million of funding from the Mayor's Young Londoners Fund that aims to stop young people getting stuck in violent and bad lifestyles. The organisations locally that will benefit from that include Abianda, who did excellent work to help girls to exit from gangs, Finsbury Park Mosque, the Ben Kinsella Trust, and there are London-wide services that benefit those in Islington as well.

Supplementary question:

That's really good to hear that you consulted people and engaged with others. Waltham Forest Council did the same, but they also put in their own direct bid as a council and managed to raise £300,000 for young people. The London Borough of

Southwark raised £150,000 for young people. The London Borough of Sutton raised £150,000 for young people. Can we make sure that we as a council do put in a bid in the next round that comes up, having consulted extensively with young people, which is one of the criteria to get the funding.

Response:

Our strategy was very much to look at the organisations in our borough who can provide the greatest benefit to the lives of young people. What we have in Islington is a really vibrant voluntary sector who have an incredible array of services, probably in excess of what any other borough can draw on. So I have to be honest with you, I feel like the strategy of prioritising those organisations has really paid off, because we are about half the size of those boroughs you mentioned in terms of population, but we are benefitting hugely from the funding that is coming through. So I think our strategy to support those organisations has really paid off. I am really happy to talk to young people and the youth councillors on if they think we should bid differently in the future.

Question (e) from Natasha Cox to Councillor Watts, Leader of the Council:

What action will you take as Leader of Islington Council following the publication of the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) Special Report on Global Warming of 1.5°C, published in October 2018, describing the enormous harm that a 2°C rise in global temperatures is likely to cause compared with a 1.5°C rise, and confirming that limiting Global Warming to 1.5°C may still be possible but only with ambitious action from national and sub-national authorities and others.

Response:

Thank you for your question. Climate change, despite what a certain politician from the other side of the Atlantic says, is a very real and present danger to all of us; I am very proud that this council takes its responsibilities seriously, and we do what we can to reduce our carbon footprint as a borough. I picked up some of your comments in the newspaper about the ground-breaking work we are now doing to decarbonise our pension fund, which I think is ahead of anyone else in the country; I think that is incredibly important.

The Council's Energy Services team will be implementing a new strategy early next year, absolutely to keep us in line with the IPCC's Special Report you mention in your question. We all understand the importance of that 1.5°C limit you refer to. Our current strategy is strongly in line with the Mayor of London's climate change action plan and what other London Boroughs are doing on this issue. We are one of the top five boroughs with the highest per capita reduction in carbon emissions over the last few years. But you are right, the IPCC's Special Report provides an excellent reference point for defining that new strategy and building on our previous performance. I know that under Cllr Webbe's outstanding leadership we will be driving forward this issue. It's also worth saying we have by far the most progressive parking charging policy; we charge the most polluting vehicles far more than cleaner

vehicles. We are also working on other initiatives, but we accept there is more to do and welcome further ideas.

Supplementary question:

Thank you for your response. Do you have plans to draw up an emergency plan with the actions specifically needed to make Islington carbon neutral by 2030?

Response:

Given we are in the process of drawing up a new plan, I don't think we need a separate emergency plan. But the plan we are already drawing up will absolutely bear in mind the findings of the IPCC report and the fundamental need for us to do what we can to keep the planet inside that 1.5°C limit. The fact that there is new unimpeachable science available will absolutely influence that new strategy we are drawing up.

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

Question from Nafisah Graham-Brown to Councillor Comer-Schwartz, Executive Member for Community Development:

Thank you for letting me ask a question. I note that in the additional papers for the meeting it mentions that Islington Council, along with other legal support organisations are providing free advice for EU citizens resident in the borough. I just wonder how that is being advertised, what the reach is in terms of take up, and are there any restrictions on eligibility? Do you have to be under a certain income to access that?

Response:

Thank you for your interesting question. We have held three sessions so far, all here in the Chamber. They have all been completely full. They are advertised in partnership with Islington in Europe; we have a panel of immigration specialist lawyers who give practical advice on what to do around issues like settled status. It is absolutely free. There are no criteria other than signing up on the Eventbrite page, but to be honest you could just turn up on the day. This is something we are looking to expand; we want to work with our partners to really focus on helping people with certain vulnerabilities to get through the process, but if you want to give me your details I'd be happy to pass on the details of the next session.

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

Question (a) from Councillor Heather to Councillor Hull, Executive Member for Finance, Performance and Community Safety:

There is a growing awareness and concern about the rise of drug related criminal activity in Finsbury Park Ward and also across Islington more generally. As a local councillor, I share local residents' and businesses concerns about this and call on the police to act urgently to address it. Can Cllr Hull provide details of what police action with regards to this serious issue the Council has been made aware of, including any more police officers, and how the Council is playing its part in tackling drug related crime?

Response:

Thanks for your question, Cllr Heather. We are certainly aware of the growing drug-related issues around the wider Finsbury Park area and recently undertook detailed analysis with the Met, Haringey and Hackney councils to understand the true nature and scale of the problem. This included collating evidence from research, councillors, residents, businesses and colleagues. The results of this analysis was presented to senior leaders from the police and councils in all three boroughs and it was agreed that the police would lead a tri-borough multi-agency partnership response with our active support.

As a result, last month, Islington Police Supt Nick Davies chaired a meeting with his equivalents from Hackney and Haringey, alongside Heads of Community Safety and Enforcement Services from each of the three boroughs. A partnership plan of action was drawn up with lead officers from all sides. The plan has two primary prongs. First, the further development of our intelligence picture around the drugs markets in question, which the police are leading. And, second, monthly Days of Action where partners from all three boroughs will carry out joint visits, inspections and patrols in the area, led by the Community Safety Team here in Islington. The first of these Days of Action was today. It has involved visits to local businesses to offer reassurance and advice, promoting our antisocial behaviour services, British Transport Police activity at Finsbury Park station, compliance work on littering and fly-tipping, support for those with substance abuse problems through Better Lives, support for street homeless people through Street Link, early morning outreach by St Mungo's, licensing visits, 13 Parkguard weapons sweeps, promotion of our Safe Havens scheme, extra CCTV coverage, visits from trading standards and environmental health (including issuing fixed penalty notices), and police enforcement activity, including 13 stop-and-searches in areas where drug-dealing has been taking place. A knife like the one in this photograph was confiscated around the back of Morrison's, an area where drug-dealing is known to take place, as we heard from a resident of the Nag's Head earlier this evening.

On top of this, the police have deployed additional officers to the area until further notice to tackle the issues you raise, day-in, day-out, such as the two extra PCs recently assigned to the Safer Neighbourhood team in Highbury West. You and other

local councillors and residents, myself included, have pushed these issues high up the agendas of three London Boroughs and the Met Police and we are now seeing concrete action in response.

Supplementary question:

Thank you for your answer Cllr Hull. I do really appreciate what is being done. A number of residents have raised this issue. It is a very worrying problem, it's really good to see that we are adopting a more strategic approach to this and a more joined up way of mapping what the problem is and doing our best to solve it. However, what we know is, from evidence received by the Policy and Performance Scrutiny Committee, there is an issue with Police resourcing. Since 2010, under the Conservative government, we have lost 300 police officers. That isn't helping the situation. We need to add to the numbers of police. I thank you for what you are doing; would you agree that we need to keep up the pressure on senior police officers to keep this a priority? There is a relationship between drug dealing and violent crime, which we know is a horrendous problem in this borough.

Response:

Thank you. I've never seen the Met more stretched. I've worked closely with the police for 15 years and, like this council, at breaking point. It cannot cover all of the bases and is running from pillar to post. However, it is important that the Met understands at the highest levels of Scotland Yard the pronounced concern felt by residents, not just in Islington but right across London, at this upturn in drug related offending. You can see it on our street corners and residents won't put up with it. You are right, that everyone in the police from the Commissioner down needs to understand that residents do not believe that this drug related offending, and the violence, by which the police are concerned, are unconnected. They are two parts of the same problem, and if we turn a blind eye to the supposedly low level drug dealing on our street corners, people in the end will get hurt. We are saying that at every available opportunity, both members and senior officers, at meeting after meeting. I think because we are speaking with one voice as colleagues across London we are starting to be heard.

Question (b) from Councillor Graham to Councillor Caluori, Executive Member for Children, Young People and Families:

I thank Cllr Caluori for his written answer to my question at the last Full Council. Since the question was asked I've been approached by several families who have been in situations where their children have been excluded despite having special educational needs. I've also been contacted by organisations who are aware of similar situations.

Can I ask Cllr Caluori what more is being done on the issue of premature exclusions for kids with special educational needs?

Response:

Thank you for your question, this is an important topic.

Islington performs better than the national picture for fixed-term exclusion of children receiving SEND Support, and far better for children with an Education Health and Care Plan, where the trend is downward. The same is also the case for permanent exclusion, where numbers are very low. There has also been a court ruling in August this year which makes it clear that schools make appropriate adjustments for children with SEND before it results in exclusion; that means that kids can't be excluded for behaviour which is a result of their disabilities, which is discriminatory.

We are confident in Islington that we challenge our schools about that where we think there is a problem, and we always want to hear from parents where there is an issue that affects their child and they feel that they are not being treated fairly. I think one thing that helps in Islington is that our parents' groups are really mobilised, we have a SEND parents network which has its own charter which sets out how they want schools to work with them, and they've delivered a session to the Headteachers' briefing last week that was very well received.

The Children's Services Scrutiny Committee will be making recommendations in March next year following a detailed review of local practice; we will have a wider picture around permanent and fixed term exclusions. But I repeat that if any parent feels their child is being treated in a discriminatory way by an Islington school because of their SEND status they should come to us and we will try to resolve it.

Supplementary question:

Thanks for that reply. Just to clarify, the court ruling you are referring to only applies to kids who are already diagnosed, so they can be permanently excluded if they haven't been diagnosed. My concern is about kids who haven't been diagnosed. You said that our schools are doing their best to identify kids with special needs, unfortunately this doesn't seem to be the experience of a lot of parents and the professionals I have spoken to. Since the last Full Council when I raised this issue, I've heard a lot of frustration from families who feel their children are being thrown on the scrapheap in schools' apparent quest for good Ofsted results.

Last week, and I am repeating this with the permission of the parents, I was given a copy of the Education Health and Care Assessment that has been written for a 17 year old in my ward who was temporarily excluded from one of our secondary schools, sent to Alternative Provision, then on returning to mainstream education very quickly permanently excluded. The Assessment says that: 'the pupil had a difficult and disruptive experience of secondary education, with time spent at alternative provision from Year 9 onwards. Reflecting on this time, it appears their needs were not understood at secondary school, and as a result staff formed an impression of them that meant they were not able to show their best self and thrive in this setting. Their experience of feeling let down and not understood by adults in school and college placements means it is much harder for them to trust adults who genuinely care and can provide support. This can put all their placements at risk of

breaking down. Their difficult and disruptive experience of education means they are underachieving greatly.'

This comes back to early intervention to prevent kids getting involved in crime. There was a recent report saying that all health care professionals should have awareness training. I would love to see that for education too.

Response:

Thank you. I would like to repeat that if parents have issues with a school that aren't being resolved in a fair way by the governing body, my door is always open. I want to hear from parents with these issues so I can directly challenge schools. I have done so in the past and will again. I think permanent exclusion for any child regardless of any disability they have is a traumatic event, it is maybe one of the defining moments of their lives, and every school should do everything they can to keep children in mainstream education. A big part of that is understanding the whole child. One thing I found interesting as we look more at permanent exclusion is the way that, without the proper understanding of what each child is bringing with them into the school, it's possible for the school to punish a child for persistent defiance, which can accumulate to the point where governors are presented with a permanent exclusion pack and they feel they have no option but to back the determination made by the Head. That can happen in any circumstance without any disability status whatsoever.

What I think is really fantastic is that our scrutiny committee are getting right under the skin of that, they are talking to Head Teachers about it and getting into the detail. A parallel scrutiny is happening in Hackney, there is also one in Lewisham and Haringey. If young people are not being treated fairly or discriminated against due to an undiagnosed disability, then we can help to remedy that. I think it's tough for the schools because they are woefully under-resourced by central government to do all of this work, but we have to make sure that the level of need is clear, and this will help to make sure that the needs are met.

Question (c) from Councillor Ismail to Councillor Comer-Schwartz, Executive Member for Community Development:

As lead member for community development, I am sure that you agree that the voluntary sector are the eyes and ears of our communities and it is important that the council continues to support the sector, particularly the smaller organisations. Many of these organisations receive funding from the council. Can you tell me what the organisations allocated funding in the last round on 1- 5 scale have done to reduce anti-social behaviour and social isolation amongst our senior citizens and how we measure the success of their work?

Response:

Islington's Voluntary and Community Sector plays an invaluable role in responding to local need across a wide range of issues, strengthening the resilience of our local communities.

The Voluntary Sector Partnership Grants programme, launched in 2016, will run until 2020. Each year we commit £1.4 million to funding independent advice and £1.3 million in core grant funding to a wide range of VCS organisations to deliver a wide range of services. 50 organisations currently receive funding.

These organisations are assessed through six-monthly cycles of monitoring visits and reports. They are assessed in terms of the quality of service, governance, finance and fundraising, safeguarding and communications, through a Funder+ model that includes advice and support to ensure that Islington's voluntary sector continues to be vibrant, dynamic and well run. The voluntary and community sector does more work on addressing social isolation than it is possible to share now, but here are some examples of the way in which the council's grant funding has impacted our local communities.

St Luke's Community Centre provides a daily lunch club for older residents and as well as a range of activities to reduce social isolation and encourage healthy and active living. St Lukes see on average 60 over 55s per day. Healthy Generations offers weekly wellbeing enrichment activities/ sessions from various locations across the borough, targeting senior citizens. This includes 653 Events, 62 groups and over 2,800 users. The Peel runs a range of activities run for older residents including trips and lunches. 185 different people attended the social club for over 55s. Islington Pensioners Forum runs a programme of informal social activities, public forums and committee meetings to give a voice to the widest possible representative group of Islington older people. IPF sees 40 older people a month. They produce a monthly newsletter that is shared with 665 recipients, I know we all receive this. This publicises lots of activities for older people.

In terms of Anti-Social Behaviour, the Voluntary Sector's work in this area is primarily focussed on creating resilient communities and promoting community cohesion, particularly through the Islington Hate Crime Forum, which is made up of organisations funded through the VCS Partnership Grants Programme. Camden LGBT Forum is actively involved in supporting victims of Hate Crime, including through direct Casework, reporting hate crime to relevant agencies, and engaging and enabling members of the LGBTQ+ community who have experienced hate crime to speak with providers.

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

As the Leader of a Council that advocates social reform, that changes lives by providing affordable energy and heating, by building more housing and through the Fairness Commission and the Fair Futures Commission, can you please update us on the outcomes of the Fairness Commissions over the last 6 years; what has been achieved and what haven't we manage to change yet and if there are lessons from

that commission which we are applying to the implementation of the Fair Futures Commission?

Response:

Thank you for your question. You are absolutely right, the Fairness Commission has underpinned a lot of the work we have done over the last eight years on making our borough a fairer place, which is ultimately the central reason why Islington Labour was elected in 2010 and has been re-elected twice since. The Fairness Commission set out a whole range of projects critical to core task of this administration, from paying the London Living Wage, to developing more apprenticeships, to getting more people in to work, to building new council housing. All of which are now grounded in the core business of this council, but at the time were ground-breaking and a real change of direction following ten years of lost direction under the Liberal Democrats. You are also right to say that the Fair Futures Commission is the way in which we can take on much of that work; it is fundamentally unfair that kids growing up on leafy streets have better chances in education, housing, having a good job and ultimately living longer than kids growing up on our estates. What we are fundamentally about as a borough is changing the odds and making our borough a fairer place.

The Fair Futures Commission sets out a whole range of ways that we can better engage young people in the work of this council and how we can address that structural unfairness in our borough; but I would say that all of this is made harder every week by the policies of the government. We can get as many people into work as we can, but if the government further cuts universal credit there will still be misery. If we are really going to complete the job, we need not just a Labour council but a Labour government fighting hard on our side too.

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

Please could you provide an update on the progress the council has made in upgrading front doors in council housing to ensure compliance with fire regulations?

As Councillor Ward, the Executive Member for Housing and Development, was not present, the question was answered by Councillor Watts, the Leader of the Council:

Thank you for your question. I understand that you met with Cllr Ward and the Service Director for Housing Property Services on 26<sup>th</sup> November where you were updated on the current position regarding fire doors. A table detailing progress and numbers per ward has been provided to you as well. I want to be clear that our responsibilities around fire safety and our residents' safety are absolutely central to everything we are trying to do as a council; the horrific Grenfell Tower disaster means that there can be absolutely no room for complacency. But fundamental to everything we are trying to do is get a better picture from government and national regulators about what is a safe fire door to install; I think you will appreciate that it is important for the council to ensure what it is doing is actually helping the situation; and therefore the real step that we need to take work forward is better clarity from

the government about what we should actually be doing as a council. When that clarity is provided we will be springing into action to do it.

Supplementary question:

Thank you very much. I think the point is that there are a lot of fire doors, composite fire doors, that have been installed that are not as fire compliant as anticipated when they were commissioned. It's not the council's fault, they were provided by contractors, but it seems there is a problem with the ability of these doors to withstand fire. So the question is, will you commit to publish a timetable once you have the information from the government? I understand that you cannot determine when you are due to get that clarity around the correct fire doors and their availability, but once that information comes through from the government, will you commit to a timetable to getting all these doors fire compliant?

Response:

Thank you for your very fair question on this. You are right to point out this isn't just an issue for Islington Council; it is an issue for every landlord in Britain, in fact it is an issue for every landlord in Western Europe given that it seems that there is only one manufacturer of composite fire doors in Western Europe. It turns out there are significant questions about those fire doors and what their actual fire safety value is. It's worth saying that we are following the advice of the Fire Brigade; they are saying that if doors are fitted and they last longer than what was before, then keep them on instead of doing anything else. So we are doing that over this interim period, as you would expect. But yes, I can commit that when there is some better clarity provided to us as a council over what we should do to keep our residents safe, not only will we do that, but when it's clear what the investment needs are and what the timetable is, we will make that quite clear to members of this Council and residents.

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

Do you have an update for the users of Sotheby Mews Day Centre?

As Councillor Ward, the Executive Member for Housing and Development, was not present, the question was answered by Councillor Watts, the Leader of the Council:

Thank you for your question. Let me start by reminding us where we've got to on Sotheby Mews. We have 14,000 people on our housing waiting list, we were elected and re-elected massively on a manifesto, the top priority of which was to build new council housing, and we do think that the Sotheby Mews site presents an opportunity to help families off the waiting list; families whose lives are being ruined by the housing situation they find themselves in. Clearly we need to work closely with residents. There is a genuinely brilliant facility being built at Highbury Roundhouse, I visited it last week, it's not very far away from Sotheby Mews; and there are also potential opportunities on Blackstock Road for the continuation of some community services too.

The council is in the process of developing new council housing on the Sotheby Mews site, and the Roundhouse have advised they are working towards a March 2019 completion date for the new site; at that point we will restart those conversations with residents. The thing I want to say, and I want to be clear on this, is that we are in danger of getting stuck on this issue in a zero sum game; we will work with users of Sotheby Mews, if there are other solutions other than moving services to the Roundhouse then we are very open to conversations about that. Cllr Ward has committed to a further series of meetings. We want to move this issue on, we want to get that housing built, but also we want to have those conversations with residents to make sure there is an offer of services that people are happy with. It might not be everything that people want, but I know Sotheby Mews do great work and I'm really confident that whatever happens they will be in a position to carry on doing that great work, both in the Roundhouse and possibly in other buildings as well.

Supplementary question:

Thank you for your response and thank you for the commitment to keep talking to the users of Sotheby Mews; that is the most important part of this, the people about whom decisions are being made need to be involved in those conversations. You say that March 2019 is the completion date, but I gather they are still short of around £500,000; have they suddenly found this money? From what I understand, they would be very unlikely to have services in there from March 2019. Can we give users of Sotheby Mews assurance that they are not going to be moved until at least the council has got an appropriate place for them to be happening? Because what they do at Sotheby Mews is so creating, caring and important in our community, these services prevent loneliness for older people and make sure that older people have access to a hot lunch, when people are really struggling to pay their bills and keep going; it's incredibly important. Can you at least give comfort that they are not going to find themselves without any space to be, if the Roundhouse isn't ready for them?

Response:

I know we have been criticised a couple of times about this, but I think it's a brilliant building; it'll be fantastic when it's opened and it'll be an appropriate space. If there are other appropriate spaces for some services, we will look at those as well. We gave this assurance a year ago and I am happy to repeat it now; we are not going to close the Sotheby Mews building until we've got alternatives sorted out.

You are right to mention issues about people being lonely and stuck at Christmas, obviously users of Sotheby Mews are very important in that and we will make sure there are the right services for them. The other people we should think about at Christmas are homeless families. We should think about the needs of homeless families stuck in temporary accommodation out of this borough who need an affordable council house in Islington; I think we should think about homeless families with no hope of decent affordable housing unless this council cracks on with the new housing programme that we were elected with 61% of the vote in May to deliver. I

think we should think about the homeless families who will be rehoused on that site, it will change their lives. We are going to listen to everyone and talk to everyone, but we are going to prioritise the building of life-changing new council housing to make sure that we can carry on giving our families the kind of start in life that they deserve. We know that we have to think about people who use services at the moment, as important as they are, but we also need to think about those people who have no voice in this chamber at all, as they are spending tonight in temporary accommodation in Barnet, because that's the best the council can do for them. We owe them a lot better and this council administration will provide it.

**35 APPROVAL OF THE REVISED NORTH LONDON WASTE PLAN FOR PUBLICATION, CONSULTATION AND SUBMISSION**

Councillor Watts moved the recommendations in the report. Councillor Burgess seconded. Councillor Russell contributed to the debate. Councillor Watts exercised his right of reply.

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

**RESOLVED:**

- (i) That North London Waste Plan be approved for publication and formal statutory consultation, and subsequent submission to the Government;
- (ii) That the Corporate Director of Environment and Regeneration, in consultation with the Executive Member for Housing and Development, and in conjunction with the other north London boroughs, be authorised to submit appropriate changes to the North London Waste Plan in the run up to, and during, the Independent Public Examination of the document, in response to objectors' submissions, requests from the Planning Inspector and any emerging evidence, guidance or legal advice.

**36 COUNCIL TAX SUPPORT SCHEME 2019/20**

Councillor Hull moved the recommendations in the report. Councillor Burgess seconded. Councillors Russell and Lukes contributed to the debate. Councillor Hull exercised his right of reply.

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

**RESOLVED:**

- (i) That the Council Tax Support Scheme for 2019/20, as contained in Appendix A to the report submitted, be adopted;
- (ii) To note that the Council is retaining a cap of 8.5% for council tax support – despite the unprecedented central government funding cuts both for this scheme and for the council generally – as part of our ongoing commitment to

- provide support throughout the different stages of residents' lives, where it is needed;
- (iii) That the retention of the amendments to council tax agreed at full Council on 7 December 2017 be agreed. This means that from 1 April 2019, the following will continue to apply:
- 1) council tax exemption classes A and C will have a discount of 0% for all cases;
  - 2) council tax discount for second homes will be 0% in all cases;
  - 3) council tax discount for empty furnished lets will be 0% in all cases; and
  - 4) a premium will be charged at the maximum percentage allowed on the council tax of all properties that have remained empty for over 2 years in all cases.

### **37 QUARTERLY MONITORING REPORT**

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

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

#### **RESOLVED:**

To note the decision taken on 22 November 2018 to approve receipt of funding for the Recladding of 251-253 Hungerford Road, London, N7 9LD and Braithwaite House, Bunhill Row, London, EC1Y 8NQ.

### **38 CONSTITUTION UPDATE**

Councillor Gill moved the recommendations in the report. Councillor Hamitouche seconded.

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

#### **RESOLVED:**

- (i) That the proposed amendments to the Constitution, as set out in Appendix 1 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.

### **39 CHIEF WHIP'S REPORT**

The Mayor advised that a revised Chief Whip's Report had been circulated in the additional despatch.

Councillor Gill moved the recommendations in the report. Councillor Hamitouche seconded.

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

**RESOLVED:**

- (i) That Cllr Troy Gallagher be appointed to St Luke's Trustee Ltd for a four year term, or until a successor is appointed;
- (ii) That Cllr Spall be appointed to the Sadlers Wells Foundation for a three year term from February 2019, or until a successor is appointed;
- (iii) That Cllr Shaikh be appointed as the Council's substitute member on the Central London Forward Partnership Board until May 2020, or until a successor is appointed;
- (iv) That Cllr Hyde be appointed to the University College London Hospital NHS Foundation Trust for a three year term, or until a successor is appointed;
- (v) That Cllr Hamitouche be nominated to the Cloudesley Charity for a four year term, or until a successor is appointed;
- (vi) That Cllr Cutler be appointed to the Richard Reeves Foundation for a four year term, or until a successor is appointed;
- (vii) That Cllr Cutler be appointed to the Richard Reeves Foundation for a four year term, or until a successor is appointed;
- (viii) That Cllr Graham be appointed to the Children's Services Scrutiny Committee for the remainder of the 2018/19 municipal year or until a successor is appointed;
- (ix) That Cllr Ismail be appointed as a substitute member of the Health Scrutiny Committee for the remainder of the 2018/19 municipal year or until a successor is appointed.

**40 NOTICES OF MOTION**

**MOTION 1: SCRAP UNIVERSAL CREDIT**

Councillor Gallagher moved the motion. Councillor O'Halloran seconded. Councillors Hull and Russell contributed to the debate.

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

**RESOLVED:**

- (i) That this Council has no confidence in Universal Credit;
- (ii) To call on the Leader of the Council to make representations to the Prime Minister to urge her to scrap Universal Credit and to replace it with a social security system that supports people and ensures that nobody is worse-off, rather than driving them into poverty;
- (iii) That Council officers be authorised to commit appropriate resources from within the Council's budget to continue supporting local residents affected by Universal Credit.

**MOTION 2: THE CUTS DON'T WORK**

The motion was moved by Councillor Hull. Councillor Chapman seconded. Councillor Russell contributed to the debate.

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

**RESOLVED:**

- (i) To support calls by the Local Government Association for the Government to close the funding gap facing local councils;
- (ii) To support the Leader of the Council to continue making representations to Government that the upcoming Government Spending Review and 'Fair Funding Review' for local government must reflect genuine need;
- (iii) To ask the Leader of the Council to write to the Chancellor of the Exchequer, the Prime Minister, and the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government setting out the funding pressures faced by our local council, and calling on the Government truly to end austerity in local government.

**MOTION 3: PEOPLE'S VOTE MOTION**

The Mayor advised that a proposed amendment to the motion had been circulated in the additional despatch of papers.

Councillor Russell moved the motion. Councillor Watts moved the amendment. Councillor Russell exercised her right of reply.

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

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

**RESOLVED:**

- (i) To support calls for an immediate General Election, should Parliament vote down the Prime Minister's EU exit deal;
- (ii) That, if a General Election is not called, the Council will support all options remaining on the table that best protect Islington residents, including making representations for a public vote to take place, with a specific option to remain in the EU.

The meeting closed at 9.35 pm

**MAYOR**