



COUNCIL MEETING - 5 DECEMBER 2019

Councillors of the London Borough of Islington are summoned to attend a meeting of the Council to be held in the Council Chamber, Town Hall, Upper Street, N1 2UD on **5 December 2019 at 7.30 pm.**

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Kingi Roper', written in a cursive style.

Chief Executive

AGENDA

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1. Minutes The Minutes of the previous meeting held on 26 September 2019.	1 - 22
2. Declarations of Interest If you have a Disclosable Pecuniary Interest* in an item of business: <ul style="list-style-type: none">▪ if it is not yet on the council's register, you must declare both the existence and details of it at the start of the meeting or when it becomes apparent;▪ you may choose to declare a Disclosable Pecuniary Interest that is already in the register in the interests of openness and transparency. In both the above cases, you must leave the room without participating in discussion of the item. If you have a personal interest in an item of business and you intend to speak or vote on the item you must declare both the existence and details of it at the start of the meeting or when it becomes apparent but you may participate in the discussion and vote on the item. *(a) Employment, etc - Any employment, office, trade, profession or vocation carried on for profit or gain. (b) Sponsorship - Any payment or other financial benefit in respect of your expenses in carrying out duties as a member, or of your election; including from a trade union.	

- (c) Contracts** - Any current contract for goods, services or works, between you or your partner (or a body in which one of you has a beneficial interest) and the council.
- (d) Land** - Any beneficial interest in land which is within the council's area.
- (e) Licences** - Any licence to occupy land in the council's area for a month or longer.
- (f) Corporate tenancies** - Any tenancy between the council and a body in which you or your partner have a beneficial interest.
- (g) Securities** - Any beneficial interest in securities of a body which has a place of business or land in the council's area, if the total nominal value of the securities exceeds £25,000 or one hundredth of the total issued share capital of that body or of any one class of its issued share capital.

This applies to **all** members present at the meeting.

3. Mayoral Announcements

- (i) Apologies
- (ii) Order of business
- (iii) Declaration of discussion items
- (iv) Mayor's announcements
- (v) Length of speeches

4. Leader's Announcements

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| 5. | Council Tax Support Scheme 2020-21 | 23 - 60 |
| 6. | Additional Investment in the 2019-20 Capital Programme | 61 - 68 |
| 7. | Constitution Update | TO FOLLOW |
| 8. | Chief Whip's Report | TO FOLLOW |

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 Despatched : 27 November 2019

LONDON BOROUGH OF ISLINGTON

COUNCIL MEETING - 26 SEPTEMBER 2019

MINUTES OF PROCEEDINGS

At the meeting of the Council held at Council Chamber, Town Hall, Upper Street, N1 2UD on 26 September 2019 at 7.30 pm.

Present:

Ismail	Gill	O'Halloran
Bell-Bradford	Graham	O'Sullivan
Burgess	Hamitouche	Poole
Champion	Heather	Poyser
Chapman	Hull	Russell
Chowdhury	Hyde	Shaikh
Clarke	Jeapes	Smith
Clarke-Perry	Kay	Turan
Comer-Schwartz	Khondoker	Ward
Convery	Khurana	Watts
Cutler	Klute	Wayne
Debono	Lukes	Webbe
Fletcher	Mackmurdie	Williamson
Gallagher	Nathan	Woodbyrne
Gantly	Ngongu	Woolf

The Mayor (Councillor Rakhia Ismail) in the Chair

70 MINUTE'S SILENCE

Prior to the commencement of the meeting, a minute's silence was held for former councillor and Leader of the Council Steve Hitchins who passed away on 24th September. Members of the Council paid tribute to former councillor Hitchins.

71 MINUTES

RESOLVED:

That the minutes of the previous meetings held on 27 June and 25 July be agreed as a correct record and the Mayor be authorised to sign them.

72 **DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

The Mayor advised that all councillors had a disclosable pecuniary interest in relation to Motion 3, '*A Fully Funded, Proper Pay Rise for Council and School Workers*', as the Members' Allowances Scheme links councillor allowances to the Local Government Pay Settlement. The Monitoring Officer had granted a dispensation to all members of the Council to allow the Motion to be considered.

Members of the Unison, Unite and GMB trade unions had a personal interest in Motion 3. Councillors Bell-Bradford, Burgess, Caluori, Champion, Chapman, Chowdhury, Convery, Comer-Schwartz, Cutler, Debono, Fletcher, Gallagher, Gantly, Hamitouche, Hull, Hyde, Ismail, Jeapes, Kay, Khondoker, Khurana, Lukes, Mackmurdie, Nathan, N'gongo, O'Halloran, O'Sullivan, Shaikh, Smith, Turan, Ward, Watts, Wayne, Webbe and Williamson declared a personal interest in relation to the Motion.

73 **MAYORAL ANNOUNCEMENTS**

(i) Apologies

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors Spall, Caluori and Picknell.

Apologies for lateness were received from Councillors Khondoker and Gantly.

(ii) Order of Business

No changes were proposed to the order of business.

(iii) Declaration of Discussion Items

No discussion items were declared.

(iv) Mayor's Announcements

The Mayor had attended several great events over the summer, including Archway Festival, Soul in the City Festival, Hillrise Summer Fair and the excellent Angel Canal Festival. The Mayor was proud to represent a borough with such diversity and strong community spirit. It was amazing to see so many local people, and many councillors, at these community events. The Mayor commented that she looked forward to working with the council to further develop Eid celebrations in future years.

The Mayor had attended the Islington in Bloom Awards. The awards recognised local people for their contribution to the local environment. The Mayor said that it is important that we look after our green spaces and do our best to make Islington beautiful. The Mayor thanked everyone who took part in the competition. The Mayor announced that the winner of "Best Ward" was Highbury West and presented a trophy to the Highbury West ward councillors, with Councillor Webbe, the Executive Member for Environment and Transport.

The Mayor had attended the Climate Strike outside of the Town Hall on Friday 20th September. The Mayor said that the climate emergency is an important issue and the Council would have discussions on this topic tonight and at future meetings.

The Mayor congratulated Islington's young people on their excellent exam results. The Mayor attended St Aloysius, Central Foundation and Elizabeth Garrett Anderson schools on GCSE Results Day and was impressed with the determination and hard work of Islington's young people. The Mayor said that we should be very proud of progress our local schools have made over recent years.

The Mayor encouraged everyone to attend the Remembrance Sunday events in November.

On behalf of the Council, the Mayor passed on her best wishes to Maggie Kufeldt, the former Corporate Director of Housing and Adult Social Services and Head of Paid Service, who was leaving Islington and taking up a new role in Camden.

The Mayor welcomed Linzi Roberts-Egan, the new Chief Executive, to the Council. The Mayor said that councillors were looking forward to working with the new Chief Executive.

(v) Length of Speeches

The Mayor reminded members to take note of the timer and to keep within the permitted length for speeches.

74 LEADER'S ANNOUNCEMENTS

Councillor Watts thanked the Mayor and welcomed Linzi Roberts-Egan, the new Chief Executive, to the meeting. Councillor Watts also thanked Maggie Kufeldt for her contribution to the council and wished her the best in her new role.

Councillor Watts noted the government's recent one year spending announcement and expressed his disappointment that the government had not acted on its previous announcement that austerity was over. Councillor Watts had been involved in budget discussions with government through his role at the Local Government Association. The budget cuts would not be as immediate as in previous years, however since 2010 the Council's budget had been cut by around £270m a year. Councillor Watts was proud at how the Council had stood up to the austerity agenda and also how the Council had protected the services that residents value most. Councillor Watts had written to the government prior to the spending review demanding proper funding for local government, money to deliver genuinely affordable council housing, support for early intervention to keep young people safe, changing national policies to ensure that local authorities are funded and supported to tackle the climate emergency, and reform of the grossly unfair business rates system to ensure that small local businesses receive a fair deal. These demands had not been met through the spending announcement. Councillor Watts said that the spending announcement was

not the end of austerity, it was a continued attack on public services by the government. Councillor Watts said that the Council would continue to challenge the government on these matters as austerity had decimated the services that local communities rely on.

Councillor Watts said he was surprised to read allegations that the Council had done nothing to act on the climate emergency. This was not true. The Council was developing a detailed action plan to achieve net zero carbon by 2030 and the Council was committed to holding a public consultation on the plan. The Council had lobbied the government to provide the resources to allow the Council to make its plans a reality. The Council had successfully lobbied for the government to restore the climate change levy exemption for renewable energy which made it cheaper for local authorities to purchase energy from renewable sources. All council decisions were now required to consider the climate change implications and their contribution to achieving net zero carbon by 2030. New key performance indicators had been agreed to enable the council to evaluate its progress on carbon reduction. The council had continued to decarbonise its pension fund and was working on plans to stop heavy goods vehicles from driving on residential roads in the borough. The Council had also lobbied the Mayor of London to deliver all electric buses at the Holloway bus garage. The Leader was delighted to confirm that the Mayor of London had taken this into account and the 43 bus route was one of the first all-electric double decker bus routes in the country. Councillor Watts thanked Fossil Free Islington and other campaign groups for engaging constructively with the Council and said that their input would inform the council's plans. Islington Council had a strong track record on carbon reduction, meeting its previous target of a 40% carbon reduction by 2020 a number of years early. Councillor Watts recognised that there was more to do and said that this would be discussed further in the petition debate.

Councillor Watts thanked all the council staff who were planning for a possible 'No Deal' Brexit. Leaving the EU without a deal would present many challenges and the council was preparing for all eventualities. The reality was that food, fuel and medicines came to the borough through the English Channel and transport delays could result in disrupted supplies of essential goods. This would have significant consequences for local people.

Councillor Watts said the national political rhetoric was inflaming community tensions and this was disgraceful. Councillor Watts used to work with Jo Cox and said that to use her memory to argue for government policy was disgraceful. Islington knew what happened when far right rhetoric played to the fears of vulnerable people, as that is what led to the Finsbury Park terror attack. The consequences of politicians inflaming community tensions were severe and real people were the victims of this. Councillor Watts said that Islington would stand up for a united and cohesive community no matter the result of the Brexit process. Islington would stand together and stand against hatred.

75 **PETITIONS**

Sebastian Sandys presented a petition regarding the climate emergency, calling on members of the Council to participate in a forthcoming event held by Extinction Rebellion.

76 **PETITION DEBATE: DECLARE A CLIMATE EMERGENCY IN ISLINGTON AND PLEDGE TO REACH NET ZERO EMISSIONS BY 2030**

The petition was presented by Jen Cronin.

Councillor Webbe moved the motion to debate the petition. Councillor Clarke seconded. Councillors Russell and Heather contributed to the debate. Councillor Webbe exercised her right of reply.

The following main points were raised during the debate:

- Climate change was having a devastating impact on communities around the world and urgent action was needed to avert climate catastrophe.
- Islington Council had proudly declared a climate emergency at its 27 June 2019 meeting.
- Islington was the 12th best local authority in the UK for carbon emission reduction and the best in London.
- Islington Council had implemented a number of measures to bring about climate justice. These included setting up London's first municipal energy provider for over a century; Angelic Energy gave all households in the borough the opportunity to purchase 100% renewable energy at fairer prices. Islington Council was one of the first local authorities to establish a carbon offset fund, which ensured that any additional carbon produced by developers in the borough was charged for and the proceeds paid for projects to reduce emissions. Islington was the first borough to introduce emissions based parking permits through the diesel surcharge.
- Further work was required to meet the target of net zero carbon by 2030 and detail would be published in an action plan in due course. This would be subject to public consultation.
- Change at a national level was also required to achieve the net zero carbon target. Members called on government to invest in new sustainable energy sources, develop green jobs and fund local authorities to implement environmental improvements in their area.
- Reducing carbon emissions in Islington would improve the health and wellbeing of local people.
- It was suggested that Islington Council needed to act faster to implement the measures required to achieve the net zero carbon target. In response, it was commented that some would always consider that the council was not acting fast enough, however the council would publish a comprehensive action plan that would be available for public consultation in early 2020. All of those present were encouraged to engage in the consultation process.

- It was commented that local councillors understood climate issues and the need for decisive action.
- Developing a low-carbon economy would be crucial to avert climate disaster.
- Achieving significant climate improvements would require collaboration between local, regional and national government.
- The Council was open to new ideas and suggestions for how it could address the climate emergency.
- Councillors thanked members of the public for campaigning on this issue.

RESOLVED:

To continue to encourage residents to participate in local democracy by carefully considering the concerns raised in the petition and to undertake the debate in a spirit of openness and transparency.

77 QUESTIONS FROM MEMBERS OF THE PUBLIC

Question (a) from Rose Pryce to Councillor Burgess, Executive Member for Health and Social Care:

The dangers of EMF radiation from wireless technology have prompted the U.K. towns of Glastonbury, Frome and Totnes to apply the Precautionary Principle and halt the roll out of 5G. (The cities of Brussels & Geneva have done the same and there are many other worldwide campaigns to stop it). With zero studies to prove that 5G will be safe and considering its Duty Of Care, why isn't Islington Council also putting the health of its community - particularly our children - first?

Response:

Thank you for your question and for drawing my attention to the position of Frome, Glastonbury and Totnes. I note that Glastonbury Council have passed a motion resisting the rollout of 5G equipment, however Glastonbury Council will not be able to put the motion into effect, because planning policies and planning decisions must be in accordance with national planning guidelines. These have been set by national government and have recently been updated. Our position in Islington is informed by the national guidance regarding radio frequency electromagnetic fields and their impact on health. The guidance is based on the latest scientific evidence.

There have been many scientific research projects and studies looking at the impact of exposure to radio waves on health. This body of research has been examined by groups of UK and international independent experts, who have concluded that there is no evidence of adverse health effects if exposure remains below the levels set by current standards. In fact, the World Health Organisation has classified the health effect of radio frequency radiation in the same category as using talcum powder, so I hope that is of some reassurance. However, I do assure you that the council will continue to regularly review our position, based on the latest scientific evidence, national guidance from Public Health England, and national planning policy, to ensure we continue to deliver a healthy Islington for all. Thank you again for your question.

Supplementary question:

Thank you. Can this be raised properly as an issue at a future meeting and given more time so that more evidence can be discussed?

Response:

Thank you. The business that is carried on in this chamber does follow certain rules, but you will have seen tonight that there was a petition that attracted a lot of signatures and triggered a debate. However, I do emphasise, we can only follow the law and the guidelines, including from the World Health Organisation in this case, which is a pretty respected organisation.

Question (b) from John Hartley to Councillor Webbe, Executive Member for Environment & Transport:

I was shocked to discover that Islington does not provide a food waste recycling service to many flats, including for example, Xchange Point in Market Road. Modern, gated, plenty of ground level storage areas, with a regular refuse and recycling service – this large block of flats does not have a food waste communal collecting point because Islington will not provide a collection service. Why does Islington fail to provide a food waste recycling service to 75% of its households?

Response:

Thank you for your question, John. Islington Council is committed to creating a cleaner, greener and more sustainable Islington. To help achieve that ambition, we are working hard to reducing waste, and drive up recycling rates across the borough. Islington Council already provides a weekly food waste collection and recycling service to all street properties with a weekly recycling service, and to approximately half of all-purpose built flats. This means that we are providing food waste recycling to approximately 75% of all households in Islington.

We are working hard to deliver food waste recycling to 100% of households in Islington. We have just consulted on our draft Waste Reduction and Recycling Plan, which is due to be adopted soon, and one of our proposals in that is extending our food waste recycling to all remaining purpose-built blocks of flats and trialling communal collection points for flats above shops. We of course need to ensure that we have the funding to do that.

It's not just about providing the resource; it's ensuring that residents understand the importance of food waste recycling. So we have been rolling out a really clear campaign to make clear that food is not waste, it is a resource. Food can be transformed in to so many things, from electricity to compost. We are making that very clear as part of our Small Change Big Difference campaign, to encourage more local people to recycle food waste. I'm with you; I can't wait until I'm also able to access food waste recycling at home too.

Supplementary question:

Thank you. I applaud the policy of trying to reduce waste. However, I did submit a Freedom of Information request asking how many households did not receive food waste recycling services, and I received the response that approximately 75% of households do not receive it. So I am surprised by your response that 75% of households do receive it. You've said you would like to increase this to 100%, can you give a timescale of how long this will take?

Response:

I'm really sorry that you received incorrect information. We've just consulted on our Waste and Recycling Plan that sets out our intention to expand food waste recycling to 100% of households. We're working through the consultation responses now, but we are hoping to take that to our Executive for agreement on 17th October. We will make the decision, then work towards getting that 100%, subject to us having the funding. It will then need to be considered in our budget for the coming financial year. By April by next year, I hope you will see this beginning to be implemented.

Question (c) from Richenda Walford to Councillor Webbe, Executive Member for Environment & Transport:

There are many items that can be recycled in Hornsey Street but to do so you have to arrive in a polluting motor vehicle. Arrive at the recycling centre on foot or bike and you will be told to take your recycling away and arrange for a motor vehicle to collect it. Why does Islington discourage zero-carbon journeys in this way?

Response:

Thank you for your question Richenda. We are committed to driving up recycling rates in Islington and our Waste Reduction and Recycling Strategy sets out a number of actions to help us achieve this. The Reuse and Recycling Centre does have a drop-off facility for pedestrians and cyclists, where local people can drop off many items. However, the site is an industrial site which is used almost 24 hours a day by heavy good vehicles who manage the large volumes of waste and recycling and consequently. It is simply not safe for pedestrians and cyclists to access the site.

There are a number of other ways in which local people can recycle items without needing to drive a polluting car to the centre. Including at public recycling points for smaller items, using council collection services. We will continue to promote those, as well as the use of car clubs, which are a greener, more sustainable option for anyone who needs to drop-off bulkier items to the Reuse and Recycling Centre.

If you are walking or cycling, you shouldn't need to go all the way to the Waste and Recycling Centre. You should be able to drop items of locally. We are committed to working with local people, to make it easier to recycle, and so people can drop off items that need to be recycled.

The safety aspect of the Waste and Recycling Centre is important. There is, however, a drop-off point at the entrance to centre for smaller items.

Supplementary question:

There is indeed a drop-off point, but there are other items such as asbestos and household chemicals that are not allowed at the drop-off point. We had some asbestos that we couldn't drop-off at the gate; you have to get a local vehicle to do it for you. Why do you not encourage zero carbon journeys in this way?

Response:

You raise an interesting point. Asbestos and chemical items are too dangerous for individuals to drop-off themselves so would require those to be transported safely. I will look at that closely, as we wouldn't want asbestos or dangerous chemicals to be dropped-off at other points either. It shouldn't be right that a pedestrian is carrying asbestos or chemical products by hand through the streets of Islington. We need to protect our residents. These are important questions and I am sure there will be an adequate solution.

Question (d) from Talia Hussain to Councillor Webbe, Executive Member for Environment & Transport:

The draft Transport Strategy says that Islington will investigate the elimination of parking permits for diesel & petrol vehicles by 2030. At the same time, the target for privately owned cars is over 30,000, which suggests that Islington could see 30k electric vehicles on the streets by 2030. How many vehicle charging points will this require on our streets, how much will this cost and how will they be paid for?

Response:

Thank you for your very important question. In June the Council declared an Environment and Climate Emergency and committed to making Islington net zero carbon by 2030. To achieve this bold ambition and clean up the air we breathe, we want to see Petrol and Diesel vehicles removed from our streets by 2030. Nevermind the government's plan to end the government's plan to end Petrol and Diesel cars by 2041. In Islington, we want to ensure that those who need to use vehicles do so sustainably, that is why we have called on the Mayor of London to end diesel vehicles in London by 2025.

We want Islington to be a place where people use healthy, efficient and sustainable modes of transport, where there are no barriers to walking, cycling and using public transport. In terms of targets for charging points, we want to make sure that the number of charging points is sufficient for the future. We have committed to installing 400 electric vehicle charging points by 2022. We have already delivered 167 on-street charging points. Our ambition is for zero emission vehicles; electric cars are part of that agenda, but there is also talk of using hydrogen and other technologies.

There will be a need to ensure that those who need to make car journeys are supported in doing so as sustainably as possible.

Supplementary question:

I know that Councillor Webbe is very passionate about carbon reduction and is engaging with climate campaigners on environmental issues. What science tells us about electric vehicles is that they emit as much particulate matter as conventional vehicles. They include carbon emissions from their production which are as much as 90% of conventional vehicles and of course they represent the same road danger. The answer isn't more vehicles on our roads. Will the council engage with the evidence on electric vehicles, including that they use rare minerals that are mined in poor countries with poor labour standards such as the Democratic Republic of Congo, that produces 60% of the world's cobalt and has terrible child labour laws?

Response:

As I set out, our future isn't necessarily electric vehicles. What we are seeking to do is move with the advances in technology. At the moment the technological advances suggest that, for the UK right now, that for those who need to use a vehicle, it is better if they are using an electric vehicle. They are available in the UK right now. We have looked at other types of vehicles, but the infrastructure isn't there to take this forward. What we have now is electric vehicles.

Electric vehicles may not be the latest technology in 2030. What our strategy sets out is that we want to move to zero emission vehicles. We hope that technological advances will mean that we will get new forms of vehicles that will not emit particulate matters. We are concerned about particulate matter and that is why our Air Quality Strategy sets out that we will move to World Health Organisation standards on particulate matters. Our agenda for moving forward is based on the reality. We understand these issues and will challenge the industry to get answers quicker; we will not sit still.

Question from a member of the public to Councillor Webbe, Executive Member for Environment & Transport:

What measures are you taking to reduce car parking in Islington?

Response:

Thank you for your question. What we want to do is create a transition and rebalance our roads in favour of walking, cycling and public transport. For too long our roads have been designed for cars. What we want to do is change and transform our roads so that we improve opportunities for walking, cycling and public transport. We are removing parking spaces and delivering cycle parking across the borough.

78 QUESTIONS FROM MEMBERS OF THE COUNCIL

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

Finsbury Park Ward is afflicted by a drug related crime crisis. The ward also has high levels of anti-social behaviour (ASB) related to business activities, with motor traffic offences being committed regularly by Uber and Deliveroo delivery drivers, servicing food and alcohol retailers, whose activities are proving to be incompatible with ethical trading and the well-being of residents living nearby.

In view of this situation, would you agree that in order to tackle these problems more effectively, the council and the police need to work together much more closely with people in the local community, and that to assist this cooperation the processes for reporting crime and ASB to the authorities, and the procedures for using CCTV to prevent and detect crime and ASB, need to be improved and communicated much more effectively to the public?

Response:

Thank you for the question, Gary. Islington Council is committed to making our borough a safer place for everyone. To tackle anti-social behaviour effectively we must continue to work with police, other partners and the wider community. That is why we share the deep concerns expressed by local residents, businesses, councillors and police about current levels of drug dealing, drug use and associated issues of antisocial behaviour, crime and violence in the wider Finsbury Park area.

The Safer Islington Partnership has taken on the issue of drug-related offending as one of its five key priorities for this year. We have put in place a joint Finsbury Park Community Safety Plan, involving council and police colleagues in Hackney, Haringey and British Transport Police, and will continue to work with other partners like the NHS and local charities to tackle the problems you have raised. We are committed to improving the safety, security and welfare of all of the area's residents and have already introduced a number of measures in the Finsbury Park area to prevent and tackle crime including –

- seven extra uniformed police officers
- increased the size of policing teams
- increased police patrols, stop-and-searches and arrests
- a knife-bin outside St Mellitus Church
- installed new CCTV cameras in crime hotspots
- physical improvements to 'design out' crime
- needle-exchange schemes
- disabled the free-calls-to-mobiles function on BT Inlink booths
- expanded the network of Safe Havens
- substance misuse support for both adults and young people
- specialist targeted support for children at risk and their families
- safe and secure accommodation for rough sleepers

- an extensive programme of positive activities for young people during the summer.

These measures have already seen the closure of 8 crack houses, the removal of over 1,000 weapons from local streets and helped get 39 rough sleepers from Stroud Green Road into secure accommodation.

We are also working hard to find practical ways to reduce the anti-social behaviour caused by the congregation of delivery drivers linked to the gig economy including tackling noise pollution and parking and traffic violations, mainly around the Nags Head area. We are engaging with delivery companies including Uber Eats and Deliveroo to ensure that drivers are given clear instructions on parking legitimately, noise nuisance and behaviour whilst working. Some of their drivers have been suspended as a result. A number of pro-active patrols have been carried out in the area already, and the ASB team are monitoring the area at night. They have identified a number of mopeds at the location and are gathering evidence of unreasonable behaviour, leading to enforcement action against drivers.

The Finsbury Park Neighbourhood Policing Team and traffic officers patrol the area regularly. On their last patrol three riders were reported for various offences. Finally, while deliveries are not currently a licensable activity forming part of a restaurant's licence conditions, in the future consideration may be made to adding conditions to new licenses regarding the use of motorised deliveries.

I welcome this progress but know there is so much more to do, and you are right that we need to do even more work with our communities, not just for them.

Supplementary question:

Thank you Councillor Hull for your comprehensive answer. I've noticed that, with all the problems we talk about in the Finsbury Park area, there is a lack of reporting and communication. This is one of the key things we need to improve. For example, in relation to the Police, there was a very useful newsletter that went out, but it would have been helpful to include contact numbers for Safer Neighbourhood Teams in the area, or even an email address. I think an area that needs more attention is the anti-social behaviour telephone line. It's an opaque and uphill complaints process. I've heard lots of complaints about the process, and I'm not blaming council staff, but I think the process needs to be looked at. It seems to have random hours, sometimes you don't get a response, it's really complicated and time consuming and doesn't lend itself to efficient reporting. In terms of traffic offences, I think we need to give more publicity on how you report those. As for CCTV, we can make improvements by working with the Police, looking at where it is deployed and how it is used.

Response:

Yes, we are enhancing our communications plan. We have written to every household in Finsbury Park ward and many households in Highbury West. Around 16,000 letters went out in my name and the name of the Borough Commander

raising a number of the issues you have raised. We wanted to ensure that local residents and businesses are informed on the progress we are making and understand the critical value of reporting crimes as they occur. I think you're right that the ASB service and the CCTV service could be further improved and I'll ensure that I raise this in my conversations with officers. Despite central government cuts, that have seen the council's core funding cut by 70% and 300 police officers taken off our borough's streets, we are determined to do all we can to tackle crime and anti-social behaviour that blights communities and make Islington a safer place for everyone. I look forward to working with you and the other Finsbury Park and Highbury West ward councillors to make that happen.

Question (b) from Councillor Clarke to Councillor Burgess, Executive Member for Health and Social Care:

All councillors in Islington received a letter from Unite London Region about a month ago informing us about the Unite members dispute with GLL in Bromley – they have been on strike since 6th June this year. They are striking about staff cuts and to protect the service and staffing. They say that 70% of GLL staff are on zero hours contracts are not paid the London Living Wage (LLW.) They also state that GLL refuse to recognise trade unions.

As a user of GLL run leisure facilities in Islington I am concerned in case the problems Unite members are having in Bromley are happening in centres run by GLL in Islington. Some of my concerns are whether GLL Islington pay the LLW, whether they use zero hours contracts, whether they recognise trade unions and provide facility time for union reps, practicing collective bargaining.

I am also concerned about the accountability of the top level of managers in GLL and who they are answerable to.

Can you confirm that we as a council support the workers in GLL and will work with GLL and the unions involved to ensure that workers' rights to organise in a union are being protected, jobs are being protected and that GLL is adhering to our contract with them?

Response:

We are committed to making the borough a fairer place and that includes that staff working directly for the council, or through contractors, receive fair pay and terms and conditions. I'm pleased to have this opportunity to assure you and all members that GLL is adhering to the terms of our contract. They have been responsible for the management and delivery of leisure services in the London Borough of Islington since April 2014 and they have been paying the London Living Wage to staff since that time. I think we were probably the first borough in London to pay the London Living Wage to leisure centre staff. They do recognise trade unions, they engage in collective bargaining, and they provide facilities for union representatives to protect the rights of workers. In Islington the relevant union is Unison. They also have Investors in People Silver Status, and they have contractual obligations to employ local residents. In 2017, 17 local residents were trained and that led to 8 being

employed locally. The following year, 39 local residents were trained and 15 of those were locally employed. There were 10 local apprenticeship placements in 2017 and 7 in 2018. They have had some trouble in getting people to fulfil those apprenticeship roles, so they are working hard to get more and we are helping them with that.

Islington Council does not support the use of exploitative zero-hours contracts, which deny employees the opportunity to take work with other employers or to refuse work that is offered by their main employer. GLL have confirmed that they do not use exploitative zero-hours contracts of this nature and about 70% of the hours of work at GLL locally is carried out by people on permanent contracts. However, sports coaches and fitness instructors often prefer the flexibility of casual contracts.

GLL is a charitable social enterprise owned by its staff on a one-person-one-share basis and the management are accountable to the elected management board which includes staff members, independent trustees and Greenwich councillors. I'd be happy to give you more information after the meeting.

Supplementary question:

Thank you, that is very reassuring. To give you an update, in Bromley GLL are running the libraries. The Bromley library service, supported by Unite, have been on strike for 15 weeks. Does GLL have an anti-bullying policy in Islington, and is it in operation in all centres and at all levels of the organisation, including management?

Response:

I assume they have an anti-bullying policy but I'd need to find out. I'm not responsible for GLL elsewhere in the country, but I know in Islington we keep them to the contract we have with them, that I think is a very good contract. It would be up to Bromley Council to give their workers a better deal, but it's not something I can comment on I'm afraid.

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

What lessons did you learn from Car Free Day?

Response:

Thank you for your question. We were very excited by Car Free Day and our ability to participate in the London-wide celebrations. Islington Council is committed to cleaning up the air we breathe and creating healthy streets, safe for walking and cycling. World Car Free Day allows people of all ages and backgrounds to reimagine their city free from cars and reclaim their streets while walking, cycling and exploring the place they live. We've learned that we can close our streets and can experience what it feels like to reimagine those streets.

This year's World Car Free day was Islington's biggest by far, with a council organised event in St John Street. The councillors of Bunhill and Clerkenwell were delighted to attend that event. We also made it possible for residents to apply for a Play Street; we had 18 Play Streets organised by local residents across the borough. Play Streets enable children and their families and their wider community to reclaim their streets by enabling residents to close residential streets to traffic and vehicles for a few hours turning them into a place where children can play and where residents and their neighbours can get together and by participating in Play Streets residents can celebrate World Car Free Day with us.

The council will go back to those who organised the Play Streets and work with them and encourage them to run a regular Play Street, so those 18 streets can be added to our existing Play Streets, so we can continue to grow the notion of closing your street to make it more enjoyable and reclaim that street for people not cars.

Supplementary question:

Thank you for your response. Car Free Day was fantastic, at St John Street the council staff were doing an amazing job in the rain, people were really enjoying themselves. I'd just like to read something from a 7-year-old about Car Free Day: "It feels really strange to be playing in the streets; I felt scared I was going to get hit by a car, but then I remember there are no cars. It's amazing". Thank you Councillor Webbe, you enabled a really good thing to happen. Some parents tried to organise a play street but were told that they couldn't do one because they'd already had one this year. I think there may have been a problem with communication between all the different bits of the council that manage the process, so what I'm asking is, can we work together to try and make sure that the process is as smooth as possible to make sure we have an even bigger Car Free Day next year?

Response:

Thank you. We are absolutely clear that we want these celebrations to grow. Next year will be even bigger than this year. We also want our Play Streets to grow. We will remove all barriers to that growth. Play Streets have been in Islington for as long as I can remember. There is no notion that if you run a Play Street in a year once you can't hold it again; the whole point is that you run them time and time again. That is what this Council is committed to; so absolutely, we will do more to allow Play Streets to grow and develop. After all, it is residents themselves that know their streets. We want residents to organise together, work together, and enable their streets to feel free and be free of cars, as it is right that our streets are reclaimed for people. Thank you.

Question (d) from Councillor Russell to Councillor O'Halloran, Executive Member for Community Development:

Can you provide an update on the Council's preparations for a No Deal Brexit?

Response:

Thank you for your question, Cllr Russell. The Council is doing all that it can to prepare for all Brexit eventualities, but as you will hear me say later tonight, it is clear that a 'No Deal' Brexit would be devastating for the country and the uncertainty of what 'No Deal' would mean for the services and support the council provides for local people is a huge challenge. The Brexit Resilience Group, which brings together services across the council to assess risks and issues facing the council as a consequence of Brexit, including a 'No Deal' Brexit, has been meeting regularly to ensure that contingency plans are in place. We are also in close contact with bodies such as London Councils and the Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government to provide updates on preparations and to raise issues of concern.

The BRG has produced and continues to monitor the Islington Brexit risk register and has been engaged in civil contingency planning with partner organisations. A comprehensive update on Islington's Brexit readiness was presented at the last Audit Committee on the 2nd September. A full report detailing the work that has been done and the risk register can be found online with the papers of this meeting, but I want to take this opportunity to repeat our commitment to our dedicated staff and people living in Islington from other EU countries – you are welcome here, you all play a vital part in our community, and you have our full support in continuing to do so. We will continue to monitor the risk register, and update it if further messaging is received from Central Government and the situation changes or becomes clearer. Thank you again for your question.

Supplementary question:

Thank you. Can I thank you for the constructive and helpful way in which you followed up on my question at the last Council meeting, I really appreciate it. I'm really reassured at your update, particularly in that solid commitment to EU citizens in the event of a crash-out 'No Deal' Brexit. EU citizens are concerned that they may not be able to vote in the London Elections next year in the event of a 'No Deal' Brexit and I just hope that Islington Council will make representations to make sure EU citizens are able to continue to vote.

Response:

As far as I am aware that information is not true; but I will defer to Councillor Watts on this point.

Response from Councillor Watts:

As I understand it, the legal position is clear. EU citizens have the right to vote until Parliament passes primary legislation to remove their right to vote. The message needs to be really clear from all of us this evening, that our EU friends, neighbours and citizens can absolutely democratically participate in those elections until that right is taken away by Parliament, and I would never support any legislation that did that.

79 BYELAW FOR THE MANAGEMENT OF BARBEQUES ON Highbury Fields

Councillor Webbe moved the recommendations in the report. Councillor Gill seconded. Councillor Russell contributed to the debate. Councillor Webbe exercised her right of reply.

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

RESOLVED:

- (i) That it be noted that the Council has now received provisional approval for the barbecue byelaw submitted to them on 14 June from the Secretary of State, and further that the Secretary of State has stated that subject to the consideration of any objections which the Secretary of State may receive, the byelaws may be submitted to the department for confirmation if they are formally adopted by the Council.
- (ii) That the Proposed Byelaw, as set out at Appendix 2 to the report submitted, be adopted and to proceed with the next steps to formalise the byelaw as set out in the report.

80 LONDON COUNCILS' TRANSPORT AND ENVIRONMENT COMMITTEE - GOVERNING AGREEMENT AMENDMENT FOR GREATER LONDON DOCKLESS VEHICLE HIRE BYELAW

Councillor Webbe moved the recommendations in the report. Councillor Gill seconded. The recommendations in the report were put to the vote and **CARRIED**.

RESOLVED:

- (i) That authority be delegated to London Councils Transport and Environment Committee to make a byelaw to regulate dockless vehicles in Islington, as set out in paragraph 3.10 of the report submitted.
- (ii) That the Council's Acting Director of Law and Governance be authorised to sign any necessary documents to give effect to the amendment to the London Councils' Transport and Environment Committee Governing Agreement dated 13 December 2001 (as amended).

81 CHIEF WHIP'S REPORT

The Mayor advised that a revised report has been circulated in the second despatch of papers.

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 Cllr Cutler be appointed to the board of City of London Academy Islington from 15 October 2019 for a four year term or until a successor is appointed.
- (ii) That Cllr Heather be appointed to the board of the Finsbury Park Trust from 15 December 2019 for a three year term or until a successor is appointed.
- (iii) That Cllr Shaikh be appointed a substitute member of the board of the Finsbury Park Trust from 15 December 2019 for a three year term or until a successor is appointed.
- (iv) That Cllr Gill be appointed to the Community Chest Panel with immediate effect for the remainder of the municipal year or until a successor is appointed.
- (v) That Laura Eden, Director of Youth and Communities, be appointed as the substitute member for Carmel Littleton, Corporate Director – People Directorate, on the Health and Wellbeing Board.
- (vi) That Zaleera Wallace be appointed as the Secondary Parent Governor Representative on the Children’s Services Scrutiny Committee for a four year term or until a successor is appointed.
- (vii) That the designation of the Executive Member for Finance, Performance and Community Safety as the Champion for Victims (of crime) be noted.
- (viii) That the following paragraph is removed from the Personnel Sub Committee’s Terms of Reference: ‘The making of the council’s personnel policies and procedures and the setting of the terms and conditions of employment.’

82 NOTICES OF MOTION

Motion 1 – Women’s Night Safety Charter

Councillor O’Halloran moved the motion. Councillor Woodbyrne seconded. Councillor Russell contributed to the debate.

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

RESOLVED:

- (i) To support and deliver on all the pledges within the Women’s Night Safety Charter;
- (ii) To encourage other businesses and organisations in Islington that operate at night to sign-up to the Women’s Night Safety Charter;

- (iii) To monitor the number of Islington businesses and organisations that sign-up to the Women's Night Safety Charter as part of the Council's efforts to prevent and reduce violence against women and girls in the borough;
- (iv) To work with the Mayor of London to seek to make London a safer city at night for all.

Motion 2 – Opposing a 'No Deal' Brexit

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

Councillor Watts moved the motion. Councillor O'Halloran seconded. Councillor Russell moved her amendment. Councillor Lukes contributed to the debate.

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

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

RESOLVED:

- (i) That the Council is opposed in the strongest terms to a 'No Deal' Brexit;
- (ii) That a 'No Deal' Brexit should be ruled out by the Government, an extension to the date the UK is due to leave the EU negotiated and then a General Election should be called to give people their say.

Motion 3 – A Fully Funded, Proper Pay Rise for Council and School Workers

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

The Mayor reminded members of the interests already declared in relation to this item.

Councillor Hyde moved the motion. Councillor Smith seconded. Councillor Russell moved her amendment. Councillors Graham and Watts contributed to the debate.

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

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

RESOLVED:

- (i) To support the pay claim submitted by Unite, GMB and UNISON on behalf of council and school workers for a £10 per hour minimum wage and a 10% uplift across all other pay points in 2020/21;
- (ii) To call on the Local Government Association to make urgent representations to central government to fund the National Joint Council (NJC) pay claim;
- (iii) To write to the Chancellor and Secretary of State to call for a pay increase for local government workers to be funded with new money from central government;
- (iv) To continue to encourage all local government workers to join a trade union.

Motion 4 – Opposition to Heathrow Expansion and the introduction of concentrated flight paths over Islington

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 Webbe moved her 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 reaffirm the Council's position to oppose further expansion of Heathrow airport;
- (ii) To oppose expansion of airport capacity in London if the Government cannot demonstrate that it is accommodated within the emissions budget that the Climate Change Committee (CCC) recommends for aviation in 2050, as well as other environmental limits, such as air quality;
- (iii) To make representations to London City Airport and the Civil Aviation Authority calling for a fairer distribution of flight paths in London;
- (iv) To make representations to the Government urging UK Aviation Noise policy to be brought into line with WHO recommendations;
- (v) To register as an 'Interested Party' in the Development Consent Order Process for the proposed expansion of Heathrow;

- (vi) To investigate joining the No Third Runway Coalition as a local authority member.

Motion 5 – Single-use plastic-free Islington

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 Webbe moved her amendment.

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

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

RESOLVED:

- (i) To bring a report to the Environment and Regeneration Scrutiny Committee on the options for reducing the use of unnecessary non-medical Single Use Plastics (SUP) items in Islington, with the aim of:
- ensuring that Islington Council becomes a full signatory of the 'Plastic Free Pledge' (<https://plasticfreepledge.com/>) by phasing out the use of unnecessary SUPs in all Council buildings, and working with commissioning partners to end the purchase and procurement of SUPs through the council supply chain;
 - further encouraging the borough's businesses, schools, organisations and residents to go 'single-use plastic free,' working to share business support, practical guidelines and advice to help local businesses transition from SUPs to re-usable alternatives;
 - supporting more traders on Council land to sell reusable containers and invite customers to bring their own, with the aim of phasing out SUPs;
 - requiring food and drink vendors at sporting and other events or on film locations in the borough to avoid SUPs and other high carbon single-use items as a condition of their event permission;
 - investigating whether avoidance of SUPs could be a condition of licensing for pubs, nightclubs and music venues.
- (ii) To continue to call on National Government to take robust action in reducing single-use plastics.

The meeting closed at 9.40 pm

MAYOR

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Report of: Executive Member for Finance, Performance and Community Safety

Meeting of	Date	Wards
Council	5 December 2019	All

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SUBJECT: THE COUNCIL TAX SUPPORT SCHEME FOR 2020/21

1. Synopsis

- 1.1 The Council Tax Support Scheme for 2019/20 was agreed by Council on 6 December 2018. These schemes have to be agreed by full Council by 31 January for each subsequent year, even if they remain unchanged. This report seeks approval for the Council Tax Support Scheme for 2020/21.
- 1.2 There is also a legal requirement to affirm on an annual basis the council tax discounts and exemptions for empty properties and the empty rates premium.

2. Recommendations

- 2.1 To agree to adopt the Council Tax Support Scheme for 2020/21 as contained in Appendix A.
- 2.2 To note the Council is retaining a cap of 8.5% for council tax support – despite 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 (paragraphs 4.8 to 4.12).
- 2.3 To retain the amendments to council tax agreed at full Council on 6 December 2018. To be clear, this means that, from 1 April 2020, 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.

3 Background

- 3.1 As a result of the Government's abolition of council tax benefit from 1 April 2013, combined with a reduction in our funding from the Government of £2.9m at that time, we had to propose and consult on a new Council Tax Support Scheme.
- 3.2 There is a legal requirement for the Council to agree the scheme each year and a further requirement to consult with residents if the scheme is changed. This report is recommending a continuation of the current scheme for 2020/21.

4 Detail leading to our recommended Council Tax Support Scheme

The scheme adopted for 2019/20

- 4.1 Islington's Council Tax Support Scheme is designed to:
 - allow working age claimants 91.5% of the support they would have been entitled to under the old council tax benefit rules;
 - allow a £100 older person discount for residents aged 65 or over who are liable for council tax;
 - protect pensioners in order that their council tax support is broadly the same as they would have received in council tax benefit;
 - base the award for working age people on the Council Tax Benefit Regulations providing extra support for disabled people, families with children, and people in employment;
 - allow for income rises of £5 a week (cumulatively) without a reduction in support to encourage paid employment;
 - unlike national benefits, protect families that have more than 2 children.
- 4.2 In addition to this, we have a £25,000 Council Tax Support welfare provision fund within the Islington Resident Support Scheme to help provide a safety net for claimants who struggle to cope with the impact of being charged council tax.
- 4.3 The Council implemented and has continued to apply this scheme, taking account of the views expressed in public consultations carried out in 2012 and 2016 and through equality impact assessments undertaken annually since 2012.

The reason for leaving the scheme unchanged for 2020/21

- 4.4 The majority of the responses from both public consultations contained some expression of concern about residents' current circumstances – e.g. financial difficulty, welfare reform, supporting the family, coping through disability, finding a job. They were worried about how changes to council tax support would affect

them personally. For this reason, we have, for each year of the scheme, chosen to limit the cap in council tax support to just 8.5%, providing residents with a greater opportunity to adapt to the significant changes and cuts that have been made to welfare benefits generally by central government.

- 4.5 The £100 older person's discount has been consistently supported.
- 4.6 Our intention to support people in low-paid work by ignoring cumulative increases in income of less than £5 received significant support.
- 4.7 To help us fund the scheme we have removed council tax exemptions and discounts for some empty properties and charged the maximum premium allowed on properties standing empty for more than 2 years. The additional revenue from this is re-invested into the Council Tax Support Scheme. This approach also supports our objective to discourage property in Islington being used for investment-only purposes and then being left vacant. This report recommends that our approach to empty properties is continued in 2020/21 and we charge the maximum premium allowed in law from that date.

The 8.5% Council Tax Support cap – part of a wider support package

- 4.8 **Limiting the impact** – We view capping the council tax support entitlement by only 8.5% as an important feature in the range of support which we provide to residents. The loss of grant funding from the government was £2.9m when the scheme was first introduced in 2013. We would have needed to cap council tax support by over 18% to recover the funding lost as a result of this government cut. Instead, in 2013 we started funding £1.5m of the loss directly from the council's budget.
- 4.9 **Even higher costs** – As a result of council tax increases over the last six years of the council tax scheme, the loss now is around £2m. We estimate that we would need to cap the council tax scheme by around 20% to cover the full cost of the scheme. Most councils are recovering their costs in such a way. However, we have instead retained the 8.5% cap, protecting residents at significant cost to the council itself.
- 4.10 **Range of support** – The council (together with the Cripplegate Foundation) offer welfare provision through the Islington Resident Support Scheme. A Guardian newspaper freedom of information request showed that, since welfare provision was passed down to local councils by the government in 2013, the London Borough of Islington is one of only two councils nationally to have increased the funding put into maintaining this local safety net. Throughout the country, schemes have either been shelved or significantly reduced as a result of unprecedented government cuts. So, in many places, help in a crisis or through the provision of essential household items is not available in the way that it was, if at all. In Islington, however, despite the removal of specific grant funding from government, we have a commitment to cover £1.4m of community care grants from our own funds and agreement from Cripplegate and St Sepulchre to add further charitable monies to this, further augmenting the impact of the scheme.

- 4.11 **Help and advice** – We made £1,151,942 of discretionary housing payments in 2018/19 to help tenants who cannot pay their rent due to government benefit cuts and we have a fund for residents who are struggling to pay their council tax. We are supporting claimants affected by the dramatic impact of universal credit, for instance by providing significant funding for advice by Islington Citizens Advice, Islington Law Centre, Islington Peoples Rights, Help On Your Doorstep and other partners, as well as delivering our own services through the Income Maximisation Team, Families First and our own universal credit support offer to provide help and advice with their claim, access housing advice and support, maximise their benefit claim and get employment support. This is offered in conjunction with the Help to Claim service from Citizen’s Advice, which helps vulnerable residents make a claim for Universal Credit. We provide crucial energy support through SHINE and help residents find employment through our iWork Team.
- 4.12 **Support during a lifetime** – We have a range of support, aligned with our priorities of tackling poverty and reducing inequality, that can be accessed during the different stages of peoples’ lives. We do not want people to be dependent on the council, but we aim to provide help for the right reason at the right time. Appendix C contains the detail of our extensive targeted provision of support.

Approval of the 2020/21 Council Tax Support Scheme

- 4.13 It is recommended that the Council Tax Support Scheme (Appendix A) remains unchanged for 2020/21, apart from two minor adjustments to:
- make our intention clearer that an application for universal credit is also treated as a claim for council tax support when notified by the DWP
 - change the date in the scheme to ensure it applies for 2020/21

5 Financial Implications

5.1 The estimated cost of continuing the existing Council Tax Support Scheme is £2m, financed through the Council’s budget.

5.2 In addition, the Council also provides further support through local schemes, namely the Older Person’s Discount, Care Leaver’s Allowance, Foster Care Allowance and Shared Lives Allowance, at a total cost to the Council of £785k, financed through the Council’s budget.

6 Equality Implications and Resident Impact Assessment

- 6.1 The Council Tax Support Scheme Resident Impact Assessment is attached as Appendix B. This can be summarised as follows:
- The Council is choosing to keep most criteria for the Council Tax Support Scheme the same as for Council Tax Benefit because it considers this to be fair, with extra premiums already awarded for disability, children and incentives for employment.
 - The Council Tax Support Scheme provides full protection for older people who are a vulnerable group whom we intend to continue to support.

- In relation to older people aged 65 or over, Islington's minimum Council Tax Support of £100 means that there will be fewer marginal cases of older people who are not quite poor enough to receive the benefit but who are still financially fragile. People in this category are less likely to access, or be able to access, the labour market.
- Retaining the 8.5% reduction despite the loss of the government grant helps all residents who will be impacted by the cumulative loss of other benefits from the government's welfare reforms.
- Applying the 8.5% reduction to the end of the benefit award (bottom slicing) rather than taking this from the liability (top slicing) works out better for people on partial benefit and it was people on partial benefit who were most concerned about the financial impact of the changes to them personally.

6.2 The Resident Impact Assessment identified the following as the key mitigation options:

- The Council's limiting of the reduction in benefit from what would have been in the region of 18% to 8.5% allows affected claimants greater opportunity to adapt to their financial circumstances.
- The Council can continue to help to finance the costs of limiting the reduction in benefit to 8.5% by adopting the other changes in the Local Government Finance Act regarding exemptions and discounts ('empties') by charging fully for class A and C empty properties, second homes and empty furnished lets.
- The Council can continue to limit the impact of Council Tax by adopting a non-standard council tax recovery process for council tax support recipients, where appropriate.
- The Council can mitigate for residents who cannot pay through the use of the council tax welfare provision (or other funds) in the Resident Support Scheme.

7. Legal Implications

7.1 The Council Tax Support Scheme is considered to be lawful. There are no material changes to the terms of the scheme for 2020/21, so the requirement now is for full Council to agree the scheme for its continuing adoption from 1 April 2020 for the full 2020/21 council tax year.

7.2 The Council must have due regard to the Public Sector Equality Duty, which is integral to the Council's functions, and which is set out in Section 149 of the Equality Act 2010 as follows:

- "1) A public authority must, in the exercise of its functions, have due regard to the need to —
- (a) eliminate discrimination, harassment, victimisation and any other conduct that is prohibited by or under this Act;
 - (b) advance equality of opportunity between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and persons who do not share it;
 - (c) foster good relations between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and persons who do not share it...
- (3) Having due regard to the need to advance equality of opportunity between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and persons who do not share it involves having due regard, in particular, to the need to-

- (a) remove or minimise disadvantages suffered by persons who share a relevant protected characteristic that are connected to that characteristic;
- (b) take steps to meet the needs of persons who share a relevant protected characteristic that are different from the needs of persons who do not share it;
- (c) encourage persons who share a relevant protected characteristic to participate in public life or in any other activity in which participation by such persons is disproportionately low.
- (4) The steps involved in meeting the needs of disabled persons that are different from the needs of persons who are not disabled include, in particular, steps to take account of disabled persons' disabilities.
- (5) Having due regard to the need to foster good relations between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and persons who do not share it involves having due regard, in particular, to the need to–
 - (a) tackle prejudice, and
 - (b) promote understanding.
- (6) Compliance with the duties in this section may involve treating some persons more favourably than others; but that is not to be taken as permitting conduct that would otherwise be prohibited by or under this Act.
- (7) The relevant protected characteristics are–
 - age;
 - disability;
 - gender reassignment;
 - pregnancy and maternity;
 - race;
 - religion or belief;
 - sex;
 - sexual orientation.”

7.3 The equality implications of the proposed scheme for 2020/21 are detailed in Section 6.

8 Environmental Implications and contribution to achieving a net zero carbon Islington by 2030

This report in itself does not in itself have any direct environmental implications.

9 Conclusion and Reason for Recommendations

9.1 This report recommends that the Council Tax Support Scheme for 2020/21 is approved. This means we would continue to use our funds to cover the impact of capping the council tax support entitlement by 8.5%.

9.2 The report also identifies the range of discretionary support that we offer and notes that Islington’s Resident Support Scheme continues to be well-funded, bucking the national trend.

- 9.3 This report recommends that we continue with the changes made in 2013/14 and retained subsequently to discounts and exemptions for empty properties and continue to charge the maximum premium allowed in law for properties left empty for more than two years. This helps to bridge the gap imposed by the Government in the council tax support scheme funding, so that, in line with our principles, those who are able to pay more will continue to support those who are less able to pay.

Appendices: Appendix A: Council Tax Support Scheme for 2020/21
Appendix B: Resident Impact Assessment
Appendix C: From the cradle to the grave – a lifetime of support

Background papers: None

Final Report Clearance

Signed by



26/11/2019

Executive Member Finance, Performance and
Community Safety

Date

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Section 5 – Financial implications supplied by –
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London Borough of Islington

Council Tax Support Scheme

Draft for approval by Council on 5 December 2019



Islington Council: Council Tax Support Scheme

1. This document and the law

This document is the London Borough of Islington's Council Tax Reduction Scheme, set out under section 13A (2) [substituted by clause 8 of the Local government finance Bill] of the Local Government Finance Act 1992.

This scheme, referred to as Council Tax Support (CTS), has been agreed based on:

- the outcome of a public consultation exercise carried out in 2012 and repeated in 2016;
- the Equality Impact Assessment made in relation to the scheme and the subsequent Resident Impact Assessments carried out annually; and
- Considerations and decisions made annually by full Council.

2. Introduction

CTS reduces the amount of council tax a person has to pay based on an assessment made by Islington Council (the Council). As the Billing Authority, council tax is raised and charged by the Council and the CTS assessed by the Council can only be applied to council tax bills issued by the Council.

This scheme sets out rules for three classes of claimants. The amount of CTS shall be determined through means testing. As such the income and capital of the claimant and any partner or partners in the case of a polygamous couple in the household shall be taken into account. It is considered that eligibility for CTS is defined by the terms of the former Council Tax Benefit (CTB) scheme as set out in the Social Security Contributions and Benefits Act 1992, the Social Security Administration Act 1992, the Council Tax Benefit Regulations 2006 and the Housing Benefit and Council Tax Benefit (Decisions and Appeals) Regulations 2001, the Council Tax Reduction Schemes (Default Scheme) (England) Regulations 2012. These will hereafter be known as the Regulations and these Regulations set out how CTB was claimed, how it was calculated and how it was paid. This scheme proposes that the principles and methods set out in those Regulations be used to determine CTS, except where amendments are set out in this scheme or by statute under the Local Government Finance Act 1992 (as amended) and accompanying legislation. For the avoidance of doubt, where there is a difference or conflict between the Regulations and the Council's CTS scheme, then it is the Council's CTS scheme as set out here that will take precedence and be applied.

3. Making a claim

A claim must be made in respect of a person who is resident in the dwelling concerned, and liable for payment of council tax. A valid claim can be made by the person liable for council tax or by their appointed representative.

3.1 How to claim

3.1.1 Except where paragraph 3.1.2 applies, an application shall be required for all new claims from 1 April 2013. A person liable to pay council tax will be able to make a claim using any of the methods the Council provides for. Generally, claims can be made via telephone, email, the Council website, in writing or in person at Islington Council offices, or to the Department of Work and Pensions (DWP) and Jobcentres. Notification by the DWP that a person has claimed universal credit will be treated as an application for CTS. A valid claim must be accompanied by the necessary supporting evidence.

3.1.2 For claimants entitled to the reduction in class 2 only (defined below), where it is possible for the Council to award CTS without application it shall do so. Indeed, for this provision an identification by the Council that a person would be entitled to this reduction by virtue of relevant detail already obtained by the Council may be enough to constitute a claim and to enable the award of a reduction. If a reduction cannot be awarded by the Council automatically under class 2, it shall be the duty of the person or persons with a council tax liability to claim this using the application process prescribed on the Islington Council website, and this application shall be required to be received in the council tax year for which the reduction applies.

4. Classes of reduction

4.1 It is considered that the Council has 3 classes of reduction in its CTS scheme. The classes below also identify the persons that the reduction will cover.

Class 1 – A person or persons of pension credit age has protection prescribed in the Local Government Finance Act 1992 (as amended). The council tax reduction shall be assessed in accordance with the provisions of that Act.

Class 2 – A person or persons with a council tax liability on 1 April 2019 aged 65 or over shall be entitled to a minimum reduction of £100 per annum, unless the council tax liability is less than this, in which case it shall match the annual council tax liability.

Class 3 – A person or persons not entitled to protection under class 1 who would be entitled to CTB based on the Regulations at 31 March 2013:

- a) shall be entitled to CTS based on that notional CTB entitlement, less 8.5%; and
- b) if, after the accurate calculation of the CTS award under Class 3a), subsequent calculations or revisions of the same CTS award would result in a decrease in the CTS award of less than £1 a week cumulatively, then no decrease shall be applied. This excludes uprating as defined in clause 5.3.

4.2 Making changes to the dates for the classes of reduction

For Class 2, the Council may substitute the date provided with a date of its choosing. This will enable the scheme to continue into future years. Any changes to dates shall be published on the website by 31 January of the year that immediately precedes the new council tax year to which the CTS shall apply.

4.3 Making changes to the values for the classes of reduction

For Class 2, for the minimum reduction the Council may substitute any amount it chooses, including £Nil. Should a change be made for a future council tax year, this shall be published on the website by 31 January of the year that immediately precedes the new council tax year to which the CTS shall apply.

For the purposes of Class 3a), the Council may substitute 8.5% with any amount it chooses but capped at 25%.

For the purposes of Class 3b), the Council may substitute £1 with any amount it chooses. Should a change be made for a future council tax year this shall be published on the website by 31 January of the year that immediately precedes the new council tax year to which the CTS shall apply.

4.4 Administering the reduction

For all Classes the reduction shall be made to the council tax liability in the council tax year that the CTS applies.

4.5 Explanation of the cumulative effect in Class 3b)

The intention is that subsequent calculations or revisions of the same CTS award that would result in a decrease in that CTS award of less than £1 a week, would only take effect when the combination of these changes would reduce that CTS award by £1 a week or more. In other words, changes in circumstances that, if applied, would reduce the CTS award would be held back until the cumulative impact of these when combined with future changes actually reduces the CTS award by £1 a week or more. This excludes uprating as defined in clause 5.3.

5. Exceptions to the Regulations

This scheme proposes that the principles and methods set out in the Regulations be used to determine CTS, except where amendments are set out in this scheme or by statute under the Local Government Finance Act 1992 (as amended) and accompanying legislation.

The exceptions to these Regulations (or clarifications) are set out below:

5.1 Information and evidence

The Council may accept any information or evidence that it sees fit to support a claim for CTS and may receive this in any way that it sees fit. As a guide, it shall publish what is expected on the Council's website. If all the information or evidence it needs is not submitted, the Council shall seek to make contact with the claimant once to obtain this. If the claimant does not reply or provide the information required within one month of the first contact made with or by the Council in relation to the application, the Council may decide to treat the claim as incomplete and refuse the CTS application. The Council may extend the one-month time limit if it thinks it is reasonable to give more time but in any case this shall not be extended beyond 3 months after the date of the first contact made with or by the Council in relation to the application.

5.2 Treatment of income

For the purpose of making an assessment under the CTS scheme, all income shall be treated in accordance with the Regulations. However, from time to time the Government may reform welfare benefits and introduce new benefits or replace them with equivalent benefits of a different name. Under the Regulations, some prescribed income is disregarded, some prescribed income has an impact on the premiums that can be applied to a person's applicable amount, and some prescribed income has an impact on the level of a non-dependant deduction(s) to be applied. In addition to this, some prescribed income passports a person to full entitlement to CTB, albeit subject to certain deductions such as a non-dependant deduction.

It is the intention of the Council for the CTS scheme, that where such income is replaced by the Government by an equivalent benefit or where new benefits are introduced, that these changes should be applied at the same time to CTS (or as soon as practicable thereafter) and attract the appropriate and equivalent income disregard, premium for the applicable amount and non-dependant deduction. It is also the intention to continue to passport an equivalent benefit to full entitlement to notional CTB to allow the CTS to be calculated.

To achieve this, when a new welfare benefit (income) is introduced by Government, the Council shall decide for the purposes of applying the Regulations:

- whether it should be disregarded; and/or
- the premium (if any) that it should attract; and/or
- the non-dependant deduction that should apply (if any); and/or
- whether it should be treated as income that would passport a person to full notional CTB entitlement.

Once the Council has decided how changes to other welfare benefits shall be treated for the purposes of applying the Regulations, the Council shall publish this detail on the Council website prior to the commencement of this new welfare benefit or as soon as practicable thereafter.

The Regulations currently afford the Council the discretion to disregard war widows pension and war disablement allowance. The Council will continue to disregard this income for the purposes of assessing CTS.

5.3 National changes to premiums, allowances, applicable amounts, disregards and deductions (the components)

For the purpose of making an assessment under the CTS scheme, all the components shall be treated in accordance with the Regulations. However, from time to time the Government may reform welfare benefits and:

- introduce a new component;
- change the value of an existing component; or
- change the basis on which an existing component can be applied.

Where this happens, the Council will have the option immediately to make a change to the CTS scheme based on the treatment of a similar component in an equivalent national scheme. An equivalent national scheme means either the provisions that form the basis for assessment under Class 1 or the Housing Benefit General Regulations 1987 (as amended).

The Council shall determine how changes to the components in an equivalent national scheme will be treated for the purposes of assessing an award under Class 3, including the date that any change will take effect. The Council shall publish this detail on the Council website prior to the commencement of these changes or as soon as practicable thereafter.

From time to time, the components and some income will be subject to uprating by the government to reflect changes in the consumer price index. This scheme provides that the Council shall uprate all the components and income in accordance with the Government's uprating of the same or equivalent components (as identified by the Council) in the equivalent national scheme.

5.4 Decisions and notifications of decisions

The Council shall make a decision on a claim within a reasonable timescale after receiving all required information and evidence. In order to inform a claimant of the decision, the Council shall send them a revised council tax bill showing the amount and period of the CTS award. The bill itself shall be formal notification of the CTS decision unless CTS is not awarded as a result of us deciding to treat the claim as incomplete or the person does not qualify for CTS, in which case a letter will be issued to the claimant. Claimants may request a statement of reasons to explain how the award was calculated. The council tax bill shall include a person's appeal rights, how they can request a statement of reasons and details of how to apply for further discretionary help from the Council Tax Welfare provision in the Resident Support Scheme. The claimant can elect to receive their bill by post or by using Islington's web portal 'My eAccount', also known as e-billing. For the avoidance of doubt, the requirements in the Regulations to notify a person of their CTB entitlement in a manner and including detail prescribed by those Regulations shall be revoked for the purposes of the CTS scheme.

5.5 How CTS will be paid

All CTS will be 'paid' by crediting the amount of CTS against the claimant's council tax liability to reduce the bill. Should a bill that attracts a council tax reduction be in credit at the point that a council tax liability is ended, the Council may use that credit to reduce any other sum that is owed to the Council by that person.

5.6 Changes of circumstances

The recipient of CTS or their appointee must notify the Council of any change to their household circumstances, income or capital that may affect the amount of CTS they are entitled to. Any change of circumstances must be reported within one calendar month of the change happening. Any change can be reported to Islington Council by telephone, email, via website or in writing. Supporting information may be required. Each material change shall result in a recalculation of CTS entitlement and a revised bill if appropriate.

A process for reviewing current CTS entitlement may be implemented by the Council. CTS may be reviewed at any time after its commencement. Failure of the claimant to fulfil any reasonable request made by the Council during a review of their CTS award shall result in the termination of that CTS award from the commencement date of the review.

5.7 Appeals

If the claimant disagrees with the CTS award or non-award following a claim, they can request that the Council looks at this again (this is known as an application for revision). They must do this within one month of the date of the council tax bill that shows the amount and period of their CTS or within month of the date of their CTS non-qualification letter. If an appeal made by the same claimant about a housing benefit decision would also impact on CTS, the Council may also treat this as an appeal against CTS if it is made within one month of the date of the council tax bill that shows the amount and period of their CTS. The Council shall check if the decision is correct and inform the claimant of its decision in writing. If the Council believes that its decision is correct or the claimant does not receive a response from the Council within 2 months, the claimant has another 2 months to appeal to the Valuation Tribunal where a final decision can be made. Any appeal against a decision regarding CTS will not mean that payments of council tax may be withheld. Payments must be made as they fall due and if an appeal is successful any additional CTS award shall be credited against the claimant's council tax liability at that time as directed.

6. General Provisions

6.1 Council Tax Welfare Provision

There is a welfare scheme available for council tax payers receiving CTS experiencing exceptional hardship. This is part of the Resident Support Scheme and the procedure for application is contained within the detail of the Resident Support Scheme approved by the Council's Executive.

6.2 Fraud

The Council will investigate any case where it has reason to believe that an amount of CTS has been awarded as a result of a claim which is fraudulent in any respect. This will include any incidence of a claimant not notifying the Council of any change in household circumstances, income or capital that results in a higher reduction under the CTS scheme than a person is due.

6.3 Consultation

The Council recognises its legal duty to consult should there be future changes to the scheme. However, from time to time the council will need to make minor changes to the practice and operation of the scheme and, should these occur, we will consult by way of publishing a notice on the Council's website during the last 2 weeks of January of the year that immediately precedes the new council tax year to which the CTS shall apply. A consultee shall then have until 31 January of that same year to respond to this notice. The Council officers delegated to operate the scheme will give due regard to this response.

6.4 Delegation

The Council shall delegate the operation of this scheme to the Corporate Director of Resources who will designate the appropriate officers to undertake this role. Currently, these officers are all based in the Financial Operations and Customer Services Directorate of the Council's Resources Department.

6.5 CTS Scheme Agreement

The CTS Scheme will be reviewed annually and subject to further agreement at Full Council prior to 31 January each year.

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Resident Impact Assessment

**Screening and full assessment of Islington's
Council Tax Support (CTS) Scheme.**

Contents

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1. Introduction and context

A Resident Impact Assessment (RIA) is a way of systematically and thoroughly assessing policies against the Council’s responsibilities in relation to the Public Sector Equality Duty, Human Rights and Safeguarding.

This RIA will describe the CTS scheme, its intended purpose and how it has been implemented. It will detail which residents are expected to be affected by the policy and the expected impact in relation to:

- The [Public Sector Equality Duty](#);
- Safeguarding responsibilities; and
- Human Rights legislation, specifically with regard to Article 3 (Inhuman Treatment) and Article 8 (Right to Private Life)

We will identify evidence, such as data and research, to assess the impact of the CTS scheme and identify options for addressing issues raised by the assessments.



2. Screening

a) Title of new or changed policy, procedure, function, service activity or financial decision being assessed:	Council Tax Support Scheme (CTS) 2020 – 2021
b) Department and section:	Finance, Financial Operations
c) Name and contact details of assessor:	Robbie Rainbird, Financial Operations, robbie.rainbird@islington.gov.uk
d) Date initial screening assessment started:	18/10/2019
e) Describe the main aim or purpose of the proposed new or changed policy, etc. and the intended outcomes:	To help low-income council tax charge payers pay their Council Tax
f) Can this proposal be considered as part of a broader Resident Impact Assessment? For example, it may be more appropriate to carry out an assessment of a divisional restructure rather than the restructure of a single team.	No
g) Are there any negative equality impacts as a result of the proposal? Please complete the table below:	

Select **Yes**, **No** or **Unknown** by clicking on the ‘Choose an item’ boxes below and enter text in the text boxes in the right-hand column:

Protected characteristics	1. Will the proposal discriminate?	2. Will the proposal undermine equality of opportunity?	3. Will the proposal have a negative impact on relations?	What evidence are you using to predict this impact?
Age	The CTS has some different conditions according to age	No	No	Described in Section 4
Disability	The CTS provides some additional support for disabled people	No	No	Described in Section 4
Gender reassignment	No	No	No	Described in Section 4
Marriage and civil partnerships ¹	No	N/A	N/A	Described in Section 4
Race	No	No	No	Described in Section 4
Religion/belief	No	No	No	Described in Section 4
Pregnancy and maternity	No	No	No	Described in Section 4
Sexual Orientation	No	No	No	Described in Section 4
Sex/gender	No	No	No	Described in Section 4

Please list any opportunities in the proposal for advancing equality of opportunity for any of the protected characteristics.

These are described in section 4.

¹ Only the requirement to have due regard to the need to eliminate unlawful discrimination in employment should be considered.

	N/A
h) Please list any opportunities in the proposal for fostering good relations for any of the protected characteristics.	N/A
i) Is the proposal a strategy that lays out priorities in relation to activity and resources and likely to have a negative socio-economic impact on residents?	No
j) Do you anticipate any Safeguarding risks as a result of the proposal?	No
k) Do you anticipate any potential Human Rights breaches as a result of the proposal?	No

3. The policy, procedure, function, service activity or financial decision

a) Date full assessment started: 18/10/2019

b) Title of new or changed policy, procedure, function, service activity or financial decision being assessed?

Council Tax Support Scheme (CTSS) 202021

People on low incomes who cannot pay their Council Tax bill can receive CTS to help them.

As part of the Spending Review 2010, the Government announced that expenditure allocated to this localised scheme would be reduced by 10% from the subsidy previously provided for council tax benefit and any increase in expenditure above what is forecast by The Department for Communities and Local Government (DCLG) from that point on must be funded locally by the Council. In 2013/14, the council received in the region of £2.9 million less to give out in support to claimants. This meant the council had to make savings or increase income to fund the shortfall. The Government also stipulated that people of pension credit age must be protected, which meant that the CTS reduction was directed exclusively at working age claimants and would have meant a reduction of around 18%-20% if the cuts were shared in equal proportions across all working age claimants. Originally, the Council chose to make up for this shortfall by introducing a standard reduction to all Council Tax Support recipients of 8.5%, by taking up the Government's offer of a temporary transitional grant and reducing the level of discounts that those with empty properties could apply for. The Government has subsequently withdrawn any transitional grant but the Council has decided to maintain the original level of support it provides to its CTS residents and is funding this additional support wholly from its own funds. As a result of the Council's additional support, the standard reduction to all Council Tax Support recipients remains capped at 8.5%.

c) What is the profile of the current service users and residents impacted by the change?

It affects everyone in Islington who has to pay Council Tax which broadly speaking means that it affects all residents. The number fluctuates but there are about 146,000 households with a liability for Council Tax.

d) What is the profile of the workforce impacted by the change?

The workforce is not impacted.

e) How will the proposed change impact this profile?

A decision to continue with an 8.5% reduction for working-age CTS recipients does not affect the profile of service users, residents or the workforce.

4. Equality impacts and mitigations

No significant issues have arisen as to the impact of Islington's Council Tax Support Scheme since it was introduced in 2013 and the analysis provided in this section should be seen in this context.

Since the Council Tax Support Scheme (CTSS) relates to the distribution of money based on criteria relating to income, it is predominantly data relevant to these issues that has been analysed in order to assess the impact of the CTSS proposals on different groups.

Although it is difficult to update demographic data or information about population statistics without recent national survey data, there is no reason to believe that figures we refer to in this analysis have materially changed from the previous years'.

As the funding for the scheme has been cut by 10% by government and not increased subsequently despite demographic change, the scheme would tend to disadvantage at least some residents with protected characteristics and/or those living in poverty, unless money was found from other parts of the council budget to make up the shortfall. The Government has also stipulated that people of pension credit age must be protected, which means that the benefit paid to other CTS claimants would need to be reduced by an estimated 18%-20% if cuts were shared in equal proportions across all remaining recipients.

However, in order to keep the extent of the financial burden on our working-age CTS claimants low, the Council did not make an 18%-20% reduction but will continue instead to limit the reduction to 8.5% in 2020/21 at a cost of approximately £2m within the Council's 2020/21 budget.

Given the scale of local government budget cuts over the past few years, it is unlikely that additional funding can be found from other sources which would not have a detrimental impact in other ways, potentially on groups with protected characteristics. The council has made the decision to keep within the budget set by central government, and while other choices are available, this appears to be a reasonable decision in the context of the council's actual and forecast financial position.

The council tax system holds very little data on most of the protected characteristics, including gender, disability and race. It has therefore been necessary to look at different local and national sources of data from different years in order to build a picture that can be used for this impact assessment.

The 2011 census shows that there are 206,100 residents in Islington and 96,100 households. This is 27,000 more than the 2001 census upon which much of the data in this assessment is based. Notwithstanding its shortcomings, the data is sufficient to get an idea of potential impacts arising from CTS.

Our CTS scheme incorporates full protection for older people against the previous council tax benefit scheme and mitigation for disabled people and large families. Applying the percentage reduction to the end of the benefit award (bottom slicing) rather than taking this from the liability (top slicing) helps people on partial benefit and there was a message from the public consultation that those on partial benefit are more concerned about the impact of the CTS. To illustrate this, in the case where the reduction is 8.5%:

1) for someone who was in receipt of £20 full CTB, whether the reduction in benefit was top sliced or bottom sliced the reduction is £1.70 (8.5%) leaving CTS of £18.30 for those previously receiving “full” benefit in this example;

2) however, in the case of someone who was previously on partial CTB because they had additional income from working, to reduce their benefit by top slicing would (if the starting point was £20) leave their CTS as £8.30 (£20 less £1.70 (8.5%) less £10 Excess Income = £8.30). But if their partial benefit was reduced by bottom slicing instead this would leave their CTS as £9.15 (£20 less £10 Excess Income = £10. Taking 8.5% of this leaves £9.15). Therefore, choosing to bottom slice makes it better for those on partial benefit which supports the consultation findings.

There is also mitigation for those who might be deemed to be better off by allowing savings of up to £16,000 before someone is disqualified from receiving CTS (this is known as the “capital limit”) and giving an additional discount of up to £100 to all pensioners over the age of 65, whether or not they currently qualify for CTB. Although the net effect of providing support to those deemed to be better off is that less money is available for others that may be in greater need, there are positive aspects to Islington’s scheme. People who are not particularly well off but have accumulated savings will not be penalised and even if savings were limited to £8,000, because less than 200 claimants out of over 20,000 existing claimants have capital over this limit, the money that would have been available to others is relatively small. In relation to pensioners over 65, Islington’s minimum CTS of £100 means that there will be no marginal cases of older pensioners who are not quite poor enough to receive the benefit but who are still financially fragile. This age group is likely to have less access to the labour market.

Compared to council tax payers who are not in receipt of CTS, there is a more favourable recovery regime for CTS. Even if a CTS council tax payer is summonsed, we will not use enforcement agents to recover the money and we will remit court costs if they agree to and keep up with a new schedule of payments [which the Council Tax service call Special Arrangements].

Catering for exceptional hardship

Additional support is available to the most vulnerable residents by way of a council tax welfare fund of £25,000 within the Council’s Resident Support Scheme (RSS) to support cases of exceptional hardship resulting from additional council tax charges. This will be available on a time-limited basis to residents who apply and meet the hardship criteria. Money has been generated for this fund by removing the 10% discount on second homes in Islington and charging more council tax on empty homes.

In the first 7 months of 2019/20 over 25,500 claimants qualified for council tax support and there have been 25 applications for additional support, as a result of which £6,851 was awarded. This is currently a small reduction from the previous year and it still appears from the low volume of requests that our CTS claimants have not been impacted to the extent that most need additional support from us.

Further analysis by protected characteristic

Summary

Since the introduction of the CTS scheme there is no evidence that any particular group is particularly impacted.

Our welfare reform response team (iWork) and our IMAX teams have not reported issues with CTS.

By September 2013 - the first year of the scheme - we had collected 50.1% of council tax monies owed; by September 2015 we had collected 51.5%; by September 2018 we had collected 51.1% and by September 2019 we had collected 51.75%. Overall, it appears that our council tax collection performance continues to be strong. There is evidence that working age CTS claimants are less likely to pay than any other type of council tax charge payer. This should be expected as this group are defined by a low income and the majority have previously been unused to paying anything towards Council Tax.

Age

Key facts

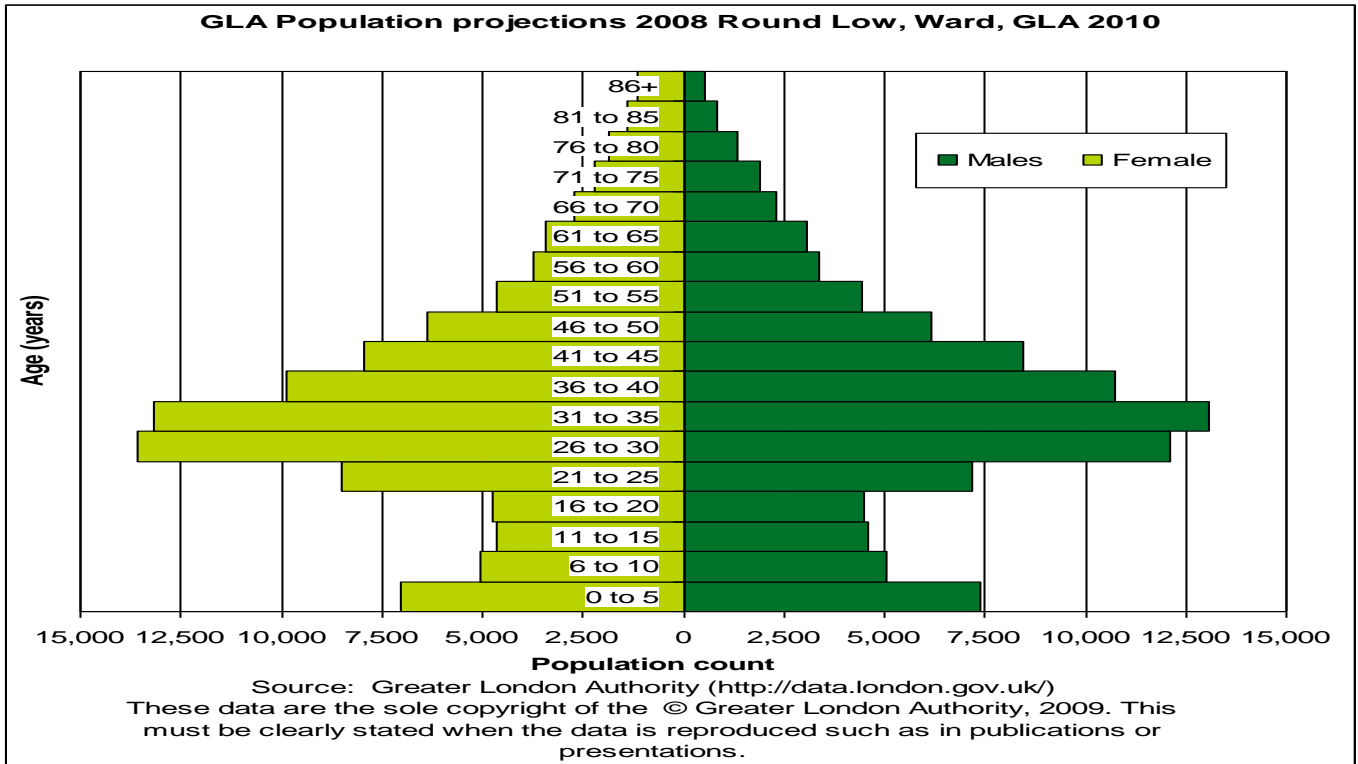
Older people

- 41% of over 65s in Islington are income deprived and 53% are in fuel poverty
- Pension poverty affects women more than men
- The older the pensioner the greater the likelihood to be living in a low income household.
- Pensioners living in a household headed by someone from a BME community² were more likely to be at the lower end of the income distribution curve.
- Disabled pensioners in households not claiming appropriate disability benefits were much more likely to be in a low income household.
- There are approximately 22,750 people aged 51 to 65 in Islington – evidence indicates that people in this age group are least likely to find another job if they become workless. Islington, alongside Hackney, Tower Hamlets and Newham have the highest proportion of pensioners receiving the Guarantee element of Pension Credit

Younger people

- There are approximately 800 known carers under the age of 19 in Islington.
- There are 1,575 residents aged 18 to 24 and 4,180 aged 25 to 49 claiming Job Seekers Allowance
- There are 5,100 residents aged 25 to 49 claiming Employment Support Allowance;

² In this context BME refers to the non-White population. Link:
http://research.dwp.gov.uk/asd/hbai/hbai2010/pdf_files/full_hbai11.pdf



Impact assessment

Older people of pension credit age are protected under the scheme, and those over 65 will also continue to receive the £100 rebate. The proposals therefore do not lead to any financial impact on older people who currently receive the benefit or are eligible. From the information available, it is not possible to assess whether the scheme is accessible to older people (who may have a range of access needs) or their carers. Given needs are met once identified, it would be important to make very clear through a range of channels that information etc is available in other formats, and that staff and voluntary sector and community organisations can also provide support.

When it comes to age, much of national policy on this and related welfare reforms protects pensioners while working age benefit recipients experience cuts. The council proposals reinforce this distinction by retaining the £100 older person’s discount. Although it could be argued that this leads to disproportionately worse impacts on those of working age, national and local data on the number of older people living in poverty and not necessarily claiming benefits means that the council’s position is reasonable from an equality perspective. Furthermore, those in the over 65 category are less likely to access, or have access to, the labour market to supplement their income than those of working age. People of working age, including young people, are only eligible for CTS where they have an additional need, for example because of a disability or they are on a low income. The cumulative impact of welfare reforms on this group is significant and eligible younger residents may not be aware of what they are entitled to. Communication methods more suited to younger people such as text messaging, social media etc, may be useful in raising awareness.

In respect of this characteristic, no significant issues have emerged during the first 6 years’ operation of the CTS scheme.

Mitigation

Develop plans to ensure that information, support and advice is accessible and that the option to claim and ways to do so are well signposted by services and organisations in contact with potentially eligible residents and through proven communication channels.

Disability

Key facts:

- There are 26,327 households with one or more person with a limiting long-term illness
- 12,540 claim out of work sickness benefits (incapacity benefit, severe disablement allowance and employment and support allowance)
- There are 7,350 working age Islington residents claiming Disability Living Allowance (a non-means tested benefit available to employed or out-of-work disabled people) - 6,270 have been claiming for at least two years and 4,860 for at least 5 years.
- There are 2,240 people claiming Carer's Allowance (CA), of which 2,080 are of working age
- The employment rate amongst disabled people is 48.2%
- Nationally 50% earn less than half the mean earnings after adjusting for extra costs
- Twice as likely to live in poverty but less likely to be in low income if in a workless household
- Disabled pensioners in households not claiming appropriate disability benefits were much more likely to be in a low income household.

The public consultation responses in 2012 and 2016 provide indications that disabled people are concerned about being able to cope financially but the numbers of respondents where this kind of data appears is low. A relatively small number of disabled and non-disabled respondents volunteered the view that disabled people should pay less council tax, with a greater proportion of working age as opposed to pension age respondents expressing this view.

In respect of this characteristic, no significant issues have emerged during the first 6 years' operation of the CTS scheme.

Impact assessment

Disabled people are disproportionately likely to be poor, out of work and on benefits. They are disproportionately affected by welfare reform overall. It is estimated that those IB claimants who have already migrated to ESA Support Group will be £17 a week better off. However, 33% will be on ESA Work Related Activity Group and be £4 a week worse off and 18% will migrate to JSA and be £40 a week worse off.

Although the CTS scheme provides higher amounts for disabled people they still get 8.5% less than they did from council tax benefit in 2012. The higher costs of care, transport and general living combined with the labour market disadvantage faced by disabled people could make the reductions stemming from the CTS scheme difficult for them to cope with. However, while members of this group are often economically disadvantaged, the rationale of a universal rather than means tested approach was challenged at the disabled group workshop. Some disabled

people may not need the extra financial support and the argument made was that looking at groups rather than more specific individual or household circumstances is too simplistic.

In any event, with respect to this characteristic no significant issues have emerged during the first 6 years' operation of the CTS scheme.

Mitigation options

The Council has limited the reduction in benefit for disabled people from 18% to 8.5%. Continuing this for 2020/21 will continue to give people greater opportunity to adapt their financial circumstances.

Supporting those with long-term health conditions into employment is the best route out of poverty and is also recognised to be of benefit, particularly to people with mental health problems. We will have a particular focus on ESA claimants in the employment work of our iWork Team, utilising specific funding to increase the number of work coaches as well as continuing the work started under the Universal Services Delivered Locally trial.

Race

Key facts:

- Employment
 - Non-white employment rate in Islington is 51.4%
 - Nationally, the rate is 59% for non-White compared to 72% for White people
 - Nationally 10% Indian and 15% White British men over 25 are not working compared with 30% to 40% for Bangladeshi, Pakistani, Black Caribbean and Black African. The high number of students explains much of the higher proportion for Black African. The ethnic profile of people starting to claim JSA in Feb 2010 showed that the proportion that were Black/Black British was 6 percentage points higher than their proportion in the 2001 census, while the proportion that were White was 22 percentage points below their proportion in the 2001 census.
- National data on earnings shows that those from Bangladeshi and Pakistani backgrounds are almost twice as likely to earn less than £7 per hour than those from Black African, Black Caribbean and White British backgrounds.
 - 48% Bangladeshi, 42% Pakistani
 - 27% Black African, 23% Black Caribbean
 - 25% White British
- Households below Average Income (HBAI) survey shows that children are much more likely to live in poverty if they are in a family headed by a BME parent, especially someone of Pakistani, Bangladeshi or Black Non-Caribbean origin.

The following table shows the ethnic distribution of families in Islington, differentiated between those who received Council Tax Benefit and those who did not.

	Yes - on CTB	Not on CTB	Grand Total	Yes - on CTB	Not on CTB	All
1 White British	2252	4950	7202	29%	38%	35%
2 Other White	597	1286	1883	8%	10%	9%

	Yes - on CTB	Not on CTB	Grand Total	Yes - on CTB	Not on CTB	All
3 Turkish / Turkish Cypriot	503	242	745	6%	2%	4%
4 Kurdish	57	21	78	1%	0%	0%
5 Bangladeshi	355	333	688	5%	3%	3%
6 Asian	131	218	349	2%	2%	2%
7 Black Caribbean	328	483	811	4%	4%	4%
8 Black Somali	324	187	511	4%	1%	2%
9 Black African	480	649	1129	6%	5%	5%
10 Black Other	345	424	769	4%	3%	4%
11 Chinese	53	92	145	1%	1%	1%
12 Mixed	882	1469	2351	11%	11%	11%
13 Other	235	386	621	3%	3%	3%
14 Not Obtained / Refused	78	183	261	1%	1%	1%
15 Unknown*	1060	1564	2624	14%	12%	13%
Missing	155	416	571	2%	3%	3%
Grand Total	7835	12903	20738	100%	100%	100%

Reviewing CTB take-up within this cohort, the biggest discrepancy is among 'white British' residents who are significantly under-represented, and 'other white' who are slightly under-represented. Bangladeshi, Black Somali, Turkish/ Turkish Cypriot and to a slightly lesser extent Black African are all over-represented. These figures are in line with what might be expected given the employment data briefly stated earlier, which indicate relative levels of poverty in different communities.

- Refugees & Asylum Seekers
 - Data from 2002 indicates a 29% employment rate nationally among refugee and asylum seekers, which is much lower than average for BME people. (Bloch 2002)
 - From a small Islington sample, the data suggests those who work are in low paid, low-skilled jobs

- Gypsies & Travellers

There are estimated to be 55 gypsy and traveller families in Islington, mostly living in houses. Although this community is small, its challenges are acute, with significantly disproportionate outcomes compared to any other group. For example, gypsies and travellers have the worst health outcomes of any racial or ethnic community and are twenty times more likely to experience the death of a child.

The consultation responses did not point to any significant issues emerging based on ethnic background and none have emerged during the first 6 years' operation of the CTS scheme.

Impact assessment

Welfare reforms, the economic situation and historic inequalities in employment together are likely to result in lower incomes for Black and Minority Ethnic (BME) residents, who will therefore be disproportionately affected by the reduction in CTS. Known barriers such as limited English and lack of familiarity with the system need to be mitigated by improving accessibility, especially for the most disadvantaged groups.

Mitigation options

Working through partners as well as using our own resources, we will ensure that access to CTS, as well as the Resident Support Scheme (RSS), is made known to those in greatest need, so that eligible residents from all ethnic backgrounds receive support.

Religion/Belief

Key facts:

- Muslims experience much higher rates of unemployment (15.4%) and economic inactivity (51.4%) compared with the average for all groups (6.5% and 32.4%)
- National research also suggests a “Muslim penalty” in employment, especially for women

Impact assessment

From available data there appear to be no significant negative impacts that can be distinguished from ethnicity. Residents are not adversely impacted by the scheme by virtue of their religion/ belief (or absence thereof).

Mitigation options

None

Gender and relationships

This section covers gender, marriage, civil partnerships and gender re-assignments.

Key facts:

- Employment rate: 71.7% men, 63.8% women
- The majority of lone parents of children living in poverty are women
- Incapacity benefit: 5,320 men (57%), 4,030 women (43%)
- Over 75% Bangladeshi & Pakistani women not in paid work
- Nationally, the number of women not working is decreasing while the number of men not working is increasing, however the difference between the sexes of those aged 18 to 24 is low.

2016 consultation responses did not point to any significant issues emerging based on gender and none have emerged during the first 6 years' operation of the CTS scheme.

Impact assessment

There appear to be no significant negative impacts for most people in this group due to any of these protected characteristics. The arrival of a new child increases household expenditure but this fact is already acknowledged in existing regulations which retain family premiums and disregard child benefit as income. The CTS has not incorporated the limit to 2 children that has been imposed on national benefits in 2017 to protect families.

Mitigation options

None

Pregnancy, maternity and family life

Key facts:

- There are 20,387 households with dependent children in Islington, of which 6,859 (34%) headed by a lone parent
 - 8,702 with children aged 0 to 4
 - 7,204 no adult working (35%)
- 46% living in poverty – 2nd highest nationally
- Most significant factors are lone parent, BME parents, disability, 3 or more children
- Of all the children in Islington HB/CTB data shows that:
 - 39% (14,867) are in families on out of work benefits
 - 15.2% (5,746) are in working families on incomes low enough to qualify for HB/CTB
 - 45.8% (17,348) are in families sufficiently well off enough not to need to claim HB/CTB

Table below showing Information from Children Services showing the number of households in Islington with dependent children:

Households Below Average Income (HBAI) survey shows that children are much more likely to live in poverty if they are in a family headed by a BME parent, especially someone of Pakistani, Bangladeshi or Black Non-Caribbean origin; living in overcrowded accommodation; with three or more children; headed by a lone parent or with a disabled family member.

There are 1,400 households with 2,420 child dependents (aged up to 18) claiming IB or Severe Disablement Allowance.

It is estimated that the vast majority of Islington households with children, whose housing will become unaffordable due to LHA changes and the overall Benefit Cap will be workless households.

lone parents

all children

Row Labels	Yes - on CTB	Not on CTB	Grand Total
lone parent	6636	5564	12200
two parents	9903	17669	27572
Unknown	16	81	97
Grand Total	16555	23314	39869

lone parents

households

Row Labels	Yes - on CTB	Not on CTB	Grand Total
lone parent	3489	3114	6603
two parents	4332	9722	14054
Unknown	14	67	81
Grand Total	7835	12903	20738

low income

all children

Row Labels	Yes - on CTB	Not on CTB	Grand Total
low income	16103	8025	24128
not low income	452	15289	15741
Grand Total	16555	23314	39869

low income

households

Row Labels	Yes - on CTB	Not on CTB	Grand Total
low income	7626	3623	11249
not low income	209	9280	9489
Grand Total	7835	12903	20738

In this information, over 55% (11,306) of all households with children were on housing and/or council tax benefit, but a far higher proportion of these were headed by lone parents than the population as a whole: 59% (4,036) of lone parent households on HB/CTB compared with 37% (5,045) of the couple households

The consultation responses segmented by those with and without children indicated that concerns about family finances were high for both groups, but that those with four or more children were particularly concerned, and those with children were more likely to raise the issue, unprompted, of struggling with money because they have children to care for. However, it should be noted that the actual number of responses received voicing these concerns was very low and in respect of this characteristic no significant issues have emerged during the first 6 years' operation of the CTS scheme.

Impact assessment

The council has in place a number of measures to support families with children – a key issue in looking at poverty in the borough as the data above indicate. By retaining all family premiums and applicable amounts, the council recognises that families require a higher level of income to support their household.

It has been decided not to cap benefit at the higher bands and their benefit will be based on the actual charge for the property. This means that there will be no adverse impact for families in larger properties because they are in a higher band. They will be no worse off because they are in a higher banded property. If benefit was capped at band D or E, benefit could only be paid up to this band and the customer would have to pay the full amount above that, which might mean they incur hundreds of pounds of new costs.

Mitigation options

As with other affected groups, it is important that take up is encouraged and that families in greatest need are provided with additional support through the RSS. The CTS has not incorporated the limit to 2 children that has been imposed on national benefits in 2017 to protect families from the nationally imposed reduction to the family premium.

Sexual Orientation

Key facts:

- 84% LGBT economically active compared to the 75% population
- Economic activity is more likely to continue beyond age 55
- 73% female and 79% men on incomes above the average for London
- 3% live in households with children under 18
- 10% live in social housing compared to 49% of the overall Islington population
- 37% experience mental health problems at some point

Source: Revealing LGBT Islington study 2005

Impact assessment

The data indicates that LGBT people tend to be economically better off than other groups, as they are more likely to be in work, work for longer and be on higher salaries. This group may be more at risk of specific conditions, such as mental health problems or being HIV+, than the general population, but where this is the case then their situation is addressed in the disability section. There are no negative impacts associated with sexual orientation triggered by this scheme.

Mitigation options

None.

b) Mitigation for people with protected characteristics

- Continuing to hold the cap on benefit at 8.5% despite no longer having a transitional grant from government to cover this and many local authorities moving away from this level of cap and passing the full extent of the government council tax benefit funding reduction to residents. This will ensure that those with protected characteristics are not impacted by the full possible extent of the government funding reduction.
- The regulations of the council tax benefit scheme have been retained, and these already make extra provision for disabled people and families by:
 - retaining all disability premiums so that the level of allowable income before tapers are introduced is higher than for the average working age person;
 - continuing to disregard as income certain disability benefits such as Disability Living Allowance (DLA) and War Disablement Allowance;
 - ensuring that no non-dependent deductions apply if a person is in receipt of DLA (care component) therefore allowing him/her to qualify for a disability premium;
 - retaining all family premiums and applicable amounts in recognition of the fact that families need a higher level of income to support their household;
 - continuing to disregard Child Benefit as income in the calculation of benefit entitlement – this means that there is an allowance for each child and a premium for disabled children.
 - The CTS has not incorporated the limit to 2 children that has been imposed on national benefits in 2017 to protect families.
 - Further to the original regulations we agreed to afford recipients of Personal Independence Payments (PIP) the same favourable premiums and allowances in the CTS scheme as we did DLA recipients, from the start date of the new benefit.
- The regulations also encourage moving into employment by:

- offering a 4 week guaranteed payment of existing benefit level to those attaining work
- The re-use of the existing regulations also:
 - supports and promotes an incentive for saving by retaining the savings limit of £16,000 that exists within the current scheme
 - does not cap the reduction/support for higher property bands to ensure that there is no adverse impact on families in higher banded properties

In addition, current practice in Islington to support people with accessibility requirements will be retained. Therefore, documents are made available in different formats such as large print, audio and Braille and once known, the requested format will be provided as a matter of course. Translation services and interpreting services are also available when requested.

5. Socio-economic, Safeguarding and Human Rights impacts

a) Socio-economic impacts

Socio-economic disadvantage is not a protected characteristic but is a consideration included in the resident impact assessment given the significant income inequality within the borough. The previous Council Tax Benefit scheme was a means tested benefit available to households on a low income. Therefore, all recipients would be considered to be at a socio-economic disadvantage, particularly lone parents (more likely to be women), part time workers (more likely to be women) and large households (more likely to be from BME backgrounds). Currently there is little or no Council Tax Benefit data breakdown on the following protected characteristics: gender reassignment/identity, marriage and civil partnership, pregnancy and maternity, religion/belief or sexual orientation. During the lead up to the new CTS scheme, extensive consultation and communications were undertaken. Raising the awareness of residents of the CTS scheme. We have made available Council Tax payment options that include 2 weekly instalments over 12 months and direct debits have been widely publicised. The service will work with debt counselling and financial inclusion provisions within the borough. Islington is increasing the employment and skills provision in the borough through an Employment unit called iWork and is leading on a trial employment support initiative called “Universal Support Delivered Locally” to work with residents affected to increase their skills and the potential for them to get into employment. Actions to minimise causing further hardship to people already on low incomes have been identified in earlier sections.

b) Safeguarding risks

No safeguarding issues for children or vulnerable adults were identified.

c) **Human Rights breaches**

No human rights issues were identified.

6. Summary: core findings of the RIA

a) Key impacts of the **proposal**:

- Since the Council Tax Support Scheme (CTS) relates to the distribution of money based on criteria relating to low income then all residents on low income who are liable for council tax are affected by this proposal.
 - Since the Council is using its own resources to limit the extent of the reduction in benefit to 8.5% then all residents are impacted by this proposal as they all have a stake in how the Council uses its limited resources.
-

b) **Equality impacts** of the proposal:

- The impact on all working age CTS claimants and potential claimants is the same in that they now have to contribute 8.5% more towards their Council Tax bill than they would have done up to March 2013. By not changing the agreed council tax support scheme since its inception, affected residents have not been subject to any further subsequent disadvantage. This position will remain for 2020/21 if the proposal to retain the existing scheme is agreed by Full Council. The impact on pension age CTS claimants is probably negligible as they have been protected from 8.5% reduction.
 - No other impacts specific to people with protected characteristics have emerged during the previous 12 months' operation of the CTS scheme.
 - No complaints or appeals specific to the CTS scheme have been received.
 - The percentage of collection rates for 2019/20 compared to 2018/19 are very similar.
-

c) Safeguarding **risks** identified:

- None
-

d) Potential Human Rights breaches identified:

- None
-

e) **Monitoring:**

Issue to be monitored	Responsible person or team
The nature of any appeals against the operation of the CTS scheme	Appeals & Complaints (Fin Ops)
The nature of any complaints about the operation the CTS scheme	Appeals & Complaints (Fin Ops)
The difference in the council tax collection rates between CTS working age and all other council tax charge payers.	Andrew Spigarolo (Head of Service; Fin Ops)
The volume of requests made to the RSS for help to pay council tax	Karen Mckenzie (Improvement Manager; Fin Ops)

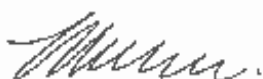
Additional items to be monitored:

- None

Please sign and date below to confirm that you have completed the Resident Impact Assessment in accordance with the guidance and using relevant available information. (A signature must also be obtained from a Service Head or higher. If this is a Corporate Resident Impact Assessment, it must be signed by a Corporate Director).


Staff member completing this form:

Head of Service or higher:



Signed:

Date: 29/10/19



Signed:

Date: 29/10/19

Appendix C

The Council is determined to tackle poverty and reduce inequality in Islington. As a result, it makes extensive efforts to support especially those who are vulnerable or less well-off to thrive in the borough. By way of illustration, this appendix provides a non-exhaustive list of some of the types of financial support and other discounts which Islington Council offers residents at different stages of their lives.

From the cradle to the grave – a lifetime of support

What we offer	Reason
Early years childcare subsidy	Making early education available for the borough's children
Free school meals for all primary school children	Support children's health and education whilst tackling poverty
Lunch bunch – free meals in school holidays	Tackling holiday hunger among children
School uniform grants	Providing children with necessary clothing for school
11 free cultural experiences for Islington schoolchildren by Year 11	Providing access to the wealth of cultural activity available in the borough
£1 junior swim	Allowing for children to swim cheaply across all pools at all times for their wellbeing
Free summer swimming lessons	Providing five 30-minute lessons to 1,200 young people for their wellbeing and safety
100 hours experience of the world of work by 16	Preparing our children for employment
Post-16 education bursary	Enabling continued studies for qualifying Islington students past the age of 16 by awarding a £300 bursary
Council Tax exemption for foster carers	Encouraging foster carers for children and adults by awarding a full exemption
Council Tax exemption for care leavers	Helping care leavers to transition into independent living up to the age of 25 by awarding a full exemption
Disabled facilities grant	Enabling adults and children to lead independent lives through adaptations in their homes
Home renovation grant	Making necessary major repairs
Accidents in the home grant	Preventing likely accidents in the home through repairs
Home from hospital grant	Supporting home repairs that prevent people leaving hospital from planned treatment or an emergency
Hoarding grant	Helping vulnerable clients in private dwellings with significant hoarding

Dementia grant	Providing facilities or minor adaptations to the home
Armed forces support	Disregarding war widows or war disablement allowance to increase housing benefit, council tax support and social care assessments
Disabled provision grant	Creating accommodation for disabled people through private housing partnerships
Empty property grant	Working with owners/landlords to create new accommodation through private housing partnerships
Housing under-occupation grant	Helping people moving from homes to allow larger families to move in
Housing rent-deposit scheme	Paying rent deposits for people at risk of homelessness
Discretionary Housing Payments	Providing, through the Resident Support Scheme, extra housing cost support for housing benefit or universal credit claimants
Crisis Support	Providing, through the Resident Support Scheme, crisis support for people needing assistance with food, some clothing and energy charges
Community Care Support	Providing, through the Resident Support Scheme, support for independent living in the form of items such as white goods, beds and furniture
Council Tax Welfare Support	Providing, through the Resident Support Scheme, support for people struggling to pay their council tax
Concessionary leisure memberships	Providing a reduction for nearly half of the 23,000 leisure membership
Free swimming for over 60s	Providing access for older people 7 days a week.
Safe and warm grant	Providing boiler replacement, predominantly for the over 60s
Council Tax older people's discount	Reducing by £100 the council tax bill for all over 65s

Report of: Executive Member for Finance, Performance and Community Safety

Meeting of:	Date:	Ward(s):
Council	5 December 2019	All

Delete as appropriate:		Non-exempt
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SUBJECT: ADDITIONAL INVESTMENT IN THE 2019/20 CAPITAL PROGRAMME

1. Synopsis

- 1.1 This report presents a package of additional investment in the 2019/20 capital programme, totalling £8.602m, to align with expected capital expenditure profiles and enable several key capital projects to progress in the current financial year.
- 1.2 The increased investment in the 2019/20 capital programme will be fully funded from external contributions and capacity in the existing capital financing budget (including underspends/re-profiled expenditure elsewhere in the capital programme).
- 1.3 There will be a further review and increase of the medium-term capital programme as part of the 2020/21 budget setting process.

2. Recommendations

- 2.1 To agree the changes to the capital programme covered in this report and the revised 2019/20 capital programme at **Appendix 1** incorporating these changes.
- 2.2 To note that the medium-term capital programme will be further reviewed and increased as part of the 2020/21 budget setting process.

3. Background

3.1 Following a mid-year review, an increased investment in the 2019/20 capital programme will enable key capital projects to progress in the current financial year and deliver improved outcomes to residents.

4. Summary of Additional Investment in 2019/20 Capital Programme

4.1 The changes to the 2019/20 capital programme included in this report are summarised by directorate in **Table 1** below and detailed at **Appendix 1**.

Table 1: Summary of Changes to 2019/20 Capital Programme

Directorate	Previous 2019/20 Capital Programme £m	Changes included in this report £m	Revised 2019/20 Capital Programme £m
Environment and Regeneration	17.259	5.460	22.719
Housing	114.171	(0.909)	113.262
People	14.007	(0.633)	13.374
Resources	0.000	4.684	4.684
Total	145.437	8.602	154.039

4.2 The decrease in the 2019/20 Housing capital programme is due to a virement of re-profiled expenditure on the new build capital programme (General Fund element) towards the increased current year capital investment in the Environment and Regeneration and Resources directorates. This does not affect the overall resources available to the Housing capital programme over the medium term.

4.3 Overall, the package of additional capital investment included in this report, totalling £8.602m, equates to a 5.9% increase in the 2019/20 capital programme.

4.4 There will be a further review and increase of the medium-term capital programme as part of the 2020/21 budget setting process.

5. Central Library Renovation

5.1 The renovation of the Central Library will provide borough wide benefits to residents, especially families who are developing their literacy skills, the growing number of young people who need a space to study, and residents who are unemployed or in poorly paid employment and wish to return to learning.

5.2 The project is in two phases. Phase 1 works, completed in September 2019, included:

- Refurbishment of the Reference library on the 2nd floor and the creation of a quality study space. This space has increased capacity by 25%;
- New purpose built First Steps Learning Centre on the 2nd floor. This replaces the Learning Centre on the ground floor which was not fit for purpose and utilises previously underused space;
- Redecoration and new flooring in large parts of building.

- 5.3 Phase 2 works will convert the vacated space on the ground floor into an operating base for Tall Stories, and will restore and re-open to the public the beautiful historic entrance on Holloway Road.
- 5.4 Tall Stories is one of the country's leading children's storytelling theatre companies. The charity aims to bring great stories to life, making live performances out of traditional stories, brand new stories and brilliant children's books like The Gruffalo to promote storytelling and reading for pleasure. The operating base for Tall Stories will be a rehearsal room equipped to work on theatrical productions from the initial idea through to full dress rehearsal with set, props, costume and lighting. There will also be an office for the small staff team and a small store for costumes.
- 5.5 The idea behind the Library Service partnership with Tall Stories is that the working space for the theatre company and what the company is making will be the inspiration for free education workshops, behind the scenes tours, open rehearsals and exhibitions, using sets and costumes that bring to life the story the production is based on as well as revealing how a theatrical production is made.
- 5.6 Tall Stories has made an ongoing commitment to deliver free activity, planned and agreed with the library service to meet local priorities. In addition, the charity is contributing capital funding and will pay a rent to the library service.
- 5.7 In summary, when the Central Library building renovation works are completed, historic features such as the entrance on Holloway Road will be restored and enjoyed by our residents. Furthermore, a thoughtful utilisation of vacant space and an innovative new partnership with Tall Stories will significantly increase the quantity and quality of what the library service is able to offer, free of charge to residents and targeting those that need our help the most.
- 5.8 In total, a capital budget of £1.067m is required, of which £0.500m will be funded from existing budgets allocated to the scheme, Section 106 funding and a contribution from Tall Stories, and £0.567m will be funded from capacity within the existing capital financing budget. The required capital budget for this scheme in 2019/20 will be funded by way of a £1.067m capital virement from a forecast £1.700m underspend on the school expansion schemes contingency budget (net nil within the People directorate).
- 5.9 Phase 2 tenders have been received. Prices are currently being checked but the returns are within the planned budget.

6. Extensive Refurbishment of 49-59 Old Street

- 6.1 The project to renovate and upgrade 49-59 Old Street ready for commercial letting has significantly progressed in the current financial year. The extensive refurbishment works have created high quality offices that are expected to generate a fourfold increase in rental income to support the Council's overall revenue budget available to pay for key Council services and mitigate the impact of Government funding cuts and other inflationary and demographic cost pressures. It is anticipated that the eventual occupiers will be tech firms who will enhance employment opportunities in the locality.
- 6.2 Following previous uncertainty around the split between capital and revenue expenditure, the expected total capital cost of the project is £2.423m (£0.714m prior year expenditure

plus £1.709m to be profiled in the current year capital programme). The current year capital programme has been increased by £1.000m for this scheme (funded from capacity within the existing capital financing budget) and the scheme budget has been further increased to the required £1.709m by way of a £0.633m capital virement from the remaining forecast underspend on the school expansion schemes contingency budget (People directorate) and £0.076m re-profiled expenditure on the current year Housing new build capital programme (General Fund element).

- 6.3 The 49-59 Old Street project includes forecast revenue costs of £1.793m in 2019/20. This is funded from the 'capital reserve' (an earmarked revenue reserve) previously set aside for revenue costs associated with capital projects.

7. Cladding Replacement

- 7.1 The revised 2019/20 capital programme also includes a new, earmarked grant funded project (£2.975m) to replace the cladding on the flats leased to a housing trust on the Council-owned Bridge School campus. As well as complying with all fire and health and safety regulations, the new cladding will provide an enhanced insulated and environmentally friendly building.

8. Bunhill Energy Centre Project Phase 2

- 8.1 The Bunhill Energy Centre Project was launched in November 2012 and Phase 2 of the project commenced in 2014. It involves the extension of the existing district heating network and the utilisation of waste heat that is being vented from the tube network and aims to provide heat and power to an estimated 1,500 dwellings in the Bunhill district. It also provides cooling for the tube network simultaneously. Unlike normal electricity production, which wastes up to two thirds of the fuel used to make it, Bunhill Heat and Power uses otherwise wasted heat to heat dwellings and thus is more efficient, cheaper and greener. Phase 2 represents a novel approach to district heating, and as such has required partnership with London Underground Limited (LUL), who own the vent shaft used in the project.
- 8.2 Following a detailed review of this globally unique project, it became clear that the previously approved budget of £9.825m was insufficient to meet the revised scope of the project and the Council's contractual obligations with the construction contractor. The expected project cost is now £16.311m (including prior year expenditure), which indicates that the originally approved budget was insufficient to deliver the project. The variance against budget results from additional construction cost due to several, essential changes to project scope and the additional time required to complete the project (£5.2m); additional specialist advisor costs and project team capacity (£0.6m); and the introduction of project contingency (£0.8m).
- 8.3 The expected project cost includes a contingency of £0.810m. This represents 34% of the remaining planned expenditure on the project and is based on a refreshed set of quantified and weighted risks. This level of contingency is supported by all of the Council's professional advisors, but will be tightly managed and only expensed as required.
- 8.4 The forecast expenditure profile of the additional budget requirement is £5.460m in 2019/20 and £1.026m in 2020/21. In order to progress the project to completion in the current financial year and start to realise the project benefits as early as possible, it is recommended that the 2019/20 capital budget is increased by the required £5.460m. The sources of funding for this budget increase are £4.088m from the Carbon Offset Fund (a form of Section 106 funding, subject to recommendation by the Affordable Energy Board and the Borough

Investment Panel to the Executive which will be requested to approve the allocation at its meeting on 28 November 2019); £0.539m forecast additional external income from the scheme; and £0.833m from re-profiled expenditure on the current year Housing new build capital programme (General Fund element).

- 8.5 The additional capital budget requirement in 2020/21 (£1.026m) will be factored into the revised capital programme to be included as part of the 2020/21 budget report.

9. Implications

9.1 Financial implications:

The changes to the 2019/20 capital programme will be fully funded from external contributions and capacity in the existing capital financing budget (including underspends/re-profiled expenditure elsewhere in the capital programme).

Where the changes are funded from re-profiled expenditure elsewhere in the 2019/20 capital programme, the future year capital programme will be adjusted so that there is no impact on overall resources available for existing projects.

The forecast capital budget requirement in 2020/21 for the Bunhill Energy Centre Phase 2 project (£1.026m) will be factored into the revised capital programme to be included as part of the 2020/21 budget report.

9.2 Legal Implications:

Full council approval is required for changes to the capital programme where the increase or alteration exceeds £1m (Financial Regulations 4.19, 4.22 and 4.24). The Council may approve the revised capital programme 2019/20 subject to being satisfied that the additional financial resources are available.

9.3 Environmental Implications and contribution to achieving a net zero carbon Islington by 2030:

This report in itself does not in itself have any direct environmental implications.

9.4 Resident Impact Assessment:

The council must, in the exercise of its functions, have due regard to the need to eliminate discrimination, harassment and victimisation, and to advance equality of opportunity, and foster good relations, between those who share a relevant protected characteristic and those who do not share it (section 149 Equality Act 2010). The council has a duty to have due regard to the need to remove or minimise disadvantages, take steps to meet needs, in particular steps to take account of disabled persons' disabilities, and encourage people to participate in public life. The council must have due regard to the need to tackle prejudice and promote understanding.

This report increases capital investment in the 2019/20 capital programme to enable the progression of key capital projects in the current financial year, but does not in itself have any direct policy implications. These individual capital projects either will have been or will be subject to their own resident impact assessments.

10. Reason for recommendations

10.1 To increase investment in the 2019/20 capital programme to align with expected capital expenditure profiles and enable key capital projects to progress in the current financial year
These projects will deliver the following benefits to residents:

- A renovated Central Library for the use and enjoyment by residents across the borough, including a thoughtful utilisation of vacant space and an innovative new partnership with Tall Stories which will significantly increase the quantity and quality of what the library service is able to offer, free of charge to residents and targeting those that need our help the most;
- The enhancement of local employment opportunities and the generation of a significant rental income from the Council's building at 49-59 Old Street, which will support the Council's overall revenue budget available to pay for key Council services;
- Compliance with all fire and health and safety regulations and enhanced insulation at the flats on the Council-owned Bridge School campus;
- Completion of Phase 2 of the Bunhill Energy Centre, which will provide heat and power to an estimated 1,500 dwellings in the Bunhill district.

Appendices

- Appendix 1 – Revised 2019/20 Capital Programme

Background papers: None

Final report clearance:

Signed by:



Executive Member for Finance, Performance
and Community Safety

26/11/2019

Date

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Appendix 1: Revised Capital Programme 2019/20

Directorate/Scheme	2019/20		
	Previous Budget	Budget Changes	Revised Budget
	£m	£m	£m
ENVIRONMENT AND REGENERATION			
Cemeteries	0.040		0.040
Bunhill Energy Centre Phase 2	(0.248)	5.460	5.212
Energy Saving Council Buildings	0.405		0.405
Greenspace	1.741		1.741
Highways	2.131		2.131
Leisure	0.685		0.685
Other Environment and Regeneration	0.019		0.019
Planning and Development	0.588		0.588
Recycling Improvements	0.158		0.158
Special Projects	0.141		0.141
Traffic and Engineering	6.822		6.822
Fleet	4.777		4.777
Total Environment and Regeneration	17.259	5.460	22.719
HOUSING			
<i>Housing Revenue Account</i>			
Major Works and Improvements	25.000		25.000
New Build Programme	49.668		49.668
Temporary Accommodation	13.500		13.500
<i>Housing General Fund</i>			
New Build Open Market Sales	12.878	(0.909)	11.969
Temporary Accommodation	13.125		13.125
Total Housing	114.171	(0.909)	113.262
PEOPLE			
Central Foundation School Expansion	1.752		1.752
Central Library Refurbishment	0.000	1.067	1.067
Dowery Street/Primary PRU	0.135		0.135
Early Years Capital	0.327		0.327
School Electrical & Mechanical Schemes	1.491		1.491
Highbury Grove School Expansion	2.425		2.425
Libraries	0.048		0.048
New River College Refurbishment	0.185		0.185
Other Schools/Contingency	1.750	(1.700)	0.050
Schools Devolved Capital Programme	0.400		0.400
Special Provision Capital Fund	0.000		0.000
School Condition Works	0.209		0.209
Tufnell Park School Expansion	4.853		4.853
School Window and Roof Schemes	0.430		0.430
Youth	0.003		0.003
Total People	14.007	(0.633)	13.374
RESOURCES			
49-59 Old Street Refurbishment	0.000	1.709	1.709
Cladding Replacement	0.000	2.975	2.975
Total Resources	0.000	4.684	4.684
TOTAL CAPITAL PROGRAMME	145.437	8.602	154.039

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