

LONDON BOROUGH OF ISLINGTON
COUNCIL MEETING - 23 SEPTEMBER 2021

MINUTES OF PROCEEDINGS

At the meeting of the Council held at Council Chamber, Town Hall, Upper Street, N1 2UD - Islington Town Hall on 23 September 2021 at 7.30 pm.

Present:

Champion	Ismail	Russell
Clarke	Khondoker	Shaikh
Comer-Schwartz	Khurana	Spall
Convery	Lukes	Turan
Gallagher	Mackmurdie	Ward
Gill	Ngongo	Boszman-Quarshie
Graham	O'Halloran	Jackson
Heather	O'Sullivan	Weekes
Hyde	Ozdemir	

The Mayor (Councillor Troy Gallagher) in the Chair

149 MINUTES

Councillor Ismail asked for it to be noted that she withdrew her questions at the previous meeting because councillors were not permitted to ask supplementary questions.

RESOLVED:

That the minutes of the previous meeting held on 8 July 2021 be agreed as a correct record and the Chair be authorised to sign them.

150 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

It was noted that there were several interests to declare in relation to Motion 5, Supporting Public Sector Workers, and these would be dealt with at the start of the agenda item.

151 MAYORAL ANNOUNCEMENTS

(i) Apologies

Apologies for absence were received from Councillor Poole.

The Mayor explained that not all members could attend because the capacity of the Council Chamber had been reduced to accommodate social distancing measures.

(ii) Order of business

No changes were proposed to the order of business.

(iii) Declaration of discussion items

No items were declared.

(iv) Mayor's Announcements

The Mayor advised that he had attended a number of fantastic events celebrating the very best of Islington over the last few months.

At the end of August the Mayor attended the Go Africa Festival at the Ringcross Centre. This event showcased the talent, art and culture of the borough's African communities and it was a privilege to attend. The Mayor had also opened the Angel Canal Festival on 5th September. The Mayor commented that the event was well attended and he was pleased that the festival could go ahead after the difficulties of the previous 18 months. The Mayor had also attended the Whitecross Street Party and said it was fantastic to attend such a colourful and bold celebration of the diversity of our borough.

The Mayor was proud to attend the unveiling of the Windrush Statue at the Whittington Hospital. The Mayor spoke of the important contribution of the thousands of nurses and midwives who came to this country to work for the NHS and it was right that this was recognised through the statue.

The Mayor commented on the work of his Mayoral Charities and the importance of fundraising and raising awareness of the serious issues they deal with.

The Mayor was honoured to attend the first conference on World Suicide Prevention Day and lead a minute silence on the steps of the Town Hall. The Mayor welcomed representatives of one of his charities, James' Place, to the meeting, and commented that they would be speaking to the Council about their work in suicide prevention and supporting people through crisis later in the meeting.

The Mayor reminded councillors of the Mayor's Inauguration Celebration on 1st October, the Freedom of the Borough Ceremony on 18th October, and the Remembrance Events in November.

The Mayor also paid tribute to Ken Watts, a D Day veteran from Islington, who passed away earlier in September. The Mayor said that the bravery of that generation should never be forgotten and the Council's thoughts were with his family at this time.

(v) Length of speeches

The Mayor reminded all councillors to stay within the permitted length for speeches.

152 LEADER'S ANNOUNCEMENTS

The Leader spoke of her frustration at the current legislative position in relation to Council meetings and that councillors were not able to participate in meetings virtually. The pandemic was still ongoing and councillors should not be prevented from participating in council meetings if they are self-isolating, clinically vulnerable, or protecting family members with vulnerabilities. The Leader thanked the council staff working to ensure that council meetings are held as safely as possible.

The Leader thanked the Mayor and said it was great to attend many events alongside him over the last couple of months. The Leader was delighted at the unveiling of the Windrush Statue at the Whittington Hospital and said that it was wonderful to have a permanent commemoration of the contribution they had made in the borough. The Leader was also pleased to attend the Whitecross Festival and said it was brilliant event.

The Leader congratulated Councillor Champion and officers in the Environment department for winning an award at the Energy Awards for their innovative work on the Bunhill Energy Centre.

153 PETITIONS

A petition was submitted by Nazir Ahmed in relation to the proposed development of housing for homeless people at Stacey Street.

A petition was submitted by Lucy Facer in relation to traffic on Liverpool Road.

154 QUESTIONS FROM MEMBERS OF THE PUBLIC

Question (a) from Ernestas Jegorovas to Cllr Ngongo, Executive Member for Children, Young People & Families:

How many schools (as a percentage) in Islington have CO2 monitors installed, and how is the council supporting schools to increase ventilation in school buildings?

Response:

Thank you for a question. CO2 monitors are a vital tool for stopping the spread of COVID-19 in our schools. Monitoring the levels of CO2 allows schools to identify locations that need more ventilation and take action to keep people safe. The Department for Education CO2 monitor programme is rolling out over the autumn term. Our special schools are given priority and should receive them from this month. However, this government has failed us as a local council by not giving us data on when schools will be allocated monitors. Officers are working closely with schools to provide advice on increasing ventilation in school buildings to ensure our young people can continue in education as safely as possible. Thank you again for your question; this Council will stand together with our schools and young people to make sure that their education is delivered in a safe environment.

Question (b) from Sue Lees to Cllr Champion, Executive Member for Environment & Transport:

In the absence of sufficient EV charging points, is there any provision for the council to provide a gunnel in the pavement to allow householders in street properties to safely charge an electric car from their home? I've seen people putting out a cable with a plastic protector over it. Wouldn't it be safer for vulnerable pedestrians to replace this with a gunnel, possibly paid for by the householder?

Response:

Thank you for your question. Enabling increased use of electric vehicles for journeys which can't be undertaken by walking or cycling or wheeling is a key part of our strategy to tackle both climate change and air quality. We are keen to support local people to switch to electric and we currently have 279 on-street electric vehicle charging points; we have a goal of installing 400 before the end of 2022.

I do appreciate that your suggestion sounds quite reasonable as a solution, particularly as, unlike other parts of the country, many people don't have access to private outside space to charge vehicles from. However, there are two main problems with your suggestion; if you cut gunnels into paving it creates weaknesses that can allow water in and can lead to the break-up of the paving thereby creating a trip hazard. Also, in Islington there are so many services under the pavements that it almost makes it impossible to dig on our pathways. We are trying to improve the condition of pathways, in particular for less mobile and disabled people who need them to remain clear and trip free, and cutting portions out on the pavement would make that task harder.

The following two questions received a joint response:

Question (c) from Roderik Gonggrijp to Cllr Champion, Executive Member for Environment & Transport:

It has come to our attention that Islington will soon start to run consultations on its People-Friendly Streets scheme. This consultation is strongly encouraged and the intention is applauded. As you well know there are groups with strong feelings both for and against these improvements in disability access and road safety on Islington's streets; and a robust and inclusive consultation is thus most important.

Can the councillor clarify to the public what form is the consultation is taking and how is the council ensuring it hears the views of all people-friendly neighbourhood residents, as well as stakeholder organisations?

Question (h) from Rebekah Kelly to Cllr Champion, Executive Member for Environment & Transport:

The Council has not yet made announcements regarding the first formal consultation of St. Peter's People Friendly Streets scheme. I sent a Freedom of Information request to find out more about consultation and was told we would be told in due course. There is no public awareness that this is the first chance for people to have their opinions recorded and considered on whether the scheme would be adapted or made permanent, although a local cycling group have full knowledge and sharing with those that support the scheme. It seems the council only want to hear the views of those that favour. Online surveys exclude those that are digitally enabled or require communication in different languages and are more likely to be completed by those that are politically engaged. All views should be heard when making major changes to the borough and ultimately the views of residents should be the ones that count.

How will consultation take place and who can take part? The Council should consider sending a survey to every address in the borough for a more inclusive, representative view on what the residents want and how they are affected. Therefore preventing the consultation from being railroaded by London or national campaign groups.

Joint Response:

Thank you very much for your questions. The consultation started on 13 September and will last for four weeks and will consist of a questionnaire designed to understand people's experiences of low traffic neighbourhoods. We have sent out over 10,000 leaflets to properties in the St Peter's area and its boundary roads, with details of the consultation events and information on how to access the questionnaire and website. 2,000 further leaflets will be available and distributed at on-street events during the consultation. I have been to two events in St Peter's, standing on street corners talking to people. We advertise that we

are there, we put up posters, and we have had a number of people coming along to talk to us. Officers have also held another one, so in the last week we've been to St Peter's three times, for more than two hours each time. We are also promoting the consultation in the local press and on social media to ensure as broad a range of response as possible.

Paper copies of the survey are available and translations are available if necessary. We will also run a disabled person's drop-in session and there is an online event planned to ensure those who cannot join in person have an opportunity to take part. We will be reaching out to businesses and local organisations to ensure their views are reflected in consultation responses.

As a Council we do want to make sure we work with local people to create safer, greener, healthy streets.

Question (d) from Natasha Cox to Cllr Champion, Executive Member for Environment & Transport:

Islington's insect population plays an important part in feeding local bats and birds. Given recent findings on the detrimental affects of LED lighting on insect numbers, does the council have any plans to fit cheap filters on them to screen out blue light, especially in green spaces and areas that have vegetation?

Response:

Thank you for your question. We don't just want to protect biodiversity, but also to increase it. We are aware of the study on the impact of lighting on insects; the findings are currently under review by the Institution of Lighting Professionals. We have no immediate plans to fit blue light filters until we fully understand the impact of this; we will take into account advice from the ILP and ensure any filters are compatible with the range of lighting equipment used throughout the borough.

In 2018 we took the decision to change our street lights to LED bulbs to decrease carbon emissions and realise savings accounted for in our budget, which allows us to spend more on vital services for local people. Most of our LED lights are connected to a central management system which does enable lights to be adapted as appropriate to the local environment. We will of course keep local people updated on any changes.

Question (e) from Benali Hamdache to Cllr Ngongo, Executive Member for Children, Young People and Families:

What guidance are Islington schools giving to children about attendance, when someone in the household has Covid?

Response:

Thank you for your question. Advice to schools is provided by the Department for Education, however we know that there has been a lack of clear guidance for schools throughout the pandemic. While people are not required to self-isolate when a member of their household tests positive, the Council operates regular lateral flow tests to spot infection and if anyone develops symptoms they should remain at home and take a PCR test. If the test is negative they are able to go back to school. If someone in that household tests positive, everyone in the household is strongly advised to take a PCR test as soon as possible in order to identify any other cases.

As a Council we are determined to keep our community safe. We are facing a serious situation. This government doesn't give any clear guidance or support to local schools to make sure our young people and their families and teaching staff are kept safe. We are liaising with our local schools day in day out in full collaboration to make sure every child, every student and every teacher is kept safe.

Who can protect our young people if it's not us? We stand in solidarity with our schools because we have witnessed the failure of any guidance to support education. We have put everything in place we can to make sure if they raise a problem or situation we can step in to protect, advise and support them through our Covid reactive response which is running seven days a week. We will continue to put pressure on the government to provide clear and consistent guidance to schools. As we head into winter, which will see rising of cases, we need to do our best to make sure we are protecting our young people.

Question (f) from Devon Osborne to Cllr Ward, Executive Member for Housing & Development:

How many people living in council housing have contacted the council in the past four years about mould or damp in their homes; and what action is the council taking to deal with damp/mouldy homes and ensure no one is exposed to damp and mould?

Response:

Thank you for your question. The Council is determined to provide safe, decent, genuinely affordable homes for local people. A vital part of that is maintaining and improving our current stock of council homes. The repair service is being proactive and providing accessible information on ways to prevent and report any cases of damp and condensation in the home. This is in addition to our reactive work which deals with reports of damp or mould and then looks at how to prevent it from reoccurring. Over the period 2018 to 2021 there have been just over 5,000 inspections of council homes for damp. The number of inspections has fallen slightly since 2018 with 1,177 inspections taking place in 2020 compared to 1,423 the year before. The data on reported damp in Islington is being analysed to identify hotspots of damp and this information is then used to identify areas for investment on estates to stop it from happening in the future. This is a key part of our £40million per year investment in maintaining and improving our council homes.

Question (g) from Lucy Facer to Cllr Champion, Executive Member for Environment & Transport:

Tree canopy cover needs to reach a critical mass of 40% to start to mitigate against climate change. Given the appetite residents have shown in supporting Islington Forest for Change, the project run by Islington Clean Air Parents, and the thousands of empty street tree pits, will Islington Council revise its current tree planting ambitions up to 40% by 2030 as part of its net zero carbon target?

Response:

I'd like to start by thanking Lucy and Islington Clean Air Parents for their help in sourcing about 200 trees for Forest for Change Islington and organising a successful fundraising campaign to defray some of those costs. I would also like to thank the council's Greenspace team in particular for enabling this to happen.

In Islington we already have tree cover of 25 percent which is above the London average of 21 percent and the national average of urban areas of 17 percent.

It's an impressive level of canopy cover due to the council's determination over a number of years to protect our borough's trees and plant more every year. We have what we believe is an ambitious target of 30 percent tree coverage, but we will of course look at all opportunities to maximise our tree planting where we can.

Given the density of borough and the limited amount of land we have available for planting it is quite challenging and to achieve the existing target we will need the help of residents and other landowners in the borough to plant trees on their land as well as the council planting in our parks, housing estates and of course highways.

Our plans are made much more difficult by the government's continued austerity restricting funds for such projects. That's why community funding initiatives are so important to this work. We will continue working with local people, businesses and community groups find locations and ways to plant even more trees to make Islington the greener and healthy place we all want to see.

Question (i) Martyn Perks to Cllr Champion, Executive Member for Environment & Transport:

How is Islington Council faced with a climate crisis, when the UK nation as a whole contributes 1% of carbon emissions globally?

Climate change, as we know is happening. But how is it a crisis or an emergency for us in this borough, even for Londoners? Especially when it is driving many of your policies, including the reduction of transport-related emissions, and to become carbon net neutral by 2030.

Response:

Thank you your question. The Climate Crisis is a global crisis. Every nation, every person, has to be part of the solution. It is absolutely not the case that Islington is not impacted. Recent weeks and months have shown us the effect the climate emergency as having already, both globally and locally. Just this summer many parts of London suffered from severe flooding, harming local homes and businesses. I walked down Tufnell Park Road a month or so ago to see a utility access cover and surrounding pavement damaged from the amount of water rushing through the Thames Water drains after a torrential rain storm. Just today, and very worryingly, Islington was named as one of the six London boroughs most vulnerable to climate change.

We need to contribute towards the global effort to reduce the wide-ranging impact of climate change on our planet. We know that climate change will hit poorest countries in the world hardest and they will not have resources to protect themselves from its effects. We do recognise that many elements of achieving our objectives are outside the control of the Council. This is why we need to tackle this issue together. A collective approach is required with much of our efforts directed towards working closely with residents, visitors, partner organisations, businesses and community groups. I hope you will join us at our forthcoming climate festival where we can hear from local people about their climate concerns and discuss how we can work together to tackle the climate emergency across Islington.

155 QUESTIONS FROM MEMBERS OF THE COUNCIL

Question (a) from Cllr Convery to Cllr Ward, Executive Member for Housing & Development:

Please can you report on progress towards Islington Housing signing Wayleave Agreements with telecommunications infrastructure providers such as G Network and Community Fibre so that households on Islington Council's housing estates can benefit from the new generation of high speed 'fibre-to-the premises' broadband connection?

Response:

Thank you very much for your question. The pandemic has proven to us how important good internet access is to everyday life, as more and more people work from home or learn remotely. Many in our borough face a digital divide. The Council has worked hard to distribute laptops and broadband access devices to people who need them, but we must do more. Everyone should have access to high-speed broadband and this is a great way of doing it. We are currently in the process of requesting expressions of interest from companies for wayleaves to enable them to deliver community fibre services to our estates. Getting this process right is important for ensuring optimum service value for money and that the work is completed safely. We've been working with a number of local authorities who have been through this process to learn best practice and ensure we provide the best possible service for local people. This is an exciting development that will bring high-speed broadband to estates across our borough. We aim to go out to market in October and will be keeping residents, members of the council, and stakeholders informed on progress and how they will be affected.

Supplementary question:

Thank you, I am delighted to hear about the progress made. The Housing Scrutiny Committee is intending to have some oversight of this issue and I would ask that this is positively engaged with.

Response:

I'd be delighted to work with the Housing Scrutiny Committee on this issue. Thank you.

Question (b) from Cllr Poole to Cllr Comer-Schwartz, Leader of the Council:

Will the Leader of the Council provide an update on efforts to save the Royal Northern War Memorial which is the only war memorial anywhere in this country on the at risk register.

As Cllr Poole was not present, the following written response was issued after the meeting:

I understand the significance of the Royal Northern War Memorial and the Council is committed to finding ways to save it. The Council has already commissioned a report from a specialist heritage consultant which sets out what needs to be done. A funding proposal is currently being worked on to support the appointment of a project manager to move this work forward including targeting potential external funding. Governance will also be put in place to ensure all key stakeholders help to shape the programme of work as it moves forward, which I know you will play a key part in. **Question (c) from Cllr Poyser to Cllr O'Halloran, Executive Member for Community Development:**

Many thanks to Cllr Shaikh and everyone in getting a sculpture stuck in the basement of the Town Hall resurrected to its rightful place in our wonderful Peace Park in Hillrise. It shows our

commitment to peace during this awful time with events in Afghanistan (the troop withdrawal was announced on the day of the unveiling) and it shows that socialists also want to raise statues where appropriate. I would particularly like to thank the Heritage Team for finding the sculpture, and also for ensuring that Bruce Kent and Jeremy Corbyn were there at the successful re-unveiling.

There is also a statue in the Elthorne Park proudly of African heritage. Would it possible for a plaque, or similar, to commemorate the name of that artist somewhere appropriate in the park?

As Cllr Poyser was not present, the following written response was issued after the meeting:

Thank you for your question. My thanks to yourself, your ward colleagues and Cllr Shaikh for your work in getting the sculpture up in Peace Park, a wonderful monument in our borough.

In a borough where we will always celebrate diversity, public art and heritage plays a very important part in this. I'm really pleased to report back to you that the Heritage team are working with the Parks team to produce a sign containing information on both statues. Once the research has been completed, Parks will liaise with local councillors to agree the location of the sign as well as the timeframe for its installation.

Question (d) from Cllr Russell to Cllr Ngongo, Executive Member for Children, Young People and Families:

I'm sure we can agree that the lack of government action to prepare for the return to school with improvements to ventilation in schools to mitigate against Covid infection is extremely worrying. Are you considering calling for mask wearing in schools for all secondary pupils in the absence of other mitigation measures?

Response:

Thank you for your question. Yet again, this government has failed our schools and our young people with their lack of guidance for keeping people safe during this pandemic. While we are supporting schools in implementing any measures to ensure teachers, staff, young people and their families are kept safe throughout the pandemic, this has been with one hand tied behind our back as the government have failed to provide the necessary guidance for schools. While the Council is not able to mandate the wearing of face coverings in schools, we encourage our local schools to take all measures possible to keep people safe, including the wearing of face coverings in crowded spaces.

In terms of additional measures in respect of confirmed cases, if a school reaches the threshold of five positive cases within 10 days, they are required to liaise with our Public Health team to discuss additional measures to be put in place to keep people safe. We know the government guidance is still not clear and not strong enough to protect people. We will continue to press for improved advice for schools from the Government. We want you to join us in this journey, for the protection of our future generation.

Question (e) from Cllr Russell to Cllr Ward, Executive Member for Housing & Development:

I am aware of several estates in my ward that are overdue their cyclical (every seven years) maintenance works. I understand part of the delay was due to not having a procurement framework in place.

How many estates in Islington are now up to date with cyclical repairs and how many are overdue; and can you supply me with a written list of all council run estates in Islington with the date of their most recent cyclical works and the intended dates for future works?

Response:

Thank you very much for your question. Everyone deserves a decent, safe and genuinely affordable place to call home. We are passionate about building more council homes for local people and tackling the housing crisis; but we are equally determined to maintain and improve our current council housing stock. We invest around £40million each year to keep our council homes in good condition. We have seen the benefit of the high level of investment carried out in our decent homes programme, with regular works often not even needed as a result. We now have a seven year inspection process which considers whether parts in people's homes require replacement imminently or whether they are still in good condition. The council can then identify works necessary for a whole estates, minimising disruption and presenting good value to the Council and its residents.

This approach allows us to invest differently in our stock; investing in areas such as resident safety and energy efficiency, which would otherwise be more challenging to fund. The Council is determined to provide high quality council homes wherever possible in this borough. This becomes more difficult when opposition councillors and parties consistently oppose the development of new council homes. I hope we will be able to work together to build more council homes for the people.

Supplementary question:

I would be very interested to know who has been opposing the building of council homes.

I think residents need more information about the seven year inspection process. It would be really helpful to have transparent information so that people living on different estates can see what the timescales are, particularly for leaseholders, so they can plan to save for their contribution to the cost of the works, and so they know what to expect and when. Could there be more information publicised about cyclical improvement works?

Response:

Since I took the housing brief, Green Party candidates have campaigned against new council housing at the Wedmore Estate, the Golden Lane Estate, and Dixon Clark Court. I know there are Green Party members who are deeply uncomfortable with this, so I would appeal for you to join us in our fight against this government and our fight for desperately needed homes. I would also be very happy to work with you on providing more clear information about our cyclical projects.

Question (f) from Cllr Khondoker to Cllr Gill, Executive Member for Finance & Performance:

The Tory Government has overseen a crisis in social care for over a decade. On the steps of Downing Street in 2019, the Prime Minister assured us he had a plan to "fix the social care crisis once and for all". Two years later, we have a tax rise on working people which hits the least well-off the hardest and still no plan to fix the social care crisis. This is an issue which is harming some of the most vulnerable people in our society who need a functioning social care system to care for them now.

Does the Executive Member agree that rather than a tax rise on local people who are already struggling to make ends meet, the Tory Government should be finding inefficiencies in its own budget and taxing the most well-off people in our society more on wealth and dividends to fund a National Care Service, free at the point of use?

Response:

Thank you for this very important question. Two years ago on the steps of Downing Street, Boris Johnson PM claimed he had a plan to solve the social care crisis and we've eagerly awaited to see how the government will solve this longstanding issue of underfunded care which affects and impoverishes the most vulnerable people in our society. After all these years of deliberation, all we have is nothing more than class war. A raid on the living standards of workers and retired workers to pay for the protected assets of the super-rich; a tax rise for working people which disproportionately affects the least well-off and currently provides no new money for social care.

A reasonably well-off retired couple with living in a council house with savings of £100,000 from their lump sums will find that under the new system they might have to pay up to half their savings. A retired worker who owns a flat worth £360,000 will be left to pay 25 percent of their wealth to pay for their social care. But someone with a £5million pound house will probably have pay less than 1.8 percent of their wealth. It's robbing the poor to protect the assets of the rich.

National Insurance, like Council Tax, is an unfair regressive tax which means that the higher you are paid, the less you pay. It's not as if this increased taxation for care workers and delivery drivers and nurses will lead to better funding for local authorities. The early indications are that the reforms are likely to be implemented in October 2023, yet the council and our staff and our care workers will be paying the increased national insurance contributions from next April, meaning further government cuts to council budgets and lower living standards.

The tax rise will increase the costs for us and significantly reduce the amount the rich have to contribute. They also are the people most likely to receive social care for the longest; as we know the poorer you are, the earlier you will die. We call on the Prime Minister to fix this social care crisis, but without regressive taxes like Council Tax and National Insurance to protect the wealth of the rich.

Question (g) from Cllr Hyde to Cllr O'Halloran, Executive Member for Community Development:

In Islington, we are proud of our diversity and welcome all those who wish to make our borough their home, as shown by our motion passed in July 2021 to become a recognised 'Borough of Sanctuary'.

Those fleeing Afghanistan recently have been through untold trauma and been forced to leave their homes for them and their family's safety. I'm proud that the Council has offered to welcome 15 Afghan families to our borough, supporting those households to settle in, get the support they need and integrate into our community. But at a time when the Council has had to make savings for over a decade, does the Executive Member agree that the Government should be fully funding this support for Afghan refugees?

Response:

Thank you for your question. As agreed at the July Council meeting, becoming a Borough of Sanctuary recognises our commitment to welcome and protect refugees and migrants in

Islington. It is also a clear statement of support for the Council's vision of fairness, in opposition to the government's hostile environment, which punishes those who wish to make our borough their home.

Despite continued government austerity for local government, this Council has continued to fund vital services for migrants and refugees; including £1.3million per year for accommodation, and to support the No Recourse to Public Funds households, with Home Office decisions on immigration applications still outstanding.

Our borough has a proud history of welcoming migrants to our borough and this has continued to in recent months. The Afghan resettlement scheme will therefore match this approach that has already been delivered for 18 Syrian families resettled in Islington. We will we be able to deliver high quality assistance to the 15 Afghan families that we've pledged to accommodate and we're very proud of this. We will use the government funding and our own excellent expertise to fully welcome and support all those who want to make home in this borough. We're already working through our amazing Fairer Together programme, Housing Needs and the voluntary and community sector to welcome anybody that's come in here. We are a borough of fairness, so shame on this government and their hostile environment.

Question (h) from Cllr Ismail to Cllr Comer-Schwartz, Leader of the Council:

First, congratulations as the leader of Islington Council. It's become custom with Islington Labour leaders to follow the same footsteps of the last leader since 2010. With Catherine West, we had the fairness commission, follow by Richard Watts, employment commission.

Will you be following the same with a new commission? As the health and economic impact of Coronavirus is yet to be unfolding, particularly, on families with children, young people and pensioners on low income suffer more, such as mental health, depression, loneliness and isolation is become daily reality for residents, so the Council can serve better, as our resources need to be more targeting the need.

Response:

Thank you for your question and your congratulations. I agree that the pandemic has shone a light on the health inequalities of this borough, which we know have sadly blighted our borough for too long. We know that there is much work to do in tackling these inequalities and this is one of my primary focuses.

Tackling health inequalities is sadly made much harder by continued austerity from central government. If we hadn't been forced to find £215 million from our budget in savings, we would be able to have invested much more in keeping our borough healthy. However, I still believe we can make a great difference to local people. So although we will not be setting up a commission, we will be setting up a taskforce to look at the issues, with experts but more importantly with local people, because their expertise comes from their experience. Together we will tackle this important issue for Islington.

I am proud that one of the first things I have done as Leader is to look at a way of setting up a project to look at how we tackle the poverty and inequality that plays such a profound part of the outcomes we see in health inequalities. If we work together we can tackle these disparities. That is why the taskforce, named Islington Together: let's talk about a healthier future, will engage with local people, health leaders, our wonderful voluntary sector and our Council. Together we will improve health outcomes and make our borough are healthier and more equal place for all.

Supplementary question:

Thank you. I think all Leaders have priorities, and regardless of funds and austerity, they do find funds to hold commissions. You mention that you are going to do a taskforce, that is great, but as Leader you have the power and autonomy to hold a Health Commission for the residents of Islington. I am happy to work with you on this.

Response:

The taskforce will be beyond what I believe a commission would be able to do, in terms of our collaboration with the borough, genuine engagement, listening to people with lived experience of poverty and health inequality. I have already asked Councillor Heather, Councillor Turan, Councillor Picknell and Councillor Chowdhury so we have cross-borough spread and expertise to lead this work. This will provide us with the expertise and the evidence that we need to give further resource and priority to this topic.

Question (i) from Cllr Ismail to Cllr O'Halloran, Executive Member for Community Development:

This Council have been funding organisations, some do good work, others could do improvements as we roll funding again and again while others are left behind. The Black Caribbean review highlighted conducted between Feb and March 2021 by VSC with the Challenging Inequality team at the council and others have not been also address yet.

How do you see the Voluntary Community Sector to be more inclusively with tangible results and more stainable next around funding?

Response:

Thank you for your question. I am proud of Islington's long-standing commitment to fund the voluntary and community sector during a time where the government cuts have forced us to make savings of over £250million since 2010.

Our £2.7million voluntary sector partnership grants 2021-24 provides vital core funding to more than 50 voluntary and community sector organisations. This funding is awarded through a fair, rigorous, open and transparent process, ensuring that all organisations we partner with deliver tangible results and are sustainable. Eighteen percent of the organisations awarded had never received core grant funding from the Council before, and in the last round of funding there was a 19 percent increase in the funding of Black Asian Minority Ethnic community groups, and funding commitments across all protected characteristics, showing our commitment to tackling inequality, racism and injustice.

In 2020-21, 38 organisations received grants totalling of £180,000 to deliver community based projects through Islington Council's Community Chest. Of these, 26 percent had never received funding through programme before, and 54 percent of the beneficiaries of the funding were from Black Asian or Minority Ethnic communities. Contrary to your claims, the Council has been working to implement the recommendations of our reviews. In July 2021 Islington's Voluntary and Community Sector Committee committed £30,000 per year to be used to work with Islington's Black Caribbean community to develop a programme of capacity building to support, establish and formalise a group of community representations. Our Equalities and Voluntary Community Sector Development Team are working with community leaders to support this work and we have been doing so over the last year. At the same committee meeting, £30,000 per year was awarded to support work with disabled people. All this information is in the public domain.

Supplementary question:

Why was the Black and Caribbean review 2020, while you were doing the voluntary and community sector partnership programme review to 2024? Isn't it a fact that Islington Labour, and especially under your hat, that the Black and Caribbean community, and the White community, have been left behind?

Response:

The facts are there. You can see the reports. It's in the public domain. If there is an accusation there, I'm happy for you to put it in writing for me or to speak about this further.

Question (j) from Cllr Clarke to Cllr Ward, Executive Member for Housing & Development:

The Holloway Prison Site is a once in a generation opportunity to build hundreds of new social homes in St George's and tackle the housing crisis in Islington, as well as increasing green space in the area.

What is the Council doing to ensure there are as many new social homes built on the site as possible?

Response:

Thank you very much for your question. This government thinks that our borough is a cash cow; they wanted to get the biggest possible receipt for Holloway Prison to use that money far away from Islington. We know better and we don't see our borough that way. We know that the whole prison site is a unique once in a generation opportunity to build hundreds of new social rent homes. Incidentally, hundreds of social rent homes the government at every step tries to stop us from building.

Since Peabody purchased the site we've continued to work with them to maximise the number of homes available for social rent, and this has resulted in plans that will now see 60 percent genuinely affordable homes on the site, and with 70 percent of that number being for social rent. I am very proud of that and all my colleagues should be as well.

We are still working with Peabody to make sure that the other 30 percent are London Living Rent. We're also proud of the work that we've done to ensure that the site delivers publicly accessible green space, a new central public open space, 60 extra care homes, and the women's building, which will not only honour the legacy of the previous Holloway prison, but will also provide one of the largest community spaces in our borough. Thank you very much for your question; I'm incredibly excited about the potential of this development and I want to thank you and all of your colleagues for your hard-fought work on this campaign. There's no justice without housing justice.

Supplementary question:

Sixty percent genuinely affordable homes with 42% at target council rent is a great achievement. Congratulations to Councillor Ward and all the groups involved in campaign to get this outcome. Eighteen percent of the homes on the site will be intermediate homes, which means homes at less than market rent, and to qualify for an intermediate home you need a maximum income of £60,000. Do agree that this is actually unaffordable for all residents in housing need in Islington? The Mayor of London is exploring what can be done

to improve the affordability and access in intermediate homes, and I'd like to ask you to work with the Mayor of London to increase the affordability and access to intermediate homes and also the number of homes at Council rents.

Response:

Absolutely, Currently Peabody's preferred intermediate product is shared ownership, we are pushing them on this as we want London Living Rent, which is much better for people in key jobs; teachers, social workers, people who are vital to our borough but the same time can't afford to rent or buy locally. The most pressing need in this borough is more social rent homes, I will be working with the Mayor of London, with you Councillor Clarke and all of my colleagues to keep on pushing for the maximum possible number of social rent homes in this borough.

156 PRESNTATION FROM MAYORAL CHARITY - JAMES' PLACE

The Council received a presentation from Ellen O'Donoghue, CEO, and Dan Bracken, Head of James' Place London, on the work of the charity James' Place. The charity works to support men in suicidal crisis. James' Place had been selected by the Mayor as one of his charities for 2021/22.

Following the presentation the Mayor spoke about the importance of creating safe spaces for people to talk about their emotions and discuss difficult issues to ensure that people in crisis are able to receive help in the local community. Members of the Council then asked questions about the work of the charity and the services they provide.

The Council thanked James' Place for their work and for their contribution to the meeting.

157 A NEW STRATEGIC PLAN FOR THE COUNCIL - ISLINGTON TOGETHER FOR A MORE EQUAL FUTURE

Councillor Comer-Schwartz moved the recommendations in the report. Councillor Ward seconded.

The recommendations were put to the vote and CARRIED.

RESOLVED:

- (i) That the new strategic plan be approved;
- (ii) That the approach to build on this plan over the coming year, by working with thought leaders and engaging with communities to capture lived experiences to enhance the delivery of our strategic programmes, be noted.

158 FLEXIBLE USE OF CAPITAL RECEIPTS STRATEGY

Councillor Gill moved the recommendations in the report. Councillor Comer-Schwartz seconded. Councillor Russell contributed to the debate. Councillor Gill exercised his right of reply.

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

RESOLVED:

- (i) That the 'Impact on Prudential Indicators' section of the report be noted;

- (ii) That the adoption of a Flexible Capital Receipts Strategy, as outlined in the 'Proposed Usage' section of the report, be agreed.

159 TREASURY MANAGEMENT STRATEGY

Councillor Gill moved the recommendations in the report. Councillor Comer-Schwartz seconded. Councillor Russell contributed to the debate.

The recommendations were put to the vote and CARRIED.

RESOLVED:

- (i) That the following adaptions to the Council's current approved borrowing counterparties be agreed:

- (a) Individuals lending via a peer-to-peer platform where appropriate counterparty checks are conducted by the platform;
- (b) Investors in capital market bonds and retail bonds issued by the council

- (ii) That the updated Treasury Management Strategy Statement, attached at Appendix A to the report submitted, be approved.

160 CONSTITUTION REPORT

Councillor Hyde moved the recommendations in the report.

The recommendations were put to the vote and CARRIED.

RESOLVED:

That the amendments to the Constitution set out in the appendices to the report be approved, to take effect from 1st October 2021.

161 CHIEF WHIP'S REPORT

Councillor Hyde moved the recommendations in the report.

The recommendations were put to the vote and CARRIED.

RESOLVED:

- (i) That Councillors Ibrahim and Burgess be appointed to the Corporate Parenting Board with immediate effect for the remainder of the municipal year or until a successor is appointed.
- (ii) That Councillor Ibrahim be appointed as Young People's Champion with immediate effect for the remainder of the municipal year or until a successor is appointed.
- (iii) That the appointment of Peter Fehler, Director of Law and Governance, as the Council's Monitoring Officer be confirmed.

162 NOTICES OF MOTION

Motion 1: An adaptation plan for climate resilience

Councillor Russell moved the motion. Councillor Champion contributed to the debate. Councillor Russell exercised her right of reply.

The motion was put to the vote and CARRIED.

RESOLVED:

- (i) To assess past and future risks to residents, organisations and the council from extreme weather events or hazards arising from a changing climate. This should include the impact of:
 - o Surface water flooding from extreme rainfall
 - o Extreme heat and cold in homes especially at night
 - o Extreme temperatures in workplaces
 - o Extreme wind, hail, rainfall, heat and drought
- (ii) To identify risks to public health, social care, community resilience, natural assets, infrastructure and economic development including these in corporate plans and policies
- (iii) To produce a plan and estimated costings for the adaptation and resilience measures required to protect the council, Islington residents, workers and organisations from the disruption due to future extreme weather events.
- (iv) To identify methods of funding and delivering this work in consultation with London Councils, City Hall and national government along with local organisations and residents.

Motion 2: Motion to support the Transport for All Equal Pavements Pledge

The Mayor noted that a proposed amendment had been circulated in the second despatch of papers.

Councillor Russell moved the motion. Councillor Champion 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 support the Transport for All Equal Pavements Pledge;
- (ii) To engage directly with organisations representing people with specific accessibility requirements;
- (iii) To call upon the Mayor of London through Transport for London (TfL) to respond to the Equal Pavements pledge with a comprehensive programme of support to boroughs to be delivered in this current term;
- (iv) To call on Central Government to fully fund the Council's attempts to make Islington's pavements more people-friendly.

Motion 3: Islington Together - let's talk about a greener future

Councillor Champion moved the motion. Councillor Weekes seconded.

The motion was put to the vote and CARRIED.

RESOLVED:

- (i) To hold a festival during COP26, to work together with local people on making our borough a greener, cleaner and healthier place by tackling the Climate Emergency;
- (ii) To continue to work with residents and local business, third sector and public sector bodies to cut the 91% of emissions generated by non-Council sources in the borough, promoting and incentivising efforts to reduce their carbon footprint;
- (iii) To continue to work with other local authorities and the Mayor of London to call on Central Government to fully fund the Council's Vision 2030 strategy and demand a national plan to tackle the climate emergency.

Motion 4: Opposing Central Government plans for voter ID

Councillor Gill moved the motion. Councillor Ozdemir seconded. Councillors Lukes and Ismail contributed to the debate. Councillor Gill exercised his right to reply.

The motion was put to the vote and CARRIED.

RESOLVED:

- (i) To oppose the introduction of photo ID as a requirement to vote at polling stations;
- (ii) To write to the Government, opposing the introduction of voter ID and request this measure is not included in any forthcoming Bill;
- (iii) That should mandatory photo ID be passed into law, this council will investigate low-cost options for residents, bearing in mind the barriers outlined and focus efforts to promote the ID to those who are most likely to need it;
- (iv) To campaign for the introduction of residence-based voting rights to ensure all residents of Islington have the right to vote for their local representatives.

Motion 5: Supporting public sector workers

This motion related to the Local Government Pay Settlement and called on the Council to support the pay claim submitted by the Unite, GMB and Unison trade unions. The Mayor announced that all councillors had a disclosable pecuniary interest in relation to Motion 5, as the Members' Allowances Scheme links councillor allowances to the Local Government Pay Settlement. It was also noted that councillors who are members of the Unison, Unite and GMB trade unions also had a personal interest in this motion. This included Councillors Comer-Schwartz, Ngongo, Champion, Ward, Convery, O'Halloran, Khondoker, Hyde, Lukes, Weekes, Gilgunn, Ozdemir, Turan, Bossman-Quarshie, O'Sullivan, Khurana, Ismail, Mackmurdie, Spall, Jackson, and Gallagher.

It was noted that under paragraph 14.2 of the Member Code of Conduct, Council may grant dispensations to councillors to vote on a matter in which they hold an interest, if without the dispensation the number of persons prohibited from participating in any particular business would be so great a proportion of the body transacting the business as to impede the transaction of the business. Councillor Hyde moved a motion to grant a dispensation to the members present for this Motion. This was put to the vote and CARRIED.

RESOLVED:

That a dispensation be granted to the councillors present to enable the transaction of business under paragraph 14.2 of the Member Code of Conduct.

Councillor Comer-Schwartz moved the substantive motion. Councillor Gilgunn seconded. Councillor Russell contributed to the debate. Councillor Comer-Schwartz exercised her right to reply.

The motion 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% uplift across all pay points in 2021/22;
- (ii) To call on Central Government to fully fund any increase in pay for public sector workers;
- (iii) To sign the Mental Health At Work Commitment, to achieve better mental health outcomes for council staff and commit to a set of actions to improve and support the mental health of council employees;
- (iv) To work with local trade unions to improve mental wellbeing services for council staff and support calls for improved mental health services for workers across the public sector.

Motion 6: Equalities in Educational Outcomes

The Mayor advised that a proposed amendment to this motion was circulated in the second despatch of papers.

Councillor Ismail moved the motion. Councillor Ngongo moved the amendment. Councillor Ismail exercised her right to reply. Councillor Ngongo exercised her right to reply.

The amendment was put to the vote and CARRIED.

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

RESOLVED:

- (i) To continue to fund and commission supplementary education for pupils underachieving in mainstream schools;

- (ii) To-continue to seek to improve the educational outcomes of the most disadvantaged;
- (iii) To provide supplementary community based education to Black, Caribbean and White British pupils as an essential aspect in improving their future and ours;
- (iv) To run an impressive series of events throughout October, celebrating Black History Month, Black culture and the contribution of Islington's Black communities to our borough.

The meeting closed at 10.15 pm

MAYOR