



AGENDA FOR THE EXECUTIVE

Members of the Executive are summoned to attend a meeting to be held in the Council Chamber, Islington Town Hall, Upper Street, N1 2UD on **18 May 2023 at 7.00 pm.**

Enquiries to : Mary Green
Tel : Tel: 0207 527 3005
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Despatched : 10 May 2023

Membership

Councillor Kaya Comer-Schwartz
Councillor Diarmaid Ward

Councillor Una O'Halloran
Councillor Rowena Champion

Councillor John Woolf
Councillor Santiago Bell-Bradford
Councillor Nurullah Turan
Councillor Michelline Safi Ngongo

Councillor Roulin Khondoker

Quorum is 4 Councillors

Portfolio

Leader of the Council
Executive Member for Finance, Planning and Performance
Executive Member for Homes and Communities
Executive Member for Environment, Air Quality and Transport
Executive Member for Community
Executive Member for Inclusive Economy and Jobs
Executive Member for Health and Social Care
Executive Member for Children, Young People and Families
Executive Member for Equalities, Culture & Inclusion

Declarations of interest:

If a member of the Executive has a **Disclosable Pecuniary Interest*** in an item of business and it is not yet on the council's register, the Councillor **must** declare both the existence and details of it at the start of the meeting or when it becomes apparent. Councillors may also **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, the Councillor **must** leave the room without participating in discussion of the item.

If a member of the Executive has a **personal** interest in an item of business they **must** declare both the existence and details of it at the start of the meeting or when it becomes apparent but may remain in the room, participate in the discussion and/or vote on the item if they have a dispensation from the Chief Executive.

- *(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 expenses in carrying out duties as a member, or of election; including from a trade union.
- (c) **Contracts** - Any current contract for goods, services or works, between the Councillors or their partner (or a body in which one 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 the Councillor or their 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.

NOTE: Public questions may be asked on condition that the Chair agrees and that the questions relate to items on the agenda. No prior notice is required. Questions will be taken with the relevant item.

Requests for deputations must be made in writing at least two clear days before the meeting and are subject to the Leader's agreement. The matter on which the deputation wants to address the Executive must be on the agenda for that meeting.

A. Formal Matters

1. Apologies for absence
2. Declarations of Interest
3. Minutes of previous meeting 1 - 8
4. Appointments to be made by the Executive 2023/24 9 – 12

B.	Child-friendly Islington	Page
1.	Proposal on the future of Copenhagen and Vittoria Primary Schools	13 - 34
2.	Under 5s childcare fee increase consultation	35 - 72
3.	Executive response to the Children's Services Scrutiny Committee - Special Educational Needs and Disabilities Transitions	73 - 92

C. Greener, healthier Islington

1.	Sobell Leisure Centre Facilities changes	93 - 138
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D. Urgent non-exempt matters

Any non-exempt items which the Chair agrees should be considered urgently by reason of special circumstances. The reasons for urgency will be agreed by the Chair and recorded in the minutes.

E. Exclusion of the press and public

To consider whether to exclude the press and public during discussion of the remaining items on the agenda, in view of their confidential nature, in accordance with Schedule 12A of the Local Government Act 1972.

F. Confidential / exempt items for information

G. Urgent exempt matters

Any exempt items which the Chair agrees should be considered urgently by reason of special circumstances. The reasons for urgency will be agreed by the Chair and recorded in the minutes.

The next meeting of the Executive will be on 22 June 2023

WEBCASTING NOTICE

This meeting will be filmed by the Council for live and/or subsequent broadcast on the Council's website. The whole of the meeting will be filmed, except where there are confidential or exempt items, and the footage will be on the website for 12 months. A copy of it will also be retained in accordance with the Council's data retention policy.

If you participate in the meeting you will be deemed by the Council to have consented to being filmed. By entering the Council Chamber you are also consenting to being filmed and to the possible use of those images and sound recordings for webcasting and/or training purposes. If you do not wish to have your image captured you should sit in the public gallery area, overlooking the Chamber.

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London Borough of Islington

Executive - 20 April 2023

Minutes of the meeting of the Executive held in the Council Chamber, Islington Town Hall, Upper Street, N1 2UD on 20 April 2023 at 7.00 pm.

Present: **Councillors** Kaya Comer-Schwartz, Diarmaid Ward, Una O'Halloran, Rowena Champion, John Woolf, Santiago Bell-Bradford, Nurullah Turan, Michelline Ngongo and Roulin Khondoker

Also **Councillor:** Ernestas Jegorovas-Armstrong

Councillor Kaya Comer-Schwartz in the Chair

93 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

None.

94 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

None.

95 MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING

RESOLVED:

That the minutes of the meeting held on 23 March 2023 be confirmed as an accurate record of proceedings and the Chair be authorised to sign them.

96 PHASE 2 OF SCHOOL ORGANISATION

RESOLVED:

(a) To note the contents of the report of the Executive Member for Children, Young People and Families, detailing proposals to reduce the number of school places in a planned way to support schools to manage change within their national funding formula allocations.

(b) To approve the changes proposed in recommendations 2.1 and 2.2 in exempt Appendix A (exempt agenda item H1).

Reasons for the decision – to drive educational excellence through inclusive and sustainable schools

Other options considered – none

Conflicts of interest / dispensations granted – none

**NEW BARNSBURY ESTATE; DISPOSAL OF FREEHOLD LAND AND
RELEASE OF RESTRICTIVE COVENANT TO SUPPORT
REDEVELOPMENT**

RESOLVED:

- (a) To authorise the Corporate Director for Community Wealth Building, following consultation with the Executive Member for Finance, Planning and Performance, to authorise the transfers of land and leasehold interests at the New Barnsbury Estate, as identified edged yellow on the plan attached at Appendix 1 to the report of the Executive Member for Finance, Planning and Performance, to Newlon, as appropriate, to enable development delivery.
- (b) To note, subject to certain conditions, that the Council will enter into the Deeds of Release to remove the restrictive covenant in respect of development.
- (c) To authorise the Corporate Director for Community Wealth Building, following consultation with the Executive Member for Finance, Planning and Performance, to authorise entering into the transactions and other documentation in respect of acquisition and/or appropriation for planning purposes, related to rights of light and all and any other rights, to support the development, including any required acquisition and disposal of land interests and other related matters and detailed in Appendix 2 to the report. In order to appropriate, the council needed to have an interest in land to satisfy the legal requirements set down in the relevant sections of law and as such would need to acquire a relevant interest from Newlon accordingly, disposing of that interest back to Newlon shortly thereafter, enabling the implementation of appropriation.
- (d) To authorise the Corporate Director for Community Wealth Building, following consultation with the Executive member for Housing and Development, and subject to the prior completion of a compulsory purchase indemnity agreement with Newlon Housing Trust, to approve the making of one or more Compulsory Purchase Orders (CPO) under sections 226(1)(a) and 226(3)(a) of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990, section 13 of the Local Government (Miscellaneous Provisions) Act 1976 and any other power as relevant, to ensure that all necessary interests in (and rights over, including new rights) the Order Land, (being that land edged red on the Plan at Appendix 3 and that land shown for the acquisition of new rights on the Plan at Appendix 4, or such other version of the Order Map as the Director of Law and Governance may approve, provided that such version does not include any additional land to that currently shown), can be compulsorily acquired.
- (e) That, where the Corporate Director of Community Wealth Building approves the making of a CPO, to authorise the Director of Law and Governance to take all necessary steps to secure the making, confirmation, and implementation of that CPO, including (but not limited to):
- i) The preparation, submission and exchange of all necessary documents required before and during the CPO process, including if necessary any applications for certificates required pursuant to section 19 or Schedule 3 to the Acquisition of Land Act 1981.
 - ii) Compliance with all procedural requirements.

- iii) The entering into of agreements or giving undertakings to, with any objectors or those with an interest in the land to facilitate the withdrawal of such objections to the CPO on terms recommended by the Corporate Director of Community Wealth Building.
 - iv) The appointment of and attendance, presentation and representation by any legal advisor or expert at any public inquiry (or similar)
 - v) The ability to seek formal modifications to the CPO.
 - vi) The execution and service of any General Vesting Declarations and/or notices to treat and notices of entry or any other document or instrument required to effect implementation of a CPO.
 - vii) Taking and enforcing possession of the Order Land
 - viii) The referral and conduct of disputes relating to compensation at the Upper Tribunal (Lands Chamber)
 - ix) To enter into a CPO indemnity agreement with Newlon Housing Trust (or such other entity as the Director may approve), under which Newlon Housing Trust will indemnify the Council in respect of the costs of the CPO process and compensation that may arise as a result of the making, confirmation, or implementation of any CPOs
 - x) The costs of all such actions, following agreement and confirmation, to be met in full by Newlon Housing Trust
- (f) To authorise the Corporate Director of Community Wealth Building, pursuant to section 227 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 and/or any other power (as relevant), to acquire any interests in (or new rights over) the Order Land by agreement and make payments equivalent to statutory compensation (or payments as are deemed reasonable in the circumstances or the provision of property or services in lieu of compensation), either in advance (but in contemplation of) or during the formal CPO process. The costs of all such actions, following agreement and confirmation, to be met in full by Newlon Housing Trust
- (g) To authorise the Director of Law and Governance to transfer, lease or licence any interests in (or new rights over) the Order Land that have been acquired by the Council pursuant to the CPO or by agreement to Newlon Housing Trust or such other person involved in the development and which the Director of Law and Governance may approve.
- (h) To note that following the compulsory acquisition, voluntary acquisition and/or appropriation of any part or parts of the Order Land pursuant to the above that section 203 of the Housing and Planning Act 2016 and/or section 236 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 (as applicable) may then apply to override or extinguish (as applicable) (and subject to payment of compensation where requested) any third party rights or covenants (to which that section applies).
- (i) To authorise the approvals required to assemble the Order Land including (if necessary) via compulsory purchase to ensure the development can proceed should Newlon Housing Trust and the Council fail to reach a negotiated settlement with the relevant affected parties. The scheme requires the assembly of the Order Land with vacant possession and free from impediments (including third party rights) including potentially via compulsory purchase.

Reasons for the decision – It was in the public interest for the Council to enter into these arrangements to secure the redevelopment to provide better and more homes and to promote economic, social, and environmental wellbeing and to contribute to sustainable development in Islington.

Other options considered – none

Conflicts of interest / dispensations granted – none

98 **LETTING OF UNDERGROUND CAR PARK, PARKER COURT GARAGES, BASIRE ST, LONDON N1 8RZ**

RESOLVED:

To authorise the Corporate Director for Community Wealth Building, following consultation with the Corporate Director of Resources and Acting Corporate Director of Homes and Neighbourhoods, to enter into the agreement for lease and subsequent lease of an unused car park under a housing scheme on Basire Street, on the terms set out in exempt Appendix 2 of the report of the Executive Member for Finance, Planning and Performance, along with the delegation to amend any such reasonable matters during the completion of the necessary paperwork.

Reasons for the decision – The ability to generate substantial long-term income for the Housing Revenue Account from non-operational property assets provided a much-needed revenue stream to the Council to reinvest in social housing. Additionally, in keeping with mitigating environmental and amenity concerns, the proposed use created opportunities to support both residents and the local business community with storage opportunities in the vicinity.

Other options considered – none

Conflicts of interest / dispensations granted – none

99 **LETTING OF 10-14 GARRETT STREET, LONDON, EC4**

RESOLVED:

To authorise the Corporate Director for Community Wealth Building, following consultation with the Corporate Director of Resources, to enter into the agreement for lease and subsequent lease of the site in Garrett Street, on the terms set out in exempt Appendix 1 of the report of the Executive Member for Finance, Planning and Performance.

Reasons for the decision - The creation and operation of much needed affordable work spaces was a key Council strategy to support local business recovery and economic growth with its attendant benefits in employment and community wealth building.

Other options considered – none

Conflicts of interest / dispensations granted – none

100 **DISPOSAL OF LAND AT YORK WAY FOR DEVELOPMENT PURPOSES**

RESOLVED:

To authorise the Corporate Director for Community Wealth Building, following consultation with the Corporate Director of Resources, to enter into the arrangements for the transfer of land at York Way, entering into a long lease and other related issues on the terms set out in exempt Appendix 1 of the report of the Executive Member for Finance, Planning and Performance.

Reasons for the decision - The provision of an appropriate fit for purpose building and other related issues would enable the long-term security of the site to be established.

Other options considered – none

Conflicts of interest / dispensations granted – none

101 **ACQUISITION OF FREEHOLD AND LONG LEASEHOLD LAND AT VALE ROYAL FOR OPERATIONAL PURPOSES**

RESOLVED:

To authorise the Corporate Director for Community Wealth Building, following consultation with the Corporate Director of Resources and Corporate Director of Environment and Climate Change, to enter into the arrangements for the transfer of land at Vale Royal, construction of new operational facilities and other related issues on the terms set out in exempt Appendix 1 of the report of the Executive Member for Finance, Planning and Performance.

Reasons for the decision – The requirement to provide the service operating from this site was a statutory requirement. In resolving the ownership issues, the provision of an appropriate fit for purpose building and other related issues would enable the long-term security of the site to be established.

Other options considered – none

Conflicts of interest / dispensations granted – none

102 **RESIDENT EXPERIENCE PROGRAMME - PHASES 1 AND 2 FUNDING APPROVAL**

RESOLVED:

(a) To note the scope of works to be undertaken in Phase 1 of the Resident Experience programme, as set out in paragraph 3.3.2 of the report of the Executive Member for Finance, Planning and Performance.

(b) To note the scope of works to be undertaken in Phase 2 of the programme, as detailed in the report.

(c) To note paragraph 3.3.4 of the report, which outlined the timetable for approval of Phase 3 of the programme.

(d) To note that Phases 1 and 2 of the programme would require a total investment of £3.372m, of which £1.068m had previously been agreed in the financial year 2023/24.

- (e) That approval for the remaining 2023/24 revenue cost of £1.974m be funded from the Business Strategy Reserve (50%) and the HRA (50%), based on the number of staff in the Contact Centre supporting General Fund and HRA activity.
- (f) To agree that the 2023/24 capital cost of £0.330m be funded from the Business Strategy Reserve (50%) and the HRA (50%).
- (g) To note that the ongoing costs of £0.470m per annum related to Phases 1 and 2 of the programme, of which £0.367m had already been agreed.
- (h) That approval be given to £0.103m ongoing expenditure being incurred from 2024/25 being factored into the 2024/25 General Fund (50%) and HRA (50%) budget processes as base budget adjustments in the MTFs.
- (i) To note the expenditure for Phase 3 which was projected to cost in the region of £10.000m one off, plus ongoing expenditure, which would be established in Phase 2 of the programme.

Reasons for the decision - To deliver long lasting transformation to the Council's services to residents, following a period of under-investment. Services would be redesigned around resident requirements to improve their experience of contacting the Council.

Other options considered – none

Conflicts of interest / dispensations granted – none

103

FUTUREWORK PROGRAMME FUNDING APPROVAL

RESOLVED:

- (a) To agree the Programme's proposals as detailed in the report of the Executive Member for Finance, Planning and Performance to vacate the sites identified as excess office accommodation.
- (b) To note that separate business cases would be written to establish the best value and viable future use of the sites which were no longer required
- (c) To note the actions to be taken to mitigate the impact of vacating the sites that are no longer required, as detailed in the report.
- (d) To approve the additional £0.688m of capital programme requirement for 2023/24 and to note that there was an estimated total £3.089m capital requirement, of which £2.401m had already been included in the 2023/24 capital programme.
- (e) That £7.749m additional revenue expenditure (one-off) be funded from the Budget Strategy reserve.

Reasons for the decision - To support a more agile operating model to support better outcomes for residents, whilst modernising the office estate and making significant savings in office accommodation.

Other options considered - None

Conflicts of interest / dispensations granted -None

104 EXCLUSION OF PRESS AND PUBLIC

RESOLVED:

That the press and public be excluded during consideration of the following items as the presence of members of the public and press would result in the disclosure of exempt information within the terms of Schedule 12A of the Local Government Act 1972, for the reasons indicated in the reports.

105 PHASE 2 OF SCHOOL ORGANISATION - EXEMPT APPENDICES

RESOLVED:

To agree the recommendations set out in the exempt appendix (H1).

106 LETTING OF UNDERGROUND CAR PARK, PARKER COURT GARAGES, BASIRE ST, LONDON N1 8RZ - EXEMPT APPENDIX

Noted.

107 LETTING OF 10-14 GARRETT STREET, LONDON, EC4 - EXEMPT APPENDICES

Noted.

108 DISPOSAL OF LAND AT YORK WAY FOR DEVELOPMENT PURPOSES - EXEMPT APPENDIX

Noted.

109 ACQUISITION OF FREEHOLD AND LONG LEASEHOLD LAND AT VALE ROYAL FOR OPERATIONAL PURPOSES - EXEMPT APPENDIX

Noted.

110 RESIDENT EXPERIENCE PROGRAMME - PHASES 1 AND 2 FUNDING APPROVAL - EXEMPT APPENDIX

Noted.

111 FUTUREWORK PROGRAMME FUNDING APPROVAL - EXEMPT APPENDIX

Noted.

The meeting closed at 7.30 pm

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Law and Governance
Town Hall, Upper Street, London N1 2UD

Report of: Interim Director of Law and Governance

Meeting of:	Date	Ward(s)
Executive	18 May 2023	n/a

SUBJECT: APPOINTMENTS TO BE MADE BY THE EXECUTIVE 2023/24

1. Synopsis

- 1.1 This report seeks approval of the appointment of members to the following Executive committee, joint committees and external organisations:
- Voluntary and Community Sector Committee
 - Associated Joint Committee - London Councils' Grants Committee
- 1.2 This report also seeks approval of the appointment of members to act as representatives of the Council at shareholder meetings of the London Collective Investment Vehicle (London LGPS CIV Limited).

2. Recommendations

- (a) To appoint Councillor Kaya Comer-Schwartz (Chair), Councillor Una O'Halloran, Councillor Roulin Khondoker and Councillor Santiago Bell-Bradford as members of the Voluntary and Community Sector Committee and Councillors Rowena Champion, Diarmaid Ward, John Woolf, Michelline Ngongo and Nurullah Turan as substitutes, for the municipal year 2023/2024, or until successors are appointed.
- (b) To appoint Councillor Troy Gallagher, Councillor Jason Jackson and Councillor Asima Shaikh as observers of the Voluntary and Community Sector Committee, for the municipal year 2023/2024, or until successors are appointed.
- (c) To appoint Councillor Kaya Comer-Schwartz to the Associated Joint Committee – London Councils' Grants Committee and Councillors Khondoker, Ngongo, O'Halloran and Woolf as deputies, for the municipal year 2023/24, or until successors are appointed.
- (d) To appoint Councillor Paul Convery as the Council's representative at shareholder meetings of the London Collective Investment Vehicle (London LGPS CIV Limited), for the municipal year 2023/24, or until a successor is appointed.

3. Background

3.1 VOLUNTARY AND COMMUNITY SECTOR COMMITTEE

The Voluntary and Community Sector Committee oversees the Council's engagement with the Islington community and voluntary sector and to ensure value for money and fairness in the allocation of council resources to the sector.

3.2 ASSOCIATED JOINT COMMITTEE - LONDON COUNCILS' GRANTS COMMITTEE

The Grants Committee of London Councils deals with the London Boroughs Grants Scheme for voluntary organisations under Section 48 of the Local Government Act 1985. Under the scheme, £8m a year is invested in voluntary organisations on behalf of all London councils. All of the grants seek to improve the lives of people who live, work in and visit London.

Membership

The Committee comprises 33 representative members, one from each of London's local councils. Under an agreement entered into by the London boroughs in respect of the Joint Committee, Islington Council is entitled to appoint an elected member representative and one or more deputies to the Joint Committee, who must all be members of the Executive.

3.3 THE LONDON COLLECTIVE INVESTMENT VEHICLE (LONDON LGPS CIV LIMITED)

The London Collective Investment Vehicle (London LGPS CIV Limited) has replaced the Pensions CIV Sectoral Joint Committee, which was established in December 2014 to act as a representative body for the London local authorities who are participating in the Local Government Pensions Scheme (LGPS) Collective Investment Vehicle in the form of an Authorised Contractual Scheme (an ACS Operator). Participation in the CIV enables the council to benefit from significant savings achieved through collective investment. The committee deals with specialist investment matters and it is recommended that the Chair of each borough's pension committee is appointed.

Oversight of the ACS Operator is an executive function. Accordingly, the Executive appoint the representative to attend the shareholder meetings of the London Collective Investment Vehicle (London LGPS CIV Limited).

4. Implications

4.1 Financial implications

The Voluntary and Community Sector Committee approves allocation of the Islington Community Fund and the Islington proportion of the London Councils' Grants Committee budget.

4.2 Legal Implications

These are contained in the body of the report.

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

There are no environmental implications arising directly from this report.

4.4 Equalities 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.

An Equalities Impact Assessment is not required in relation to this report.

A significant proportion of the grants made by the Grants Committee are to organisations meeting the needs and priorities of a wide range of Islington's residents and are aimed at improving fairness and equality in the Borough.

5. Conclusion and reasons for recommendations

- 5.1 The Executive is responsible for making these appointments to enable the Council's representatives to participate in meetings.
- 5.2 The Voluntary and Community Sector Committee is a Committee of the Executive and therefore the Executive has responsibility for appointing its membership.

Background papers: None.

Final report clearance:

**Authorised
by:**

Interim Director of Law and Governance

Date: 9 May 2023

Report author: Mary Green
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Children and Young People
222 Upper Street
London N1 1XR

Report of: Executive Member for Children, Young People and Families

Meeting of: Executive

Date: 18 May 2023

Ward(s): Barnsbury and Caledonian

Subject: Proposal on the Future of Copenhagen and Vittoria Primary Schools

1. Synopsis

- 1.1. The School Organisation Plan was approved at the Executive Board on 13 October 2022. The Plan sets out how the council will manage the high levels of surplus capacity in our schools to ensure the best outcomes for children. In response to this, officers undertook a detailed first stage consultation between 3 November and 16 December 2022 on a proposal to amalgamate Copenhagen and Vittoria Primary Schools.
- 1.2. The outcomes of the informal consultation were reported to the Executive on 9 February 2023. The Executive reviewed the outcomes and decided to proceed with the proposal and issue a statutory notice on Thursday 23 February. The notice had a representation period lasting until 23 March. The statutory notice was published in accordance with guidance for opening and closing maintained schools.
- 1.3. This report provides details of the responses received during the representation period and makes recommendations. A copy of the statutory notice and statutory proposal is available online at [Statutory Proposal to Amalgamate Copenhagen Primary School and Vittoria Primary School](#).
- 1.4. This report is coming to Executive to consider the representations made to the statutory notice and to determine, considering those responses and officer recommendations, whether it wishes to implement the proposal as laid out in the statutory notice.

2. Recommendations

- 2.1. To review and consider the responses to the formal representation period of the statutory notice.
- 2.2. Based on the feedback received during the statutory notice period and the earlier information consultation, it is recommended that the council proceed with the proposal to amalgamate Copenhagen and Vittoria Primary schools and implements the statutory proposals to discontinue Copenhagen Primary School and move Vittoria Primary School to the Copenhagen Primary School site, with effect from 31 August 2023 and to

increase the capacity of Vittoria Primary School from 210 to 315 and with effect from 1 September 2023.

- 2.3. That officers, together with the existing schools, develop the Copenhagen school site for the operation of the amalgamated school.

3. Background

- 3.1. Across London, there has been a reduction in pupil numbers because of falling birth-rates, changes to EU migration (Brexit), the impact of COVID, and associated with housing, families relocating to places outside of London. Islington is not immune to this, and this is reflected by a high level of surplus capacity in Islington's primary schools with vacancies in Reception at 20% in October 2022.
- 3.2. In the context of increased financial pressures and falling rolls many Islington schools are experiencing financial difficulties. The impact of this financial pressure is that the quality of the educational experience for children and young people is compromised. This is because less money impacts on staff numbers and resources that then impacts on the diversity and quality of the curriculum offer.
- 3.3. The School Organisation Plan sets out the approach as to how we will confidently manage this surplus capacity in our schools to ensure the best outcomes for our children and young people and sustainability of schools. The plan sets the strategic direction for pupil place planning across the borough and has been developed alongside the Education Plan to ensure that the principles applied to managing our school estate reflect our corporate and political commitment to driving educational excellence through inclusive and sustainable schools and supports the delivery of a quality educational experience for all children and young people through a diverse curriculum offer.
- 3.4. We have a duty to ensure that sufficient schools are available at primary and secondary stages of education in the local area, and for children with special educational needs. Decisions to change the organisation of Community and Voluntary aided schools are made by the Council, and for academies, by the Secretary of State, advised by the Regional Schools Commissioner (RSC).
- 3.5. Reducing the number of school places in a planned way will support schools to manage change within their national funding formula allocations. Department for Education (DfE) guidance on school closures includes a presumption not to close. Therefore, all options have been exhausted to avoid school closure although, where there is no alternative, long-term option, this does have to be considered
- 3.6. The part of the borough with the highest level of surplus places is Planning Area 4, which is comprised of seven schools, two of which are Copenhagen and Vittoria. Both schools have high levels of surplus capacity with 17 pupils in Reception class in Copenhagen this year and 12 pupils in Reception at Vittoria.
- 3.7. The proposal is to amalgamate Vittoria and Copenhagen primary schools to a single school on the Copenhagen site so that the new school is financially viable. This will

support a quality educational offer by making use of the staff expertise across both school sites.

- 3.8. As set out in the School Organisation Plan and in line with Department for Education Guidance all possible options were explored before making the proposal to amalgamate the two schools.
- 3.9. A first stage consultation on the proposal to amalgamate the two schools was carried out and a second stage statutory notice was issued with a four week representation period.

4. The reasons for the proposal

- 4.1 School places are planned by dividing Islington into six different planning areas. Copenhagen and Vittoria Primary Schools are in Planning Area 4 (Barnsbury). This planning area has the highest vacancy rate in the borough with 260 places in reception across seven primary schools, with 76 places currently unfilled in October 2022, a vacancy rate of 29%.
- 4.2 The pupil number projections show that this vacancy rate will increase further in the coming years at both reception and for all year groups. Preferences show how many parents each year choose a school as their first choice for their children starting in reception. Both schools have a lower number of first choice preferences than their capacity and have been under-subscribed for the last six years.
- 4.3 Copenhagen and Vittoria schools both have high levels of spare school places, with pupil numbers set to fall further still in the coming years. As a result, both schools are expected to experience budget deficits, which could lead to a decline in the educational offer if it is not addressed.
- 4.4 As set out in the School Organisation Plan and in line with Department for Education Guidance all possible options were explored before making the proposal to amalgamate the two schools. These are as follows:
 - 4.5. Reduce the Published Admission Number (PAN)**
 - 4.5.1. Both schools are currently operating as one Form of Entry (one class a year) and cannot reduce their size any further as this is the legal minimum size and the minimum size at which a maintained primary school is financially viable.
 - 4.6. Maximise the pupil numbers**
 - 4.6.1. Both schools have sought to maximise their pupil numbers, however falling births in the area means there are not enough pupils to fill either school.
 - 4.7. Make better use of spare building capacity**
 - 4.7.1. Copenhagen has spare capacity which has been maximised over the last two years by using a whole floor with separate entrance as the spare space for other schools to use when capital works are taking place. However, this use is not sufficient to address the future budget shortfall.

4.8. Including children with SEND

- 4.8.1. Copenhagen and Vittoria have a higher proportion of pupils with SEND Support than the borough average and Copenhagen has the fourth highest proportion of pupils with an EHCP in the borough and so are already doing this.

4.9. Collaboration and Federation to achieve economies of scale

- 4.9.1. Copenhagen and Vittoria are already part of the Islington Futures Federation with Elizabeth Garret Anderson and Beacon High. There are shared staffing posts across several areas, shared events and resources and they have completed a series of cost reduction measures. Over recent years, both schools have put cost saving measures in place to help tackle the financial difficulties facing many London schools and feel that continuing to cost cut within the individual schools would be to a detriment to the children's' learning experience

5. Consultation

- 5.1 The council carried out a detailed consultation from 3 November to 16 December 2022 on the proposal to amalgamate Copenhagen and Vittoria primary schools in line with Stage 1 of the statutory guidance on Opening and closing maintained schools. The outcome of this consultation was considered by the Executive at its meeting on 9 February. [See the full details on this consultation and outcomes.](#)
- 5.2 Based on the outcomes of the consultation the Council decided to proceed with the proposal to amalgamate Copenhagen and Vittoria Primary schools and follow the next stage of the prescribed process, which was to issue a statutory notice.
- 5.3 The statutory notice was issued on Thursday, 23 February. The notice was published in the Islington Tribune, the Islington Gazette, and on the council website. The notice was sent directly to staff, parents and governors of Copenhagen and Vittoria Primary schools and interested parties as set out in the guidance on closing and opening maintained schools.
- 5.4 A joint meeting was held with parents of both schools on Thursday, 23 February to explain the next steps and share the statutory notice and how they could make representation. Feedback was also sought and recorded during this meeting as part of the representation feedback.
- 5.5 15 parents and carers attended the parent meeting and participants asked for clarity on what the school will be called and what the uniform would be following amalgamation, and clarity on the location of the school. Parents were also concerned if any proposed building works would affect the school's budget. Overall, discussions focused on how the transition will be managed - for example: when will children be introduced to each other, and could parents meet each other and the teachers - and the opportunities that amalgamation could bring, including developments to the curriculum and extra-curricular activities.
- 5.6 There was one written representation received which opposed the proposal and objected to the loss of name of Copenhagen school, raised concerns about any staff

redundancies, and asked why other schools in Islington were not being considered for closure.

- 5.7 There was one request for information on pupil numbers and the requestor was directed to the full proposal where this information is provided.

6. Implications

6.1. Financial Implications

- 6.1.1. It is becoming increasingly difficult for schools to remain financially viable when pupil numbers are falling as most school funding is pupil based in line with the School's National funding Formula. Therefore, as pupil numbers decline, schools receive less funding. Per pupil funding in Islington is on average £5,500 per pupil depending on the characteristics of its pupils. One way to make schools more financially sustainable is to merge two schools with surplus capacity into a single school with a smaller combined capacity.
- 6.1.2. Individual school balances stood at £8.313m at the end of 2021/22, with 10 schools in deficit. School balances are forecast to reduce further over the course of this financial year, where more schools are projected to be in deficit. School balances in Islington have been in decline since 2018/19 when they stood at £11.732m. The main driver of declining school balances is falling pupil numbers alongside increasing cost pressures such as energy costs and pay.
- 6.1.3. Schools that are in deficit or are set to go into deficit are required to complete deficit recovery plans to bring their budget back into balance and eliminate their deficit within three years. This is becoming increasingly challenging for schools in the light of falling pupil numbers and increasing cost pressures and is a national issue.
- 6.1.4. Both Copenhagen and Vittoria were in surplus at the end of 2021/22, but their balances are forecast to decline over the course of the year with Copenhagen entering a deficit by 31 March 2023. When two schools merge their balances are amalgamated.

School	Copenhagen	Vittoria	Total
Balance at 31 March 2022	£0.024m	£0.097m	£0.121m
Forecast balance at 31 March 2023	-£0.006m (deficit)	£0.050m	£0.044m
Movement	-£0.030m	-£0.047m	-£0.077m

- 6.1.5. Alternatively, if a school closes the local authority meets the cost of any deficit balance from the General Fund. In the event of academisation, there are two scenarios: for convertor academies (those that voluntarily convert) the deficit is repaid to the local authority by the DfE and recouped from the academy; for sponsored academies (forced conversion due to the school being assessed as inadequate) the deficit remains with the local authority to be paid from the General Fund.

6.2. Legal Implications

- 6.2.1. Section 14 of the Education Act 1996 requires local authorities to provide sufficient schools for primary and secondary education in their area.
- 6.2.2. The Education and Inspections Act 2006, the School Organisation (Establishment and Discontinuance of Schools) Regulations 2013, the School Organisation (Prescribed Alterations to Maintained Schools) (England) Regulations 2013, the statutory guidance 'Opening and closing maintained schools' (November 2019), and the statutory guidance 'Making significant changes ('prescribed alterations') to maintained schools (October 2018) sets out the procedure for amalgamation of schools, by way of closure of a school and expansion of another.
- 6.2.3. The proposals set out in this report comply with the above legislation and guidance.

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

- 6.3.1. Environmental Implications Islington Council declared a climate emergency in June 2019, committing the council to working towards making Islington net zero carbon by 2030. A 10-year Net Zero Carbon Strategy, with action plans, was adopted by Executive in November 2020. The implementation of the School Organisation Plan 22-25 will be progressed in a manner that aligns with and supports the delivery of the council's ambitions for creating a clean and green Islington. In particular key environmental implications that the school organisation plan impact are:
- Improving the energy efficiency and reducing the level of carbon emissions of all buildings and infrastructure: schools form an important element of our non-residential buildings and infrastructure net zero carbon workstream given their number, size and distribution across the borough. Decarbonisation Feasibility Studies have already been undertaken for 22 of our schools with a further 14 taking place during 2022/23. The impact on the environment and the findings from these decarbonisation reports will be fully considered in developing plans, and where there are falling rolls in making better use of the spare capacity thereby optimising energy efficiency.
 - Reducing emissions in the borough from transport. Schools again can play their part in delivering on this priority. In proposing specific measures as part of school organisation planning, the implications on school journey distances,

school streets and potential changes to vehicle journey numbers will be fully considered in consultation with schools and key stake holders.

6.4. Equalities Impact Assessment

- 6.4.1. 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.
- 6.4.2. An Equalities Impact Assessment was completed on 24 March 2023. The full Equalities Impact Assessment is included as Appendix A.

7. Conclusion and reasons for recommendations

- 7.1. There was good engagement with the first stage consultation process, through formal responses to the consultation and attendance at multiple meetings held during the consultation period, as reported to Executive on 9 February.
- 7.2. No new issues or concerns were raised during the statutory notice period. The feedback received reflected the important considerations raised in the earlier stage of the consultation which are being explored and developed by the Governing Board and school leadership in more detail with the school community to help to ensure that the best educational provision for children and strong parental engagement are at the centre of the amalgamated school proposed.

8. Appendices

- Appendix A – Equalities Impact Assessment

Final report clearance:

Signed by:

Executive Member for Children, Young People and Families

Date: 5 May 2023

Report Author: Sarah Callaghan, Director of Learning and Culture

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Email: sarah.callaghan@islington.gov.uk

Financial Implications Author: Tim Partington, Assistant Director of Finance, Schools, Resources and Childrens

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Legal Implications Author: Rob Willis, Chief Corporate and Commercial Litigation Lawyer

Tel:

Email: rob.willis@islington.gov.uk

Equalities Impact Assessment:

Full Assessment

Before completing this form you should have completed an Equalities Screening Tool and had sign off from your Head of Service and the Fairness and Equality Team.

This Equality Impact Assessment should be completed where the Screening Tool identifies a potentially negative impact on one or more specific groups but it can also be used to highlight positive impacts.

Summary of proposal

Name of proposal	Proposal on the Future of Copenhagen and Vittoria Primary Schools
Reference number (if applicable)	
Service Area	Children's Services
Date assessment completed	24 March 2023

Before completing the EQIA please read the guidance and FAQs. For further help and advice please contact equalities@islington.gov.uk.

1. Please provide a summary of the proposal.

Please provide:

- Context on how the service currently operates (if relevant) and the scope of suggested changes
- The intended beneficiaries and outcomes of the proposal
- Reference to any savings or income generation

Following the Executive decision on 13 October 2022 to approve the [School Organisation Plan](#), officers started a process to amalgamate Copenhagen and Vittoria primary schools to create a 1.5 form entry school on the Copenhagen site.

The process around amalgamating schools is a statutory one as set out in the government's guidance for [Opening and closing maintained schools](#).

The first stage of the process is an informal consultation. This ran from 3 November to 16 December 2022. Following this, a formal proposal was agreed by the Executive in February 2023 and a further four-week consultation ran from 23 February. The Executive is now being asked to make a final decision on the proposal. If agreed, Copenhagen school will close on 1 September 2023 and Vittoria school will move and expand on the existing Copenhagen site.

The intended beneficiaries of this proposal are pupils attending Copenhagen and Vittoria schools, their parents/carers, and the staff at both schools.

By creating one combined school we will be better placed to ensure a balanced budget so that pupils receive a broad and balanced curriculum in a sustainable high-quality school. Staff will also be assured that they are in a sustainable school for their employment and career development.

2. What impact will this change have on different groups of people?

Please consider:

- Whether the impact will predominantly be external or internal, or both?
- Who will be impacted – residents, service users, local communities, staff, or others?
- Broadly what will the impact be – reduced access to facilities or disruptions to journeys for example?

The impact will be predominantly external, impacting on pupils, parents and carers and school staff.

The proposal will change where some current and future pupils attend school, potentially leading to stress and anxiety for pupils and families and would impact similarly on staff currently working at these schools.

There is likely to be changes to the staffing establishment. A separate staffing consultation if required will run after the school's governing body has considered a proposed structure. The latest available

information from the School Workforce Census indicates that there are 29 staff working at Copenhagen and 27 at Vittoria, including both teachers and support staff.

The proposal will impact on where the current pupils at Copenhagen and Vittoria attend school and potential future children and parents who wish to attend these schools. However, this will not impact on our legal duty to ensure that every child has a school place, which will be maintained within close distance for all affected pupils.

The proposal will increase the size of Vittoria school, whilst ensuring class sizes are within the statutory maximum threshold for primary schools (30).

Our Education Plan sets out our mission that, by 2030 every child, whatever their background, has the same opportunity and ambition to reach their educational potential in a good Islington school. Schools operate most efficiently when full or nearly full and any surplus places should be kept to a minimum to ensure the financial viability of schools and the ability of schools to provide a high quality, broad and balanced curriculum. These proposals support the delivery of this objective.

3. What impact will this change have on people with protected characteristics and/or from disadvantaged groups?

This section of the assessment looks in detail at the likely impacts of the proposed changes on different sections of our diverse community.

3A. What data have you used to assess impacts?

Please provide:

- Details of the evidence used to assess impacts on people with protected characteristics and from disadvantaged groups (see guidance for help)
- A breakdown of service user demographics where possible
- Brief interpretation of findings

All the equalities data listed in this section is taken from the January 2022 School Census.

Gender

Copenhagen and Vittoria have slightly more boys enrolled than girls. This is typical for Islington schools – overall, across all primary schools, 51% of pupils are male.

	Copenhagen	Vittoria
Male	53.3%	53.6%
Female	46.7%	46.4%

Free School Meal eligibility

Across all Islington primary schools, 41% of pupils were eligible for Free School Meals as at January 2022. Islington tends to have relatively high levels of Free School Meal eligibility compared to other boroughs, with the second highest proportion of pupils eligible in the most recent comparator figures.

Copenhagen and Vittoria both have a higher proportion of pupils eligible for Free School Meals than the Islington average. Vittoria has the twelfth highest proportion who are eligible, out of the 46 primary schools in the borough and Copenhagen the 20th.

	Copenhagen	Vittoria
% FSM eligible	44.7%	50.3%

Special Educational Needs

Across Islington primary schools, 15.5% of pupils were at the SEN Support level of provision in January 2022. This indicates they have some special educational need, but do not meet the threshold for an Education, Health and Care Plan (EHCP). 3.8% of Islington primary school pupils had an EHCP. Therefore, 19.3% of Islington primary school pupils were known to have Special Educational Needs.

Copenhagen and Vittoria both have a higher proportion of pupils at SEN Support than the borough average. However, Vittoria has a lower proportion of pupils with an EHCP than the borough average, whilst Copenhagen has the 4th highest proportion of pupils with an EHCP in the borough. Overall, Copenhagen has relatively high proportions of pupils with some sort of Special Educational Needs, whilst Vittoria was just below the borough average.

	Copenhagen	Vittoria
SEN Support	15.8%	16.6%
EHCP	6.6%	2.2%
Total SEN	22.4%	18.8%

English as an Additional Language

40% of Islington's primary school pupils had English as an Additional Language (EAL) in January 2022. Copenhagen has a relatively high proportion of pupils with EAL, the 6th highest in the borough.

	Copenhagen	Vittoria
% EAL	58.6%	33.7%

Ethnicity

Compared to the average across all Islington primary schools:

- Copenhagen has a relatively low percentage of White-British pupils
- Copenhagen and Vittoria both have a relatively high percentage of Bangladeshi pupils
- Both schools have a higher proportion of pupils from a Black-African ethnic group than the borough average, particularly Copenhagen

	Copenhagen	Vittoria	Islington Primaries
White-British	6.6%	27.6%	26.8%
White-Turkish	5.3%	4.4%	4.3%

Please provide:

- Details of the evidence used to assess impacts on people with protected characteristics and from disadvantaged groups (see guidance for help)
- A breakdown of service user demographics where possible
- Brief interpretation of findings

White-Other	7.2%	4.4%	13.3%
Kurdish	2.0%	0.6%	0.7%
Asian-Bangladeshi	23.0%	15.5%	5.2%
Asian-Other	1.3%	3.3%	1.9%
Black-Caribbean	1.3%	1.1%	4.2%
Black-African	29.6%	17.1%	14.6%
Black-Other	1.3%	0.6%	1.7%
Mixed - White & Black-Caribbean	2.0%	4.4%	4.3%
Mixed-Other	9.2%	9.9%	14.9%
Chinese	1.3%	0.0%	0.5%
Other	8.6%	9.4%	6.4%
Not stated / refused	1.3%	1.7%	1.2%

Pupil residence

The pupils on roll at both schools are predominantly from the same area in Islington, around the Caledonian and Barnsbury wards.

Religion

Data on religion is not collected in the School Census.

3B: Assess the impacts on people with protected characteristics and from disadvantaged groups in the table below.

Please first select whether the potential impact is positive, neutral, or negative and then provide details of the impacts and any mitigations or positive actions you will put in place.

Please use the following definitions as a guide:

Neutral – The proposal has no impact on people with the identified protected characteristics

Positive – The proposal has a beneficial and desirable impact on people with the identified protected characteristics

Negative – The proposal has a negative and undesirable impact on people with the identified protected characteristics

Characteristic or group	Positive/Neutral/Negative	What are the positive and/or negative impacts?	How will potential benefits be enhanced or negative impacts be eliminated or reduced?
Age	Positive and negative	<p>The intended beneficiaries of the proposals are pupils attending both schools, staff at the schools, and the schools themselves who will make significant financial savings and prevent them from having long term deficit budgets and thereby ensure pupils receive a broad and balanced curriculum in sustainable high quality schools with staff secure in their roles.</p> <p>There may be some stress and anxiety for pupils, both for those who are moving from one site to the other, and those on the remaining school site who will both have changes in classes. However, the feedback from pupils has been encouraging who are excited about making new friends and having a bigger football team.</p>	<p>There will be a school place available at a good school that has long term financial sustainability within the local area for all primary aged pupils.</p> <p>Preparing students for the transition will be managed by the schools, which benefit from being in a Federation with a joint governing board and an Executive Headteacher. Ahead of the amalgamation, the school plans to hold joint events and opportunities for parents and pupils to visit the school site.</p>

Disability (include carers)	Negative	As with all pupils, any change can cause anxiety and this can be a particular issue for pupils with SEND and their families, particularly those with Autism who represent 52% of children and young people with SEND in Islington. A recent study undertaken by the National Autistic Society (2022) found that 47% of autistic people fall into the severe anxiety category based on GAD-7 diagnostic criteria (measure for assessing generalised anxiety disorder. It is anticipated there will not be a significant impact on carers, as the schools are near each other for school pick up or drop off.	An initial assessment of children with EHC Plans shows that their needs can be met within the amalgamated school. The SEND team will work with individual children and their parents/carers to support their transition, including identifying a tailored list of alternative schools suitable to the child's needs as set out in their plans if necessary.
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Race or ethnicity	Positive and Negative	<p>Whilst Copenhagen has a high percentage of pupils from a non-White ethnic background, both schools have pupils from a diverse range of ethnic backgrounds. The proposal should not have a more significant impact on one group more than any other ethnic group. Indeed, as the schools are in proximity, this could potentially widen and strengthen community bonds.</p> <p>As Copenhagen has a particularly high percentage of pupils with English as an Additional Language, it is likely that a considerable proportion of parents would also not have English as their first language. This may form a barrier when informing parents about the changes.</p>	<p>We have mitigated this by translating the proposal document into the most common second languages.</p> <p>We will continue to work closely with the schools to identify the most suitable communication methods with their communities, deploying in person, hard copy and digital methods. We will also work with the schools to undertake activities designed to facilitate community bonds, taking into account protected characteristics of the families and pupils impacted, and to run more targeted and tailored sessions as required.</p>
Religion or belief (include no faith)	Neutral	Both schools welcome students from diverse communities and faiths.	
Gender and gender reassignment (male, female, or non-binary)	Neutral	There should not be any difference in the impact on different genders. Both schools are mixed gender schools.	
Maternity or pregnancy	Neutral	Any staff on or due to go on parental leave will be protected in accordance with employment law if any staffing consultation affects them and their role.	

Sex and sexual orientation	Neutral		
Marriage or civil partnership	Neutral		
Other - deprivation (e.g. people living in poverty, looked after children, people who are homeless or refugees)	Neutral	Both schools have relatively high levels of Free School Meal eligibility. However, given that they are located close to each other, there is not expected to be a significant impact. The mapping of pupils' home residences relative to the proposed site of the amalgamated school shows that most pupils live close to both schools, therefore pupils should not have to change travel plans and have to catch a bus as they will be offered a place at a nearby school.	Work will be undertaken with the Corporate Landlord and Architects to ensure the main entrance point is the most appropriate and accessible based on the predominant travel route to school of the pupils.

4. How do you plan to mitigate negative impacts?

Please provide:

- An outline of actions and the expected outcomes
- Any governance and funding which will support these actions if relevant

All pupils will have continued access to Ofsted rated 'Good' local provision following the amalgamation. Current surplus places within all Islington Primary School planning areas mean that future pupils will continue to have access to local provision and that the provision will be more sustainable in the longer term by reducing the excessive surplus places.

The SEND team will work with any family whose child with special educational needs may be affected by these proposals. The team will further consider with the family and those who support the child any additional supports that might need to be put in place to support transition. Full consideration will be given to travel, friendship groups and any particular access needs.

The School Admissions team will offer open surgeries and individual sessions at the schools to provide advice to other families who may be affected by these proposals if required. Full consideration will be given to travel, friendship groups and any access needs.

These surgeries will be arranged with the school to consider any groups who may be impacted differently, for example translation or interpreters will be arranged for those for whom English is an additional language.

The School Admissions Team will also liaise directly with Children's Social Care to ensure that any Child In Need, Looked After Child or child with a protection plan is given full support from their allocated Social Worker to ensure they understand processes to be followed, and to support visits.

There are many Social, Emotional and Mental Health services already operating with the schools that may be affected by these proposals. These include the School Wellbeing Service and CAMHS in Schools, as well as the pastoral care in place at each school. These services will be informed of any changes to schools so they can ensure support can be targeted at these schools, where pupils may have increased anxiety around the changes.

All staff affected by any staffing consultation will receive support from our Schools HR service, including interview training, CV writing and tailored one-to-one sessions if requested.

These arrangements will be kept under review by the School Organisation Project team that will be overseeing all aspects of any transition, including for example premises, staffing and transfer of records.

5. Please provide details of your consultation and/or engagement plans.

Please provide:

- Details of what steps you have taken or plan to take to consult or engage the whole community or specific groups affected by the proposal
- Who has been or will be consulted or engaged with
- Methods used or that will be used to engage or consult
- Key findings or feedback (if completed)

To implement any significant change to a school, including an amalgamation of school, or as is described in regulations as a 'prescribed alteration,' the relevant authority (Local Authority, Governing Body/Diocese, Trust, or Foundation) is required to complete a statutory consultation process.

This includes both an informal consultation/listening period and then a formal statutory consultation period if the authority intends to propose closure or amalgamation.

We completed the initial consultation which involved the whole community and followed statutory requirements and best practice. 38 people responded to our online questionnaire and over 100 parents/carers attended seven meetings held in the community. We also organised meetings with staff, with the school councils for the pupils' voice, and invited and received feedback through a dedicated mailbox.

The feedback was predominantly supportive with 55% of respondents to the questionnaire strongly agreeing or agreeing to the proposal to amalgamate the two schools. Respondents raised concerns about the name of the school, which we have listened to carefully.

The formal consultation ran for four weeks from 23 February to 23 March. We received only one response in this period which opposed the amalgamation and raised concerns about the school's name, whether any staff will be made redundant, and if other schools in the local area will be closed in the longer term. These issues have already been considered in the earlier stages of the proposal and set out in the full proposal.

6. Once the proposal has been implemented, how will impacts be monitored and reviewed?

Please provide details in the table below.

Action	Responsible team or officer	Deadline
We will review admissions data, budgetary details, and educational attainment data through regular monitoring channels	Learning and Achievement	Ongoing

Please send the completed EQIA to equalities@islington.gov.uk for quality checking by the Fairness and Equality Team. All Equality Impact Assessments must be attached with any report to a decision-making board and should be made publicly available on request.

This Equality Impact Assessment has been completed in accordance with the guidance and using appropriate evidence.

Member	Name	Signed	Date
Staff member completing this form	Matthew Beevor		24 March 2023
Fairness and Equality Team			
Director or Head of Service	Alison Cramer		24 March 2023

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Early Intervention and Prevention
222 Upper Street
London N1 1XR

Report of: Executive Member for Children, Young People and Families

Meeting of: Executive

Date: 18 May 2023

Ward(s): all

Under 5s childcare fee increase consultation

1. Synopsis

- 1.1. This paper sets out the summary responses and draft council recommendations from the Under 5s childcare fee increase consultation which ran from 19 January to 9 March 2023. There were 192 responses to the consultation from parents and providers. The draft Under 5s childcare fee increase consultation report (Annex 1) summarises the consultation responses and our proposed adjustments to the proposed model.

2. Recommendations

- 2.1. To approve under 5s childcare fee increases with the following adjustments:
- Reduce the increase to fees for higher earning households from 8% down to 6% in year 1
 - Raise the household income threshold for a 6% increase in year 1 from £90K (band 9) to £100K and above (bands 10, 11 and non-subsidised/marketed)
 - Review increases in year 2 and 3 for household incomes above £100K depending on inflation, occupancy at council subsidised nurseries, and the financial implications of the new free childcare entitlements outlined in the spring budget 2023
- 2.2 To approve the consultation report to allow for implementation of the childcare fee increases in September 2023

3. Background

- 3.1. At Joint Board in December 2022, a range of options for childcare fee increases were presented. It was agreed to go out to consultation on the following proposed increases:
- Fees for households with incomes less than £90,000 (charging bands 1-8) will have a 0% increase in 2023-23; with a 2% increase in 2024-25 and 2025-26
 - Fees for households with incomes more than £90,000 (charging bands 9, 10 and 11 and non-subsidised/marketed) will be increased by 8% in 2023-24, 2024-25 and 2025-26
- 3.2. As a result of consultation and engagement responses from parents and providers, the consultation report recommends proceeding with the broad outline of the proposals with the adjustments as described at Section 2, Recommendations, above.

3.3 Rationale for recommendations

- **Reduce the increase to fees for higher earning households from 8% down to 6% in year 1; review % increase for year 2 and 3**

By reducing the fee increase in year 1, the council is acknowledging that while private nursery fees are on average 7% higher than the LBI marketed rate for babies and toddlers, there is a danger that the differential between the two sectors will be significantly reduced if fees in Islington nurseries are increased by 8% each year over 3 years. This could drive a significant number of families away from Islington nurseries to the private sector; just over one third (34%) of paying families at Islington subsidised nurseries are in Band 10+, which represents approximately £1.5 million revenue. Furthermore, by committing to review the increase for year 2 and 3, we are acknowledging that the national rates of inflation are unclear, but unlikely to be as high as 8% year on year. Reviewing in year 2 and 3 also enables us to understand and cost the implications of the government's new childcare funding announcements.

- **Raise the household income threshold for a 6% increase in year 1 from £90K to £100K**

Responses to the consultation are that the impact of higher fees on Band 9 (£90-£100K) families could be considerable, reducing the number of hours they could afford to pay or having to leave the workforce altogether. However, only 3% of families paying for places in 2022 were income assessed at band 9. There will, therefore, be a relatively small financial impact for the council on raising the threshold for the higher fee increases to £100K and above, band 10, 11 and non-subsidised/marketed. We, therefore, recommend that this is a fair and reasonable adjustment to the proposed fee increases.

4. Implications

4.1. Financial Implications

Each September the Council's standard policy is to increase childcare fees by 2%, delivering a saving of £100k against the childcare subsidy budget. This has been built into the Council's MTFS for 2023/24. Five twelfths (£42k) of this saving have already been delivered in 2023/24 from the increase in September 2022, with the remaining seven twelfths (£58k) to be delivered this year. The proposal consulted on would have increased this saving to £634k over 4 years.

Changing the threshold of higher rate increases from Band 9 (family incomes over £90k) to Band 10, 11 and non-subsidised (family incomes over £100k), and reducing the higher rate increase from 8% to 6% over 3 years, would reduce the saving to £454k. However, the proposal to review the increase after 12 months is sensible as it will allow:

- the impact of the first year's increases on demand to be assessed;
- updated market testing to be carried out to ensure the Council's fees remain competitive; and
- the implications of the government announcements regarding entitlements to free childcare to be better understood.

Two alternative scenarios have been modelled for years 2 and 3 for illustrative purposes, in the event that it is decided not to continue to increase fees for families with incomes of more than £100k by 6% in these years. Scenario 1 reverts to the standard policy of increasing fees by 2% each September, and Scenario 2 increases fees by 3% instead.

Scenario 1: This will deliver savings of £371k over 4 years.

Bands 1-9: 0% year 1, 2% years 2&3; Band 10+: 6% year 1, 2% years 2&3

Income band	Increase Year 1	Increase Year 2	Increase Year 3
Bands 1-9	0%	2%	2%
Bands 10+	6%	2%	2%

Scenario 2: This will deliver savings of £392k over 4 years.

Bands 1-9: 0% year 1, 2% years 2&3; Band 10+: 6% year 1, 3% years 2&3

Income band	Increase Year 1	Increase Year 2	Increase Year 3
Bands 1-9	0%	2%	2%
Bands 10+	6%	3%	3%

A summary of the savings from the proposal consulted on, and the alternative proposals / scenarios are provided below for comparative purposes.

	23/24 £k	24/25 £k	25/26 £k	26/27 £k	Total £k
Saving built into MTFS based on standard 2% increase in September 2023	58				58
Option consulted on: Bands 1-8: 0% year 1, 2% years 2&3 Band 9+: 8% years 1, 2&3	65	197	262	110	634
Increase higher rate threshold / reduce increase to 6%: Bands 1-9: 0% year 1, 2% years 2&3 Band 10+: 6% years 1, 2&3	30	138	202	84	454
Scenario 1: Bands 1-9: 0% year 1, 2% years 2&3 Band 10+: 6% year 1, 2% years 2&3	30	114	161	67	372
Scenario 2: Bands 1-9: 0% year 1, 2% years 2&3 Band 10+: 6% year 1, 3% years 2&3	30	120	171	71	392

4.2. Legal Implications

4.2.1. The Childcare Act 2006, section 6 sets out the duties on local authorities to secure, so far as is reasonably practicable, that the provision of childcare (whether or not by them) is sufficient to meet the requirements of parents in their area who require childcare in order to enable them to take up or remain in work or undertake education or training which could reasonably be expected to assist them to obtain work.

4.2.2. The duties of local authorities are further defined in that Act and importantly the power to charge is set out in section 10 of the 2006 Act, section 10(1) providing:

‘An English local authority may enter into an agreement under which payments are made to the authority for the provision by the authority of childcare for a child.’

4.2.3. The local authority must have regard to the needs of the parents in their area for provision of childcare in respect of which the childcare element of working tax credit is payable and the amount of childcare costs that would be included in a calculation of an award for universal credit.

4.2.4. The local authority should also take into account:

- 4.2.4.1. Provision of childcare suitable for disabled children
- 4.2.4.2. Any statutory guidance
- 4.2.4.3. The guidance on Early Education and Childcare from June 2018 applies to the free entitlements for two-, three- and four-year-olds;
- 4.2.5. The local authority may have regard to any childcare which they expect to be available outside their area.
 - 4.2.5.1. securing sufficient childcare for working parents; providing information advice and assistance to parents; and providing information, advice and training to childcare providers.
 - 4.2.5.2. The consultation exercise relevant to this report is clear, was available on the council's website and responses have been taken into account.
 - 4.2.5.3. Potential legal challenges might be launched on the basis that the recipients of the previous annual 2% increase in fees could have a reasonable expectation that the council would not increase its fees by a greater percentage. However, the proposed increase is available through the statutory mechanism and would be justified on current budgetary pressures.
 - 4.2.5.4. One other factor as is already noted in this report is the potential impact of the government's announcement of increased provision in the Spring 2023 budget.

4.3. **Environmental Implications and contribution to achieving a net zero carbon Islington by 2030**

- 4.3.1. There are no environmental implications.

4.4. **Equalities Impact Assessment**

- 4.4.1. 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.

Full EQIA has been completed with potential negative impacts identified for women and low-income families. Mitigations for any potential negative impacts are provided in the EQIA document.

5. Conclusion and reasons for recommendations

- We have consulted with parents and providers on the proposed fee increases
- We have adjusted the proposals based on the feedback received and on recent government announcements on free childcare
- It is recommended that CMB approves the proposed fee increases and the final report in order to move forward to the implementation phase in Autumn 23.
- If the recommendations are not agreed the standard 2% increase will be applied to all income bands as per the council's charging policy

Appendices:

Appendix 1: Under 5s Childcare Fee Increase Consultation Report, March 2023, DRAFT

Appendix 2: Illustrations of weekly costs for under 2s, spreadsheet

Appendix 3: EQIA

Appendix 4: Childcare fee increase consultation timeline 2023

Final report clearance:

Signed by:

Executive Member for Children Executive Member for Children, Young People
and Families

Date: 5 May 2023

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Appendix 1: Under 5s childcare fee increase public consultation report, May 2023

Contents

Appendix 1: Under 5s childcare fee increase draft public consultation report, March 2023 ..**Error! Bookmark not defined.**

Section 1: Executive Summary	3
Section 2: Introduction.....	4
Section 3: Analysis of responses.....	5
Responses to the proposals	5
Make up of respondents	6
Section 4: Response of Islington Council.....	10

Section 1: Executive Summary

1. The council helps with the cost of childcare by subsidising fees at council-run nurseries, children's centres, and some school and community nurseries for Islington-resident working and studying families. Fees are charged on a sliding scale according to income, so that families on the lowest incomes receive the most help with the costs of childcare. The subsidy supports low- and middle-income families with the costs of childcare helping parents to take up and sustain work, while also ensuring that the council fulfils its duty to secure sufficient childcare for working and studying parents. Islington Council supports families with the costs of childcare over and above national government support, unlike most other councils, and remains committed to this.
2. There are 11 charging bands in the nursery charging schedule, as well as a non-subsidised/marketed band, as part of [Islington's Early Years Charging Policy](#). Standard policy has been to increase charges at all bands by 2% each year recognising low levels of inflation in the past.
3. Due to increased inflationary pressures, it has been necessary to review the annual increase to charges. From January to March 2023, the council consulted on proposals to introduce a three-year graduated increase to charges as follows:
 - Fees for households with incomes less than £90,000 (charging bands 1-8) will have a 0% increase in 2023-23; with a 2% increase in 2024-25 and 2025-26
 - Fees for households with incomes more than £90,000 (charging bands 9, 10 and 11 and non-subsidised/marketed) will be increased by 8% in 2023-24, 2024-25 and 2025-26
4. The council received 192 responses from residents and nursery providers.
5. Most respondents agreed with the principle that low- and middle-income families should be protected from significant fee increases over the next 3 years, and that increases should be phased in over three years.
6. A narrow majority agreed that the council should prioritise protecting fee increases for households with income of less than £90K, although concerns were raised about the threshold for low- and middle-income families being set too low.
7. A significant majority (85%) disagreed that the proposed 8% increase of fees for households with incomes more than £90K is fair and affordable.
8. As a result of the responses received, the council has reviewed the proposals and the recommendation is to proceed with the broad outline of the proposals with the following adjustments:
 - Reduce the increase to fees for higher earning households from 8% down to 6% in year 1

- Raise the household income threshold for a 6% increase in year 1 from £90K to £100K (from Band 9 to Band 10, 11 and non-subsidised/marketted)
 - Review increases in year 2 and 3 for household incomes above £100K depending on inflation and occupancy at council subsidised nurseries
9. Since the consultation was launched and concluded, the government has announced new childcare initiatives, introducing free childcare hours for children from 9 months. At the time of drafting this report, the details of new national childcare funding have not yet been provided. Further analysis of the implications of these national initiatives will be required to see how they may impact on Islington's approach to local childcare subsidy. The uncertainty created by these announcements provides further rationale for reviewing Islington's childcare fee increases in year 2 and 3.
10. The council will continue to supply providers with information about the national and local support available to help parents with childcare costs, including tax-free childcare, childcare through Universal Credit and Islington's Childcare Bursary. Providers will be encouraged to share this information regularly with parents, along with information about the full range of support the council is providing to help with the cost of living.

Section 2: Introduction

1. This report sets out responses to the consultation and the council's response to these.
2. The council ran online consultations from 19 January to 9 March 2023. There were 192 responses.
3. Responses to the proposed model were also gathered via an online information session for parents on 26 January, after which 'frequently asked questions' were added to the consultation web page.
4. As part of the consultation information provided online, parents and providers were reminded of the national childcare support available, such as funding through Universal Credit or Tax-Free Childcare. Tax-free childcare, for example, provides up to £500 every 3 months (up to £2,000 a year) for each child to help with the costs of childcare. These amounts are doubled if a child is disabled. This means that for every £10 a parent pays into their childcare account, the tax-free childcare scheme would provide up to £2. Islington's childcare subsidy scheme is designed to work in conjunction with the national schemes which support all parents with the costs of childcare.
5. The consultation process asked residents and providers to comment on the following:
 - Do you agree with the principle that low- and middle-income families should be protected from significant fee increases over the next 3 years?
 - Do you agree that the council should prioritise protecting fee increases for households with income of less than £90K?
 - Do you agree that any increases should be phased in for families?
 - Do you agree that an 8% increase of fees for households with incomes more than £90K is fair and affordable?

Section 3: Analysis of responses

Responses to the proposals

Do you agree with the principle that low- and middle-income families should be protected from significant fee increases over the next 3 years?	Number of responses	% of responses
Yes	150	78%
No	42	22%

Do you agree that the council should prioritise protecting fee increases for households with income of less than £90K?	Number of responses	% of responses
Yes	109	57%
No	83	43%

Do you agree that any increases should be phased in for families?	Number of responses	% of responses
Yes	166	86%
No	26	14%

Do you agree that an 8% increase of fees for households with incomes more than £90K is fair and affordable?	Number of responses	% of responses
Yes	29	15%
No	163	85%

Make up of respondents

Are you an Islington parent/carer of a child under 5?	Number of responses	% of responses
Yes	185	96%
No	7	4%

Are you currently using childcare in Islington?	Number of responses	% of responses
Yes	181	94%
No	11	6%

Are you an early years provider currently offering Islington childcare subsidy??	Number of responses	% of responses
Yes	13	7%
No	179	93%

If yes, what sector do you represent?	Number of responses	% of responses
School-based children's centre	3	2%
Voluntary sector children's centre	1	0.5%
Voluntary sector nursery	2	1%
Islington maintained nursery	14	7%
Maintained nursery school	1	0.5%
Not applicable	171	89%

Your ethnicity	Number of responses	% of responses
Black Caribbean	4	2%
Black Somali	1	0.5%
Other Black African	3	2%
Black - Other	0	0%
Bangladeshi	1	0.5%
Other Asian	10	5%
White - British	47	25%%
Turkish	0	0%
Kurdish	0	0%
White - Other	63	34%%
Mixed White and Black Caribbean	4	2%%
Mixed ethnicity	18	10%%
Prefer not to say	25	14%%
Other – please specify	9	5%

Responses to other	
Mixed white and Asian	Algerian
Irish	Hispanic
Chinese	

Do you consider yourself to have a disability	Number of responses	% of responses
Yes	9	5%
No	159	86%
Prefer not to say	17	9%

What is your household income?	Number of responses	% of responses
Up to £24,999	6	3%
£25,000 to £30,999	5	3%
£31,000 to £39,999	4	2%
£40,000 to £49,999	5	3%
£50,000 to £59,999	8	4%
£60,000 to £69,999	8	4%
£70,000 to £79,999	11	6%
£80,000 to £89,999	13	7%
£90,000 to £99,999	23	13%
£100,000 to £120,000	24	13%
Above £120,000	41	22%
Prefer not to say	37	20%

Further comments

Respondents were asked for comments after each question.

Summary concerns from respondents

- Too big a jump from 2% increase to 8% increase between income bands
- Women will be disproportionately affected, as they are most likely to leave work to care for children if childcare is not affordable
- Protection for lower earners should not be at the expense of higher earners
- Proposals disproportionately affect families with more than one child, even with the discount for subsequent children
- £90K household families are struggling and are not 'high' earners in London, particularly Islington
- Risk of losing higher earners to private nurseries if fees are increased too steeply
- Inflation is not going to increase by 24% in three years; wages will not increase by this amount either
- The council is 'setting the rich against the poor'
- Fee structure is already graduated to benefit low- and middle-income earners, but the proposed increases are disproportionate
- Burden of the increase falls on just one cohort of families; all families should see some increase in year 1

Summary suggestions from respondents

- Don't increase fees at all (some low-income respondents said even 2% would be hard for them)
- Protect all families by introducing a more graduated increase across all bands
- Introduce a more graduated increase in bands above £90K
- Phase in increases over more years
- 3% increase for band 9; 6% increase band 10; 9% increase band 11; 12% increase marketed
- Suggestions for reasonable increase for higher earners included: 3% or 4% or 5%
- Increase fees for £120K plus
- Increase by 8% in year 1 only
- Re-evaluate all income bands and increases based on inflation
- Increases should be related to income tax bands per household job
- Review increases each year
- The government needs to fund childcare properly

Section 4: Response of Islington Council

The council is grateful to all the parents/carers and providers who took the time to respond to the online survey. We appreciate how considered the comments were and have aimed to acknowledge and address these in our responses. The council's responses set out what aspects of the proposed model will be introduced as well as those that require clarification and modification in the light of responses received.

Response to: Do you agree with the principle that low- and middle-income families should be protected from significant fee increases over the next 3 years?

With 78% of respondents agreeing with the principle, we will proceed with the implementation of a model which protects low- and middle-income families from significant fee increases over the next 3 years.

Several respondents commented:

- Protect all families
- Everyone dealing with price increases, but lower earners already get more financial support
- Protection for lower earners should not be at the expense of higher earners
- Share increases more fairly across all bands
- Middle-income families will be most affected

Council response: The increases in fees are designed to ensure the council can continue to subsidise childcare while protecting those on the lowest incomes who are more significantly affected by cost-of-living pressures. To ensure that the families on the lowest incomes continue to receive the most support towards childcare costs, we are increasing the charges for higher earning families by a higher rate.

Response to: Do you agree that the council should prioritise protecting fee increases for households with income of less than £90K?

A narrow majority (57%) agreed that the council should prioritise protecting fee increases for households with income of less than £90K, however concerns were raised about the threshold for low- and middle-income families being set too low.

Several respondents commented:

- Why £90K?
- £90K household income doesn't mean the family isn't struggling
- High wage inflation will bring many middle earning families to just above that level
- £100K household income would be more appropriate

Council response: The council recognises that the low- and middle-income household threshold set out in the proposals needs adjustment. We, therefore, recommend that the income threshold for protecting fee increases should be raised to £100K (Band 10 and above of Islington's charging structure).

Response to: Do you agree that any increases should be phased in for families?

With 86% agreeing that increases should be phased in, we will proceed with the implementation of a model which phases increases across three academic years from September 2023 to 2026. However, respondents commented that the phasing of increases was applied to low- and middle-income earners, but for household incomes above £90K, there was a steep, unphased rise from year 1.

- All bands need phasing
- Phase in over a longer period, 5-10 years
- Review regularly, depending on economic climate

Council response: Recognising that the current economic climate is extremely volatile and rates of inflation hard to predict, the council will review the fee increases at the start of the second year to determine any impact on occupancy at council-funded nurseries and whether the council's charges at the highest bands continue to be competitive for families, particularly in the light of government funding of free childcare from 9 months.

Response to: Do you agree that an 8% increase of fees for households with incomes more than £90K is fair and affordable?

A significant majority (85%) disagreed that the proposed increase is fair and affordable, with many commenting that the proposal would see an increase of 24% over three years.

"It is clearly unfair to increase fees for these households by 8% for three years in a row in a context where (i) they are already paying significantly higher fees in a system that has already been banded progressively, (ii) the proposal for other households is to increase by only 0-2%, and (iii) inflation is not expected to remain anywhere near as high as 8% for the next three years. Increasing already-higher fees by a much higher percentage puts undue pressure on these households who are also vulnerable to cost-of-living pressures. The effect of this proposal is that a household with income of £90,000 would see baby nursery costs increase from 29.8% of gross household income, to 37.5% (a ca. 8% rise), whereas a household with income of £85,000 would see an increase of 24.6% to 25.6% (a 1% increase). This is clearly unfair and renders the fees much less affordable for these households.

Respondents also commented that the consequences of raising fees to this extent could lead to:

- The loss of higher band parents to private nurseries, resulting in loss of income for Islington subsidised nurseries
- Women leaving the workforce, or creating disincentives for career progression
- Adversely affecting single parents who have less scope for increasing earnings to cover increased costs
- Parents reducing nursery hours, resulting in reduced fee income to nurseries
- Parents moving out of Islington
- Disproportionately affecting parents with more than one child, even leading to parents deciding not to have more children

Council response: the council conducts an annual price comparison exercise to ensure that our prices at the top end remain competitive with private sector nurseries in the borough. In the last two years our top rate fees have been at or below the median, and comparable with childminders. Islington charges are currently 7% below the median average for both under 2s and 2-3s.

Furthermore, a recent [Early Years Alliance survey of private nurseries in England](#) reported that providers had already increased or were intending to increase charges by on average 8%.

However, the council recognises that many families are experiencing significant financial challenges with the rising cost of living, increasing energy bills and wage stagnation. The recommendation is, therefore, to reduce the proposed fee increase for higher income households (£100K and above) from 8% to 6% in year 1, with a review of increases at the start of year 2, considering inflation and occupancy at Islington subsidised nurseries and recent budget announcements regarding the introduction of free childcare hours for children from 9 months.

Council responses to specific comments and queries raised

“Families with more than one child of nursery age are affected more significantly by fee increases”

Council response: we offer sibling discounts in recognition that where families have multiple children under 5, the cost of childcare can be particularly challenging. We will continue to provide a 25% discount for the 2nd child, 35% for the 3rd child and 45% for the 4th child.

“There should be a more graduated increase across all bands”

Council response: The proposed fee increases are designed to ensure that Islington’s subsidised nurseries remain sustainable while supporting the lowest earning families with the costs of childcare. The increases in fees are to ensure the Council can continue to subsidise childcare, over and above the support provided nationally, while protecting those on the lowest incomes, rather than mirror increases in inflation.

Options	Description
Option put out for consultation	For new and existing families: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Bands 1-8 (incomes of less than £90K): 0% increase in year 1; 2% increase in years 2, 3 Bands 9, 10 and 11 increase by 8% in years 1,2,3
Recommendations in response to feedback	Review at the end of year one and: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Reduce increase for families on bands 9, 10 and 11 from 8% to 6% Raise income threshold to band 10 (£100k and above)

Table 1: Option put out for consultation - Childcare fees for a full-time under 2s place, graduated increase from 0% - 8% over three years

	2022		2023				2024				2025			
	Weekly fees	Annual fees	% increase	£ increase	Weekly fees	Annual fees	% increase	£ increase	Weekly fees	Annual fees	% increase	£ increase	Weekly fees	Annual fees
Band 1 (Up to £24,999)	207.70	10177	0%	0	207.70	10177	2%	4.15	211.85	10381	2%	4.24	216.09	10588
Band 2 (£25,000 - £30,999)	219.78	10769	0%	0	219.78	10769	2%	4.40	224.18	10985	2%	4.48	228.66	11204
Band 3 (£31,000 - £39,999)	239.17	11719	0%	0	239.17	11719	2%	4.79	243.96	11954	2%	4.88	248.84	12193
Band 4 (£40,000 - £49,999)	265.04	12987	0%	0	265.04	12987	2%	5.30	270.34	13247	2%	5.41	275.75	13512
Band 5 (£50,000 - £59,999)	297.36	14571	0%	0	297.36	14571	2%	5.95	303.31	14862	2%	6.06	309.37	15159
Band 6 (£60,000 - £69,999)	336.14	16471	0%	0	336.14	16471	2%	6.72	342.86	16800	2%	6.86	349.72	17136
Band 7 (£70,000 - £79,999)	349.32	17117	0%	0	349.32	17117	2%	6.99	356.31	17459	2%	7.12	363.43	17808
Band 8 (£80,000 - £89,999)	410.77	20128	0%	0	410.77	20128	2%	8.22	418.99	20531	2%	8.38	427.37	20941
Band 9 (£90,000 - £99,999)	434.35	21283	8%	34.75	469.10	22986	8%	37.53	506.63	24825	8%	40.53	547.16	26811
Band 10 (£100,000 - £120,000)	442.36	21676	8%	35.39	477.75	23410	8%	38.22	515.97	25283	8%	41.28	557.25	27305
Band 11 (above £120,000)	467.45	22905	8%	37.4	504.85	24738	8%	40.39	545.24	26717	8%	43.62	588.86	28854
Out of Borough/Marketed	492.83	24149	8%	39.43	532.26	26081	8%	42.58	574.84	28167	8%	45.98	620.82	30420

Table 2: Recommendation to reduce the increase to fees for higher earning households, bands 10 and above (£100k+), from 8% down to 6%

	2022		2023			
	Weekly fees	Annual fees	% increase	£ increase per week	Weekly fees	Annual fees
Band 1 (Up to £24,999)	207.70	10177	0%	£0	207.7	10177
Band 2 (£25,000 - £30,999)	219.78	10765	0%	£0	219.78	10765
Band 3 (£31,000 - £39,999)	239.17	11719	0%	£0	239.17	11719
Band 4 (£40,000 - £49,999)	265.04	12987	0%	£0	265.04	12987
Band 5 (£50,000 - £59,999)	297.36	14571	0%	£0	297.36	14571
Band 6 (£60,000 - £69,999)	336.14	16471	0%	£0	336.14	16471
Band 7 (£70,000 - £79,999)	349.32	17117	0%	£0	349.32	17117
Band 8 (£80,000 - £89,999)	410.77	20128	0%	£0	410.77	20128
Band 9 (£90,000 - £99,999)	434.35	21283	0	£0.00	£434.35	£21,283.31

Band 10 (£100,000 - £120,000)	442.36	21676	6	£26.54	£468.90	£22,976.15
Band 11 (above £120,000)	467.45	22905	6	£28.05	£495.50	£24,279.51
Out of Borough/Marketed	492.83	24149	6	£29.57	£522.40	£25,597.62

Equalities Impact Assessment: Full Assessment

Before completing this form you should have completed an Equalities Screening Tool and had sign off from your Head of Service and the Fairness and Equality Team.

This Equality Impact Assessment should be completed where the Screening Tool identifies a potentially negative impact on one or more specific groups but it can also be used to highlight positive impacts.

Summary of proposal

Name of proposal	Under 5s Childcare Fee Increase
Reference number (if applicable)	
Service Area	Children's - Early Intervention and Prevention
Date assessment completed	30 November 2022

Before completing the EQIA please read the guidance and FAQs. For further help and advice please contact equalities@islington.gov.uk.

1. Please provide a summary of the proposal.

Please provide:

- Context on how the service currently operates (if relevant) and the scope of suggested changes
- The intended beneficiaries and outcomes of the proposal
- Reference to any savings or income generation

The Council subsidises the cost of childcare in council-run children's centres and council-funded community nurseries for Islington-resident working and studying families. Fees are subsidised on a sliding scale according to income, so that families on the lowest incomes receive the most help with the costs of childcare.

This is a progressive policy which:

- supports low- and middle-income families with the costs of childcare enabling parents, and especially mothers, to take up and sustain work after having children
- ensures a social mix within our high quality nurseries which benefits all children, in particular those who are most disadvantaged
- supports the council to fulfil its statutory duty to secure sufficient childcare for working and studying parents

We use household income (both earned and unearned) to determine childcare fees. There are 11 income bands (plus an out of borough/marketed rate band), enabling us to set fees which are sensitive to differences in income. In addition, we offer sibling discounts in recognition that where families have multiple children under 5, the cost of childcare can be particularly challenging.

Standard policy has been to increase charges at all income bands by 2% each year in line with inflation.

The proposal is to consult on introducing a graduated increase to childcare charges (where the rate of increase is greater for those households with higher incomes). The increase would be applied from September 2023 and would contribute to the Council's savings targets over a three-year period while protecting low- and middle-income families.

It is proposed to apply an increase as follows:

For new and existing families:

- Bands 1-8 (incomes of less than £90K): 0% increase in year 1; 2% increase in years 2, 3
- Bands 9, 10 and 11 increase by 8% in years 1,2,3

We would continue to support families where there is more than one child under five and where children have disabilities by providing a discount.

Islington is one of only a small number of local authorities which provides additional, local support for the costs of childcare on top of the government entitlements and financial help. Nationally, the government provides financial support for families with the costs of childcare through Universal Credit for low-income families and the Tax-Free Childcare scheme for any families where no one parent earns more than 100k, which gives families up to £2000 per year per child towards childcare costs.

Please provide:

- Context on how the service currently operates (if relevant) and the scope of suggested changes
- The intended beneficiaries and outcomes of the proposal
- Reference to any savings or income generation

2. What impact will this change have on different groups of people?

Please consider:

- Whether the impact will predominantly be external or internal, or both?
- Who will be impacted – residents, service users, local communities, staff, or others?
- Broadly what will the impact be – reduced access to facilities or disruptions to journeys for example?

Residents who currently use LBI nurseries (and whose children will still be nursery age by September 2023) will see an increase to their childcare fees. Households earning less than 90k will be protected from any increases in year 1 and will then see a 2% increase each year thereafter, well below the current rate of inflation.

609 families pay childcare fees at LBI nurseries as at Summer 2022 (with others accessing free entitlement government-funded hours or priority child in need places only). Of these, 36% (217 families) are in bands 9 and above, earning more than £90k per year. Families in this income bracket will see higher proportionate increases under the proposals. 391 families are paying within bands 1-8, with almost half of these (184 families, 30% of the total paying cohort) at band 1, earning less than £24,999.

The increases will be phased in over 3 years, with notice given to parents in May 2023 allowing time for them to prepare.

LBI charges are currently 7% less than the median private sector charge for a baby place. We continue to monitor private sector charges in order to remain competitive.

3. What impact will this change have on people with protected characteristics and/or from disadvantaged groups?

This section of the assessment looks in detail at the likely impacts of the proposed changes on different sections of our diverse community.

3A. What data have you used to assess impacts?

Please provide:

- Details of the evidence used to assess impacts on people with protected characteristics and from disadvantaged groups (see guidance for help)
- A breakdown of service user demographics where possible
- Brief interpretation of findings

We collect detailed information about the household incomes of families using LBI children's centre nurseries, as outlined above. We monitor occupancy on a termly basis and analyse the spread of places taken up in each of the charging bands annually. This proposal protects low- and middle-income households from unaffordable rises and ensure they can continue to work.

The costs of childcare can be prohibitive and this has a disproportionate impact on women who are more likely to take time off work to care for young children. A lack of affordable, flexible childcare is one of the main barriers for parents, and especially mothers, to enter or re-enter the workplace. Research shows that children in low-income households do less well than their peers on a range of developmental outcomes and that household income has a positive causal effect on children's outcomes.

It is possible that some families may reassess their working arrangements as nursery fees increase. We will keep the policy under review.

3B: Assess the impacts on people with protected characteristics and from disadvantaged groups in the table below.

Please first select whether the potential impact is positive, neutral, or negative and then provide details of the impacts and any mitigations or positive actions you will put in place.

Please use the following definitions as a guide:

Neutral – The proposal has no impact on people with the identified protected characteristics

Positive – The proposal has a beneficial and desirable impact on people with the identified protected characteristics

Negative – The proposal has a negative and undesirable impact on people with the identified protected characteristics

Characteristic or group	Positive/Neutral/Negative	What are the positive and/or negative impacts?	How will potential benefits be enhanced or negative impacts be eliminated or reduced?
Age	Choose an item.	Neutral	

Characteristic or group	Positive/Neutral/Negative	What are the positive and/or negative impacts?	How will potential benefits be enhanced or negative impacts be eliminated or reduced?
Disability (include carers)	Choose an item.	Neutral	

Characteristic or group	Positive/Neutral/Negative	What are the positive and/or negative impacts?	How will potential benefits be enhanced or negative impacts be eliminated or reduced?
Race or ethnicity	Choose an item.	Neutral	

Characteristic or group	Positive/Neutral/Negative	What are the positive and/or negative impacts?	How will potential benefits be enhanced or negative impacts be eliminated or reduced?
Religion or belief (include no faith)	Choose an item.	Neutral	

Characteristic or group	Positive/Neutral/Negative	What are the positive and/or negative impacts?	How will potential benefits be enhanced or negative impacts be eliminated or reduced?
Gender and gender reassignment (male, female, or non-binary)		<p>Negative. High childcare fees have a disproportionate negative impact on women's ability to take up and sustain work.</p> <p>It is possible that in two-parent families where there is a disparity in earnings between male and female partners, a fee increase could deter women from remaining in work.</p>	<p>The provision of a local childcare subsidy in addition to national support is part of the Council's response to the link between childcare fees and the ability of women to take up/sustain work and/or re-enter the workplace. We know that where earnings are higher there is a greater incentive to take up/return to work and to purchase childcare as a result, therefore fee increases in the higher income brackets are less likely to be prohibitive.</p> <p>We will review the increases at the start of the second year to determine any impact on take-up at council-funded nurseries.</p> <p>Sibling and disability discounts will continue with no changes to these proposed, further alleviating pressure for families.</p>

Characteristic or group	Positive/Neutral/Negative	What are the positive and/or negative impacts?	How will potential benefits be enhanced or negative impacts be eliminated or reduced?
Maternity or pregnancy	Choose an item.	Neutral	

Characteristic or group	Positive/Neutral/Negative	What are the positive and/or negative impacts?	How will potential benefits be enhanced or negative impacts be eliminated or reduced?
Sex and sexual orientation	Choose an item.	Neutral	
Marriage or civil partnership	Choose an item.	Neutral	

Characteristic or group	Positive/Neutral/Negative	What are the positive and/or negative impacts?	How will potential benefits be enhanced or negative impacts be eliminated or reduced?
<p>Other Age (e.g. elderly)</p> <p>(e.g. people living in poverty, looked after children, people who are homeless or refugees)</p>	Choose an item.	Negative. The proposal sees fees increases for all families in the system over the course of three years, which includes those on the lowest incomes.	We are protecting low-income families from the higher increases and they will see no increase in year 1. Increases in years 2 and 3 at 2% are likely to be significantly below inflation. We will continue to promote and communicate to families the local and national support available with the costs of childcare, including through the Family Information Service and Bright Start. Sibling and disability discounts will continue.

4. How do you plan to mitigate negative impacts?

Please provide:

- An outline of actions and the expected outcomes
- Any governance and funding which will support these actions if relevant

As above we will continue to promote the financial support available to families for the costs of childcare. We actively communicate the childcare bursary, tax free childcare and other schemes via social media and other resident-facing campaigns. Our Family Information Service will continue to provide brokerage and support for parents seeking childcare. Through Bright Start our Family Engagement Workers and other early childhood colleagues will continue to promote the help and support available to parents taking up / returning to work. We are working with subject experts Hempsall's to review our subsidy offer and we expect them to identify ways in which we can make the process of looking for and taking up a place simpler for families, in particular to ensure the fee structure can be easily understood.

5. Please provide details of your consultation and/or engagement plans.

Please provide:

- Details of what steps you have taken or plan to take to consult or engage the whole community or specific groups affected by the proposal
- Who has been or will be consulted or engaged with
- Methods used or that will be used to engage or consult
- Key findings or feedback (if completed)

If the proposals are agreed there will be a 7-week public consultation on fee increases starting in January 2023. The consultation would be promoted directly to parents/carers currently using our centres as well as via social media and on the council website in order to seek a broad range of views.

Please provide:

- Details of what steps you have taken or plan to take to consult or engage the whole community or specific groups affected by the proposal
- Who has been or will be consulted or engaged with
- Methods used or that will be used to engage or consult
- Key findings or feedback (if completed)

We have also committed to reviewing the charges at the start of year 2 for any negative impacts.

6. Once the proposal has been implemented, how will impacts be monitored and reviewed?

Please provide details in the table below.

Action	Responsible team or officer	Deadline
Review at start of year 2	Early Years and Childcare Service	Autumn 2023

Please send the completed EQIA to equalities@islington.gov.uk for quality checking by the Fairness and Equality Team. All Equality Impact Assessments must be attached with any report to a decision-making board and should be made publicly available on request.

This Equality Impact Assessment has been completed in accordance with the guidance and using appropriate evidence.

Member	Name	Signed	Date
Staff member completing this form	Lydia Hutchings		20/10/22
Fairness and Equality Team			
Director or Head of Service			

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Childcare Charges Consultation Timeline

Actions	Timeline
Joint Board	6 December 2022
Consultation	7-week consultation 19 Jan-9 March
Consultation analysis	1 week analysis (9-17 March)
Final report to CSMT	21 March 2023 (send 17 March)
CMB	28 March 2023
Exec Member sign off	7 April 2023
Approved Report to Democratic Services	14 April 2023
Joint Board	25 April 2023
Exec Member sign off	28 April 2023
Approved report to Democratic Services	5 May 2023
Exec Board	18 May 2023
Decision published (including call in period)	19-23 May 2023
Notice to parents	May 2023
Model implemented	September 2023

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Children's Services
222 Upper Street, N1 1XR

Report of: Executive Member for Children, Young People and Families

Meeting of: Executive

Date: 18 May 2023

Ward(s): All

Subject: Response to the Children's Services Scrutiny Committee - Special Educational Needs and Disabilities Transitions

1. Synopsis

- 1.1 Between July 2021 and March 2022, Children's Services Scrutiny Committee undertook a [review of provision for children and young people with special educational needs and disabilities \(SEND\)](#), with a particular focus on transition points. The overall aim was to assess the ways in which the council supports young people with special educational needs and disabilities (SEND) and their families at various points of transition: early years to primary school, primary to secondary school, secondary school to the world of work or further education as well as the transition from Children's Services to Adult Social Services. The report made thirty-four recommendations.
- 1.2 This report gives an update on local and national developments in SEND since the review was undertaken, and on progress made against the recommendations.

2. Recommendations

- 2.1 To approve the responses to Scrutiny recommendations.
- 2.2 To note the further work proposed to consolidate and build on the improvements to date.

3. Background

Local Area SEND Inspection

3.1 In November 2021 and during the conduct of the above review, Ofsted and the Care Quality Commission (CQC) also conducted a full Local Area SEND Inspection as part of a national programme, publishing their [report](#) in January 2022. The inspection found many strengths in Islington, including:

- Strong strategic leadership and well-established teams
- Strong and well-established joint working relationships
- Very effective use of data
- Partnerships with parents and children and young people are meaningful and effective
- Children and young people with SEND achieve well
- Education, Health and Care Plans are of a consistently high quality and provide an up-to-date and clear picture of each child and young person's needs
- Partnerships between the Islington SEND Team and schools are very positive
- Short breaks are used effectively to support families
- The area-wide approach to meeting children and young people's SEMH needs is strong
- Case officers know young people and their families very well
- Procedures to identify needs in the early years are very well embedded
- The work of special schools, including through outreach services, makes a real and demonstrable difference to children and young people's lives and achievements
- Clear oversight of children and young people who are electively home educated
- Children and young people receive comprehensive support while they await diagnosis

3.2 Regarding transition arrangements, the report specifically found:

'Transition planning is strong. Parents reported that when their children move from early years to school and from school to college, the transition is smooth and effective. At annual reviews, professionals consider future pathways to ensure that these are well matched to individual needs. Partnerships between the Islington's SEND team and schools are very positive. School leaders spoke highly of the support they receive from case workers, for example. They work well together to support pupils when they move from one phase of their education to the next.'

The 'outcomes framework' makes clear the expectations of professionals in planning children and young people's next steps. An effective 'transition to adulthood' protocol has been co-produced with young people to ensure their move to adult services is well planned. Youth careers advisers attend annual review meetings. They provide support and guidance to staff and young people. Young people with SEND achieve highly in post-16 settings. The proportion of young people in education, employment or training has been consistently high.'

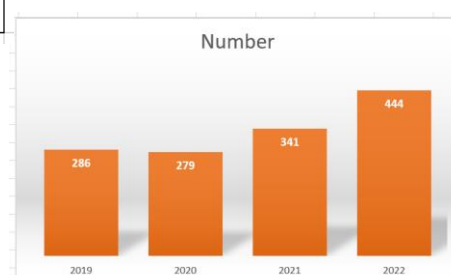
SEND Green Paper – Right Support, Right Place, Right Time

- 3.3 In March 2022, shortly before the Committee finalised its report, the Government published the [SEND Green Paper 'Right Support, Right Place, Right Time'](#) in response to growing national concern that the SEND reforms of 2014 had not delivered the intended outcomes.
- 3.4 The Green Paper acknowledged growing pressures across a SEND system characterised nationally by delays, frustration, and increasing financial pressure, and a 'widespread recognition that the system was failing to deliver, that parental and provider confidence was in decline, and the system had become financially unsustainable.'
- 3.5 At the time of publication of the Green Paper, high needs revenue funding had increased nationally by more than 40% over 3 years, but spending was still outstripping funding. Two thirds of local authorities had budget deficits in as a result of high needs cost pressures. More than 50% of local areas inspected by April 2022 had received a written statement of action notice to improve.

Increased SEND demands and local impact

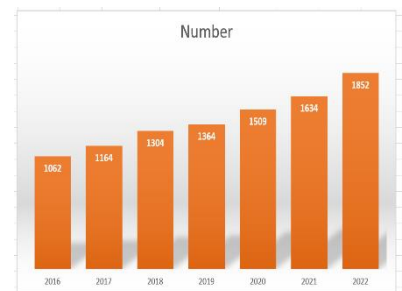
- 3.6 Although Islington is not among those local areas in deficit, and with a strong inspection outcome, local pressures are nevertheless evident, and have become more so in the last 12 months:
- Increasing numbers of EHCPs is putting high pressure on staffing numbers, places and provision available whilst meeting statutory expectations.
 - As the DfE acknowledge, the adversarial nature of the system created by 2014 reforms is causing significant tension and conflict within the system
 - The huge financial strain at LA level is not helped by broader reductions in public funding generally
 - There is a lack of skilled SEND staff for very skilled roles across education, health and care
 - Mainstream schools in particular are struggling to cope with an increase in numbers and increasing complexity of need.
- 3.7 We have seen the following increases in requests for Education, Health and Care Assessments in the last 3 years and in particular, the last 12 months:

Increase in EHCP Requests				
Year	2019	2020	2021	2022
Number	286	279	341	444
% increase		-2%	22%	30%



- 3.8 The number of Education, Health and Care Plans maintained by Islington has increased by 74% since the first full year of the SEND reforms in 2016:

Number of EHCPs							
Year	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022
Number	1062	1164	1304	1364	1509	1634	1852
% growth		10%	12%	5%	11%	8%	13%
Growth since 2016							74%



- 3.9 The reasons behind this increase in demand are complicated, but include rising levels of deprivation, an increase in children born with complex needs, an increase in knowledge and diagnosis of autism, raised awareness of sensory needs and pressures on school budgets. The Covid-19 pandemic, long periods of children being without nursery or school has also had a huge impact on children's communication and development skills and this is also showing in an increase in demand for our services. Post pandemic we have also seen a significant increase in incidence of children's mental health, including self-harm and emotionally based school avoidance, particularly among girls.
- 3.10 Despite this, we retain excellent specialist provision, with many very satisfied parents and children. Our workforce remains committed and hardworking, for the most part over and above expectation. We retain close working relationships across the partnership, and with Parent Voice groups whilst recognising the limits of co-production on unpaid volunteers' time. And we are fortunate that senior officers and members continue to be committed to service improvement in this area at its time of greatest need.

Islington SEND Strategy 2022-27

- 3.11 Our SEND Strategy 2022-27 approved by the Executive in October 2022, has been coproduced taking full account of the above context, and forms our local response to the challenges set before us.
- 3.12 It has four Ambitions:
- **Ambition One: Fully inclusive education for all:** We will support all schools and settings in Islington to be inclusive and welcome children and young people with SEND
 - **Ambition Two: Right support in the right place at the right time for parents and carers:** We will transform parents' experience of the SEND system by delivering the right support in the right place at the right time

- **Ambition Three: Equity and excellent education provision:** We will deliver new, ambitious and innovative provision that enables children and young people with SEND to receive excellent education in their local community
- **Ambition Four: All young people are well prepared for adulthood:** We will enable all young people to achieve independence, build good relationships and have a meaningful occupation

- 3.13 The recommendations of the Scrutiny Committee's report have been incorporated into the delivery programme sitting beneath this strategy. The delivery plan is a live document that will be further amended to take account of the SEND Green Paper delivery plan which is anticipated before the end of March 2023.
- 3.14 The remainder of this report gives an update on progress against the recommendations of the committee to improve the experience of children and young people with SEND and their families at key transition points.

SEND and Alternative Provision (AP) Improvement Plan

- 3.15 On 2 March 2023 the Government's long-awaited response to the SEND Green Paper – [SEND and AP Improvement Plan](#) – was published.
- 3.16 The plan describes the steps that will be taken over the next three years to rebuild an effective, sustainable, and inclusive national SEND system. This will start with improved mainstream provision, that builds on high quality teaching and prompt access to targeted support when needed. Measures will be put in place to ensure greater national consistency in the support that should be made available, how it should be accessed and how it should be funded. This will mean that most children and young people should be able to access the support they need without the need for a statutory Education Health and Care Plan (EHCP).
- 3.17 Key deliverables of the Improvement Plan include:
- **Publication of National Standards** by the end of 2025 that will clarify what types of support are available (based on evidence of what works), whose job it is to make different types of provision available, and which budgets should be used to pay for support.
 - **Introduction of local SEND and Alternative Provision (AP) partnerships** that bring together partners to plan and commission support for children with SEND and in AP, meeting the National Standards.
 - A requirement on local SEND and AP partnerships to **create evidence-based local inclusion plans**
 - **A standard national EHCP template**, with supporting processes and guidance from 2025.
 - **Digital requirements for EHCP systems** to improve experiences for parents, carers and professionals, reduce bureaucracy and improve DfE ability to monitor the health of the SEND system
 - **Create a three-tier AP system**, focusing on targeted early support within mainstream school, time-limited intensive placements in an alternative provision setting, and longer-term placements

- 3.18 The Department for Education intend to establish nine *Regional Expert Partnerships* to co-produce, test and refine key reforms, including new local SEND and alternative provision partnerships, local inclusion plans, strengthened accountabilities and new inclusion dashboards. They will use the findings to inform future legislation to deliver reforms. This would include new burdens assessments and consideration of the capacity required to manage delivery.

4. Children's Services Scrutiny: Special Educational Needs and Disabilities Transitions: Recommendations and progress to date

Communication

- 4.1 **Recommendation one: Parents/carers struggle to find out what inclusive events are going on across the borough. The council should raise the profile of its online "Things To Do" calendar for children and their families with SEND**

lzyy-info.com, our website for young people in Islington, includes a lot of information, advice and detail about local youth organisations. There is also the Islington Life on-line magazine. We have asked the recently appointed Youth Council for 2023-24 to help us by suggesting ways that the website could be better promoted and made more accessible to children and young people with SEND. We are also considering this through the SEND Co-Production Group. Suggestions will be passed on to the Council's central communications team. We are also currently advertising for a part time SEND Parent Parliament Coordinator, who will manage communication with parents and children and young people with SEND through our Local Offer website to make sure that the information contained there is up to date and relevant to their needs and interest of all communities.

- 4.2 **Recommendation two: Each year there is a SENCO network day when primary and secondary SENCOs come together to share information. It is not limited to Islington schools and out-of-borough receiving schools should be encouraged to attend.**

Because of their location (tangential to the Islington boundary) Acland Burghley School in Camden have a significant intake of Islington resident children for whom they are the most local secondary school and are regular attenders at the network day. No other out-of-borough secondary schools are significant importers, but we continue to promote the event to all schools that will receive Islington residents at secondary transfer and specifically target any school expecting three or more children with SEND from Islington. Our primary SENCOs link directly with receiving schools of children with SEND in any event as part of our transition protocol.

- 4.3 **Recommendation three: Islington Council's Local Offer website (co-produced with parents) is where current information, advice and services for children with SEND can be found. The Council's Corporate Communications Team should work with the Children's Services team to consider how it can better publicise the Local Offer and a translate facility should be made available on the Council's website so that the Local Offer can be accessed by non-English speakers.**

Extensive work has already been undertaken to improve the look and feel of the Local Offer website. Further work is programmed for April 2023 to consider publicity to coincide with the recruitment of a parent champion to specifically promote the website. The Corporate Communications Team have been asked to investigate a translate facility. Google Translate is not an option due to accessibility problems which don't meet the correct legal standards, but there is potential to link to a Google Translate add-on for SEND Local Offer users to add to their browsers which will allow them to use the programme to translate the webpages. This option is being looked in to.

Education Health and Care Plans

4.4 Recommendation four: Islington Council do not require an Educational Psychologist report to be submitted with a request for an EHCP assessment. This is not widely known. The council should communicate this to families and schools thinking about submitting requests.

While it is not a statutory requirement to include EP advice as part of an EHC assessment request, we do consider it best practice. The SEND Code of Practice is explicit that any request for statutory assessment should normally be considered only when all the supports and purposeful interventions normally available to a child or young person have been exhausted. Advice from an EPs (who would normally observe over time to provide the most helpful formative advice) makes an important early contribution to the development of suitable provision, and gives a helpful baseline for the child, parent, and school. We would therefore normally expect to see evidence of consultation and advice from an EP as part of 'normally available' provision. The Council **must** seek advice from an EP as part of a statutory EHC assessment; this advice is most helpful when the child has been observed in different contexts and in response to various interventions over time, rather than as a one-off assessment. This is the advice we give to schools and parents but are making it clearer that while highly desirable to have had EP involvement prior to any consideration of a statutory EHC assessment request, it is not mandatory.

4.5 Recommendation five: Some parents/carers found EHCPs overly long and unwieldy with many strategies and interventions recommended. Every effort should be made to make sure EHCPs are concise and bespoke to individuals.

The Ofsted LA SEND Inspection (Nov 2021) commented that '(Islington) EHC plans are of a consistently high quality. All plans focus on preparation for adulthood. This means that no matter what the child's age, professionals consider future pathways, independence and physical, social and emotional well-being. Practitioners from a range of settings agree that EHC plans have improved over time. Plans provide an up-to-date and clear picture of each child and young person's needs.'

We are committed to continuous improvement however, and our most recent focus has been on not including in EHC plans those interventions and supports 'normally available' to all children but only those that should be made additionally available. This not only makes the plans shorter, but also helps to target and therefore identify and measure progress more easily, including where sufficient progress has been made so that the child / young person may no longer needs the support of an EHC Plan to continue to make progress.

- 4.6 Recommendation six: Some parents/carers found EHCPs difficult to understand. This is even more difficult for parents for whom English is not a first language. Islington Council should (i) make every effort to use simple, non-technical language and provide explanations of words/phrases not in common use and (ii) offer workshops to parents of children with EHCPs to explain the process and answer questions.**

See response to 5) above. We also continue to focus through our quality assurance processes on the use of language and accessibility of EHC plans. SEND Keyworkers have been provided with additional training in sharing plans with parents and reporting any issues or themes. Our Parents Carer Forum and Independent SEND Advice Service (funded through DfE) provide workshops on a range of themes including EHC assessment and plans on a rolling basis. Parent Champions, supported through the London Mayor's Violence Reduction Unit also organised a workshop for parents across Camden and Islington on the SEND Process which took place in October of last year and was well attended.




Transition: from Early Years to Primary School

- 4.7 Recommendation seven: Islington Council should continue its ongoing work with a group of Headteachers to establish a protocol to ensure that children with SEND not known to services are identified as early as possible so that the relevant early years setting can be informed.**

This work is ongoing.

- 4.8 Recommendation eight: Primary schools sometimes receive no prior notice that a child with SEND is about to join. Sometimes information is provided but it is incomplete or provided very late. This makes it difficult for the receiving school to plan appropriately. The council should create a "transitions toolkit" to provide guidance to early years settings of what information about a child with SEND should be provided to the primary school the child is moving to. The toolkit should set out best practice in terms of what information should be provided, when and in what format.**

Our [Early Years to Primary Transition Support Planning framework](#) has been revised to provide more explicit advice to both early years and school settings. The expectation is that the setting-based SENCO will coordinate a meeting in a professional and timely way using the above framework and documentation. For transition to reception for all 4-year-olds, settings are now asked to also complete a Revised Early Years Transition Record to provide a baseline for reception class teacher.

Early Years Transition Record - 4YO

This form is to be completed in addition to the Early Years to Primary Transition Support Planning documents. To complete the sections below the Birth to Five Future tracking tool has been used as an example to record emerging (e), working within (w) or secure (s). Your settings tracking tool can also be used to draft your leavers report.

Name of Child:	Date of birth:
Name of setting:	Admission date:
Attendance %:	Child's home language:

Personal, social and emotional:

Making relationships		Sense of self		Understanding emotions	
Range 1 0-3 months	Range 2 3-6 months	Range 1 0-3 months	Range 2 3-6 months	Range 1 0-3 months	Range 2 3-6 months
e w s	e w s	e w s	e w s	e w s	e w s
e w s	e w s	e w s	e w s	e w s	e w s
e w s	e w s	e w s	e w s	e w s	e w s

Communication and Language:

Listening and attention		Understanding		Speaking	
Range 1 0-3 months	Range 2 3-6 months	Range 1 0-3 months	Range 2 3-6 months	Range 1 0-3 months	Range 2 3-6 months
e w s	e w s	e w s	e w s	e w s	e w s
e w s	e w s	e w s	e w s	e w s	e w s
e w s	e w s	e w s	e w s	e w s	e w s

Physical development:

Moving and handling		Health and self-care	
Range 1 0-3 months	Range 2 3-6 months	Range 1 0-3 months	Range 2 3-6 months
e w s	e w s	e w s	e w s
e w s	e w s	e w s	e w s
e w s	e w s	e w s	e w s

Expressive arts and design:

Current progress and strengths:

Parent/Carer comments:

Child's comments:

The tracking tool referenced in this template is [Bolt to 5 Online](#) which can be replaced by your settings tracking tool

Names, contact details and signatures:

Teacher/Keyperson	Name:	Signature:
Parent/Carer	Name:	Signature:
Child	Name:	Signature:
Head/Manager/SENCO	Name:	Signature:
Professional/Services providing support	Name:	Email:
Date:		

Transition: from Primary School to Secondary School

4.9 Recommendation nine: Similar to recommendation eight above, there should be a “transitions toolkit” for children with SEND moving from primary to secondary school.

We have introduced the Nurture UK 'Transition Toolbox' to several Primary Schools to trial for September 2023-4 cohort and already receiving positive feedback. The toolbox is designed to support children by helping them to build the confidence and skills they need to ensure a smooth, successful transition. It also provides a range of resources for parents and professionals. The materials can be used flexibly to suit the learning context and individual student need and are organised in six sections:

- Making the transition
- Building self-esteem and confidence
- Developing resilience and problem solving
- Managing stress and anxiety
- Being a learner in high school, and
- Building strengths and setting goals.



The annual SENCO network day (see 2 above) is where primary and secondary SENCOs come together face to face to share information.

All schools maintained by a local authority are required to send a Common Transfer File (CTF) to the new school on transfer. This also applies to pupil referral units. This is a statutory obligation. Academies (including free schools) are ‘strongly encouraged’ by the DfE to send CTFs when a pupil leaves to attend another school.

A working group (SENCOs and Officers) are developing a protocol for SEND information exchange.

4.10 Recommendation ten: Islington Council should promote the guidance set out in its Transition Good Practice booklet which sets out expectations of schools to ensure there is a consistent transition offer.

The booklet is published on our Local Offer and presented to all new SENCOs as part of their induction.

Transition: Secondary School to Education, Employment, Training Opportunities and Adult Services

4.11 Recommendation eleven: Islington Council and Islington secondary schools should ensure that all partners work together to consistently begin joint planning for this important transition for children with SEND when the child is 14 years old.

A detailed programme of work is underway to drive ambitious education, employment and training outcomes for all Islington's young people, including those with SEND. The aim over the next three years is to build consensus around what a 14-19 curriculum offer that provides for the aspirations of all young people while reflecting pathways into central London's unparalleled range of employment sectors looks like. The Council is working with education, business and community partners to support all young people to establish aspirational career goals and achieve positive progression, irrespective of their starting point. The plan is underpinned by the mapping the existing Key Stage 4 and post-16 landscape and consultation with employers representing key local and regional employment sectors (including growth sectors) to identify current and future skills needs.

The 14-19 plan is equitable and inclusive, building on the individual talents and potential of all of the young people who live and study in Islington. There are three strands to this work:

1. Understanding the profile of young people likely to become NEET (where those with SEND are over-represented) so that relevant stakeholders can support them in active NEET prevention:

Work already undertaken includes shaping and development of an integrated early intervention approach, using risk of NEET indicators (which include SEND) to help schools identify young people at risk of becoming NEET and formulate rapid response interventions to support them. The approach is currently being piloted in two schools secondary schools with a working group monitoring progress against an action plan. Adjustment, launch and roll out to all schools is planned over the coming months.

2. Expanding our Youth Employment Services to provide borough wide support for young people not in employment, education, or training into positive destinations through our programmes and spaces (incl. Youth Employment Hubs):

Work already carried out includes internal consultation to establish a framework for engaging growth sector businesses and the opening of two Youth Employment Hubs in Caledonian / Barnsbury and Finsbury Park to increase community engagement and provide localised employability and employment support. Ongoing work is

focusing on the development of tailored progression pathways for young people (particularly those at risk of NEET) into work experience, internships, apprenticeships, and employment, with particular focus on growth sectors. We are continuing to work with businesses to identify skills gaps and create programmes of learning which respond to labour market need.

3. Shaping a curriculum that prepares young people for the changing landscape of the labour market and that all, no matter what their starting points or additional needs, can access pathways to quality careers:

From September 2022 work has been taking place with our secondary schools to review the current careers education offer to ensure all pupils from Year 7 have access to world of work opportunities. Primary schools are also being supported with lighter touch careers activities to build awareness of emerging sectors and skills needs and increase participation in the World of Work programme, which is being expanded to include work activities with clearer alignment to growth sectors. Schools will be supported to develop a clear approach to assessing the impact of careers education by introducing a skills framework that establishes pupils' level of knowledge and skills, whilst recoding and evidencing new skills, experience or knowledge gained.

4.12 Recommendation twelve: For any child with SEND who has a social worker, a Transitions team member should attend the annual review that takes place when the child is in Year 9.

Recommendation twenty-seven: Islington Council should roll out the Progression to Adulthood framework in Adult Services.

Work is underway to develop the transitions offer to ensure more robust oversight and support for those with SEND from the age of 14, which can include support (including careers advice) through schools and colleges, the Progression Team, Specialist SEND Keyworkers, and Social Workers, where allocated. There are close working relationships across this wider stakeholder group to ensure an inclusive assessment and transition review processes.

There is also a dedicated transition social worker that works across the Disabled Children's Service and Adults Transitions Service who supports Young People who are looked after with a disability, working alongside the young person from the age of 14 to 25 years to ensure a seamless transition assessment and care planning process is achieved for the Young Person.

Committee members will also recall the [Health Support Transitions Pathways](#) for young people with SEND which were presented as part of the Scrutiny process.

The current configuration of services means that social worker attendance at all reviews from Year 9 would be challenging to resource. Adults and Children and Young People departments have however begun a joint piece of work to consider the design of the services that support transitions, in recognition of the current challenges in resourcing timely support.

A Progression to Adulthood Framework workshop across Children and Young People and Adult Services was held in February 2023 to identify areas of strength and challenge. Consideration was given to:

- ***A review of operational teams and structures*** to ensure that they are best configured to meet the growing number and level of complexity of young people with learning disabilities and / or other special educational needs;
- ***Aligning the current accommodation needs analysis with strategies to better manage the market and cost*** including the use of 'Care Cubed' in Children's and Adult Services and effective brokerage
- ***Further development of the pathways and systems to ensure young people transitioning into Adult Services are appropriately supported to achieve the four 'Progression to Adulthood' outcomes:*** being supported to take up opportunities for employment, education or training, preparing for independent living, staying healthy and being an active part of the community

The outputs from the workshop have informed a 'project initiation document' that will outline a shared vision for Islington's young people in transition, how we progress work to develop the support we give young people in transition, detail clear aims and objectives and the governance arrangements and accountability required to deliver.

While this work is underway, Children's and Adult Services have put in place more immediate measures to ensure that there is clear sight of the number of young people that could be reasonably be expected to be eligible for Adult Service and their needs to ensure early planning and making available adequate provision.

The development of future models and/or ways of working will explore how we can continue to deliver statutory outcomes and facilitate earlier planning collaboratively by supporting the assessment processes, which in turn will help people to prepare more proportionately for the future.

4.13 Recommendation thirteen: The council should develop a specific strategy to support young people with SEND who are transitioning from Pupil Referral Units and alternate provision into Education, Employment or Training opportunities.

Their most recent Ofsted Report judged New River College's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare as outstanding. They found 'a comprehensive programme for pupils' careers guidance and advice' was preparing pupils well for their next steps when they leave school. This includes visits to universities as well as a wide range of businesses to raise pupils' aspirations for their future. In 2022, every pupil went on to appropriate placements, including further education, employment or training and/or apprenticeships. Students from New River College will also be able to access an extended Supported Internship offer from September 2023 where this may be appropriate.

4.14 Recommendation fourteen: Islington Council should work with City and Islington college (CANDI) and with young people and their families to ensure that the college is meeting the needs of young people with SEND and providing what is required by their EHCPs.

The College has been a full and active partner in the newly established (March 2022) Islington Secondary School and College Leaders (ISSCL) forum. A major focus for the Forum has been the further development of inclusive practice and addressing some of the barriers to this, for example in-year pupil movement. This agenda is being taken forward by a Deputy Headteacher sub-group.

Part of the CANDI response has been to extend their offer to include accredited alternative education provision for Key Stage 4 pupils, aged 14-16 years old at their Camden Road site from September 2022. Courses will provide knowledge, experience and employability skills in an inclusive, safe environment. The offer has been successfully running in Haringey for several years with high achievement rates that exceed national averages. The courses meet DfE, Council and schools' requirements for Alternative Provision and can help to re-engage and motivate some young people who may be struggling in school. The courses can support students from Year 10 into Year 11, and in turn onto Further Education, employment, or an Apprenticeship. The offer includes both one day per week 'day release' courses from Entry Level to Level 2 along with full time courses. Students can choose subject areas according to their interests, abilities, and intended career aims, with an individual learning plan prepared for them. Early feedback from participating student has been positive.

SEND Keyworkers will follow up directly with the college any concerns about the individual progress of students with an Education, Health and Care Plan, and there are positive relationships with the Colleges SEND Team.

4.15 Recommendation fifteen: Islington Council should undertake a longitudinal study of a subset of young people at 1 year, 2 year and 5 years after completion of the Progression to Adulthood programme to measure the long-term success of the programme.

A sample of students has been identified, consent sought and obtained. First interviews will take place in June-July 2023.

4.16 Recommendation sixteen: Islington Council should consider becoming a Business Partner in Supported Internships.

Recommendation seventeen: Members heard the council had a supported employment programme and as part of this disability-friendly jobs were created or found and a disability-friendly recruitment process was used to fill the roles. This had stalled during lockdown as it was not possible to operate the programme virtually. The council should restart the programme as soon as possible.

Several building blocks are either in place, or in development.

A new DfE grant ringfenced for developing supported internships (£12,800 to March 2023) was announced in October 2022. Our agreed outputs with the DfE against this grant are to:

- Establish an employment forum made up of supported internship providers, the LA and parents, and develop an action plan
- Double the number of supported internship places available by March 2025

A sub-group of the Autism and Learning Difficulties Employment Group is being established with a focus on Supported Internships. There has been liaison with HR colleagues who are developing an early careers strategy for employment opportunities for young people to ensure that those with SEND and the option of Supported Internship are included. We are in conversation with local Education providers to assess options for the most flexible offer that would support the 'job sampling' model that most young people tell us they would prefer. Work has also started on disability awareness training across the Council workforce. This will be reinforced through a 'Child Friendly' borough approach.

Transition: General

- 4.17 Recommendation eighteen: Islington Council should support schools to establish electronic databases to store reports prepared in respect of children with SEND. There should be a specified day each year when all such reports are transferred electronically to the receiving school.**

This has not been progressed and will be challenging as there are several different commercial and bespoke programmes / systems used by schools to capture and record SEND interventions and progress. Advice within our Transitions protocol is that information should be exchanged by the end of the Spring Term, and the date for the annual SENCO network day (see 2 and 9 above) is set well in advance. There is no date set by the DfE for transfer of the Common Transfer File (see 9 above) and a local transfer date may be difficult to enforce.

The SEND and AP Improvement Plan does however make a clear case for all SEND services to move to digital systems and will develop digital requirements for all Local Authorities to adapt to as part of delivery.

Other

- 4.18 Recommendation nineteen: Islington Council should complete the audit of school buildings currently underway, so that improvements to create a more SEND-supportive schools' estate in the borough can be planned and prioritised, as and when funding becomes available.**

This audit remains in progress as part of the Council's School Organisation planning and sits alongside implementation of the Council's Education Plan 2023-30 and SEND Strategy 2022-27 with the collective objective of delivering high quality education for all through an inclusive and sustainable school system.

- 4.19 Recommendation twenty: When any physical space intended for use by children and young people is being designed, commissioned, or refurbished, Islington Council should ensure that the space is as inclusive as possible.**

There is a comprehensive SEND Needs Assessment and SEND Sufficiency Plan which are updated annually and reported to the Education Capital Board. The Head of Pupil Services and Lead Member for Children attend this board. This ensures that relevant to the needs of all children are considered in capital planning.

4.20 Recommendation twenty-one: To embed inclusion, Islington Council should work with schools to ensure all teachers and not just SENCOs, understand attachment theory and trauma informed approaches.

This aim is central to the delivery of the SEND Strategy 2022-27, approved by Executive in October 2022. Delivery is supported by a detailed action plan.

4.21 Recommendation twenty-two: During the covid pandemic some services stopped visiting schools. All services should return to in-person delivery as soon as feasible.

All Council Services are now performing in accordance with the Council's workstyles and flexible working arrangements and guidance and based on sensible decisions on the best approach for teams considering the needs and preferences of service users. Guidance for health services varies, however.

4.22 Recommendation twenty-three: On a visit to The Bridge it was noted that the swimming pool at Beacon High next door was not available to be used by students at The Bridge. The possibility of offering sessions to students the Bridge should be explored by Islington Council.

The Bridge School can use the pool but are not given priority for booking slots. They are also finding use prohibitively expensive. In an ideal world, the school would like to be asked first which sessions would work for them, and for the cost to be more manageable. Discussion is on-going.

Children Looked After

4.23 Recommendation twenty-four: Islington Council should produce local guidance outlining guiding principles it will use and that it will encourage other local authorities to subscribe to in respect of children looked after with EHCPs. Such local guidance should set out the circumstances in which Islington Council will retain responsibility for an EHCP in respect of a child who is moving to another authority.

The local authority looking after a child will always be financially responsible for any special educational provision made through an Education Health and Care Plan, irrespective of where they may be 'ordinarily resident' or where (geographically) they attend school. The matter of who retains responsibility for ensuring that the plan is delivered, and progress reviewed annually will always be considered in the best interests of the child. For the purposes of Part IV of the Education Act 1996 and Section 24 of the Children and Families Act 2014, a local authority is responsible for a child if he or she is in their area. This phrase is usually used to mean 'ordinarily resident in their area'. This means that a SEND assessment and responsibility for making and maintaining any EHCP. This would normally be in the best interests of the child because this is where the best knowledge of the local SEND offer would sit and would also ensure equity of access to local services.

However, given the complexity of children looked after lives it is open to local authorities to make 'ad hoc' arrangements in individual exceptional cases, which are in the best interests of the child. The local authority placing the child could agree to accept the

responsibility for assessing a child or making and maintaining an EHC Plan where there are practical reasons for doing so (e.g. where children move placement in quick succession or have a long term plan to move to a permanent placement, it can be in the best interests of the child for the care authority to 'hold' the assessment or EHCP, at least for a short time, even though the child is living out of authority). Clearly both authorities must agree before such arrangements can go ahead. Normally, however, it is in the child's interests to be monitored and supported in accordance with arrangements local to the area in which they are living by professionals with up-to-date knowledge of local services and issues.

These are the arrangements and principles set out in our [Guidance on Looked After Children with Special Educational Needs and Disabilities](#) document, which can be shared with other local authorities.

4.24 Recommendation twenty-five: Islington Council should consider whether all young people entering care should be assessed for SEND screening.

All Children Looked After on becoming Looked After are allocated an Advisory Teacher. All local authorities have a statutory duty to promote the education of children looked after and all local authorities are required to have Virtual School Head (VSH), who has the responsibility to ensure the local authority carries out their statutory duty. Within Islington the VSH manages a team called the Virtual School, who are central to supporting all children looked after and the professionals around these children, to ensure they receive the best education possible and achieve the best possible outcomes. This includes ensuring that if children have SEND this identified and assessed in collaboration with schools and CAMHS. All children looked after are allocated a specialist Advisory Teacher in the Virtual School, whose responsibility is to ensure that all children looked after education is promoted and supported. This includes ensuring that if children have SEND this identified and assessed in collaboration with schools and CAMHS.

The SEND Code of Practice describes the detailed planning that will be done around the care, health and education needs of children looked after. They will have a Care Plan, which sets out how the local authority will meet the care needs of the child, addressing all important dimensions of their developmental needs. These include health, education, emotional and behavioural development, identity, family and social relationships, social presentation, and self-care skills.

Each child's Care Plan will specifically include a Personal Education Plan (PEP) and a Health Plan (both are a statutory requirement) which will particularly assess and set out the child's education and health needs. The Advisory Teacher leads on ensuring that all children have a timely and effective PEP. It is through the PEP meeting, and the Advisory Teacher's contact with the Team Around the Child, that a child's SEND will be identified. If there is need to carry out a formal assessment of the child's SEND it will be the Advisory Teacher who will take the lead this, through either supporting the school or social worker to make a request for statutory assessment of SEND or supporting school within the SEN Support framework. The Advisory Teacher will also attend the Annual Review for those children with an existing EHCP. Additional CAMHS and Educational Psychology resource is also allocated to the Virtual School to make individual assessment in response to specific concerns available.

- 4.25 Recommendation twenty-six: In relation to a child not in a stable placement, Islington Council should liaise with the relevant Clinical Commissioning Group with a view to an Islington mental health professional being allocated to that child, if appropriate, until the child is in a stable placement.**

Our Motivational Practice Model encompasses CAMHS embedded within the Children Looked After service. Every child when they come into care has a trauma formulation meeting with all the professionals led by a clinician to ensure the child's journey is understood and the right intervention is put in place for the child. This helps to ensure placement stability. Children in care who are experiencing placement instability are discussed in consultations with CAMHS clinicians which assist to inform the work the network and specifically social workers undertake with the child and the carer and support the placement. These children are also discussed within group supervision where clinicians are present. A clinician is based within our Fostering service who supports foster carers and Supervising Social Workers to support the stability of the placement. If needed individual therapy is offered to children and young people.

Support for Families

- 4.26 Recommendation twenty-eight: Members heard that there is currently one disability swim session per week at one swimming pool in Islington for children with SEND and their families. Islington Council should extend this model across all Islington swimming pools and leisure facilities such as trampoline parks, adventure playgrounds and encourage cinemas to provide viewings for SEND children and their families.**

Disability swim sessions are currently available at Archway Leisure Centre, Iron Monger Row and Cally pools. Details of these sessions and all other accessible leisure facilities can be found through the [SEND Local Offer](#).

- 4.27 Recommendation twenty-nine: Islington Council should promote more social events for adolescents and young adults with SEND.**

The Head of Pupil Services and the Director, Young Islington will have further discussion about the current local offer for this group, including and any further adjustments that could be considered to the universal offer to extend reach.

- 4.28 Recommendation thirty: The SEND Parent and Carers Forum already exists but consideration should be given by Islington Council as to (i) how to make more families aware of its existence and (ii) how the Forum can help fathers and siblings connect with each other.**

We are working with the new chairs of the Islington Parent / Carer Forum through our co-production group and contributing to their plans develop the Forum and extending their reach. The Forum is directly funded by the Department for Education (DfE) and supported by the Council for Disabled Children through a contract awarded by the DfE.

- 4.29 Recommendation thirty-one: Members heard that in general, parents welcomed social care assessments to look at the needs of the whole family. However, consideration should be given to the wording of the form to ensure that it is not the same as is used in the context of child protection.**

This have been incorporated as part the Motivational Practice Model and different ways of working with families for example language has been changed to children subjected to a Child Protection to children supported by a Child Protection Plan.

The Disabled Children's Services have now adapted their social care assessments for children with disabilities who are accessing a personal budget where there are safeguarding or parenting capacity concerns. These assessments are now called 'Children with Disabilities Early Help Assessment' and are no longer completed by a qualified social worker. We are also now in the process of transforming how we review personal budget plans in a more simplified and less intrusive way for families.

- 4.30 Recommendation thirty-two: Members were advised that the wording of the short breaks form currently referred to "severe and complex needs" which could prevent some entitled families from completing the form. Islington Council should therefore review the wording of the form.**

We are working with our Co-production Group to agree wording that is within the remit of the scheme and target towards the families who need a break from caring responsibilities for those with very complex needs and does not set false expectations of entitlement for a wider group of families.

- 4.31 Recommendation thirty-three: Some Islington Council and Islington School SEND support groups had stopped meeting due to the Covid pandemic and where possible these groups should be restarted post-Covid.**

Those groups able to reopen have done so.

- 4.32 Recommendation thirty-four: Members heard that there was a Camden transition pack that Islington might be able to learn from. The Council should work with the Family Carers Action Group to produce transition packs including case studies of families of children with SEND who were willing to share their stories. This would enable parents and carers to imagine future options for their child and help them gain knowledge from others who had been in similar situations. Work should also take place to distribute packs more widely.**

This work is underway, with some very positive case studies including work place experience and supported internship opportunities.

5. Further action planned

- 5.7 Narrowing attainment gaps and securing equality in outcomes for all pupils remain central to our work and have been reflect in the development of our Education Plan. There is concern that the COVID-19 disruption has exacerbated existing inequalities and / or created new ones, as we now know that the pandemic has impact more heavily on disadvantaged communities. We will also need to support families and schools in responding to the cost-of-living crisis, which will inevitably hit hardest on our most vulnerable families. Promoting inclusion and belonging for all children therefore retains the highest priority.

- 5.8 Our Education Plan and SEND Strategy place inclusion at the heart; both are supported by a detailed delivery plan involving collaborative working across all services, as well as the support of elected members.
- 5.9 Our approach is system led, which means all schools regardless of their status (academy, maintained) working together with a shared ambition to improve outcomes for ALL children. It also reflects the priority for Islington to become an exclusion-free borough by taking a 'no need to exclude' stance and promoting the 'Islington approach to Inclusion' as set out in our Education Plan / SEND Strategy.
- 5.10 Other action planned includes:
- Promoting inclusion and belonging through our direct and targeted work with schools e.g., through School Attendance Support termly Targeting meetings
 - Capturing and sharing best practice (e.g., schools that have shown a significant improvement) through the Education Board
 - Supporting schools towards earlier intervention through better use of data
 - Making best use of whole school transformation (e.g., trauma informed practice)
 - Updating of our behaviour handbook to reflect new DfE guidance
 - Training for Governors on shaping school culture and ethos
 - Developing locality-based networks to share good practice

6. Implications

6.1 Financial Implications

- 6.1.1 There are no financial implications from this report. All recommendations are being implemented within existing budgets.

6.2. Legal Implications

- 6.2.1 A child or young person has Special Educational Needs if he or she has a learning difficulty or disability which calls for Special Educational Provision to be made for him or her. Where, in light of an assessment of their needs, it is necessary for Special Educational Provision to be made for a child or young person in accordance with an Education, Health and Care Plan (an EHC Plan), the responsible local authority must secure that such a Plan is prepared and then maintained for the child or young person.
- 6.2.2 The legislation which provides for EHC Plans is Part 3 (Sections 19-83) of the Children and Families Act 2014 (CFA 2014). EHC Plans replace, but are substantially similar to, Statements of Special Educational Needs under the Education Act 1996.
- 6.2.3 The principal Regulations are the Special Educational Needs and Disability Regulations 2014, Statutory Instrument No 1530 of 2014. The other key document is a Code of Practice issued by the Secretary of State.

6.2.4 An important duty is to publish and keep under review information about available provision, pursuant to Section 30 of CFA 2014 and Regulations 53 and 54 of and Schedule 2 to the above Regulations and the Special Educational Needs (Provision of Information by Local Authorities) (England) Regulations.

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

6.3.1. No implications

6.4 Equalities Impact Assessment

6.4.1. 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.

6.4.2. An Equalities Impact Assessment was completed on 21 June 2022. The main finding is that there are no negative implications arising from the Strategy.

7. Conclusion and reasons for recommendations

8.1 This report details the response to recommendations from the Children's Services Scrutiny Committee.

Final report clearance:

Signed by: Executive Member for Children, Young People and Families

Date: 5 May 2023

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Environment and Climate Change

Report of: Cllr Nurullah Turan, Executive Member for Health and Social Care

Meeting of: Executive

Date: 18th May 2023

Ward: Finsbury Park

Subject: Sobell Leisure Centre Facilities Changes

1. Synopsis

1. To set out the serious impact of the Thames Water Mains flood in August 2022 on the Sobell Leisure Centre
2. To explain the issues relating to the reinstatement of an ice rink at the Sobell and the potential alternative facilities.
3. To set out the proposed consultation and engagement process for the next phase and the constraints that the insurance claim place upon this.

2. Recommendations

1. That the Council is minded not to reinstate an ice rink at the Sobell Leisure Centre for the reasons set out in the report.
2. To consult and engage with users and the wider community on the proposal not to reinstate the ice rink and to replace the lost facilities with a new offer to appeal to a wider user base to increase physical activity particularly by young people.
3. To delegate authority to the Corporate Director of Resources in consultation with the Executive Member for Health and Social Care to make a decision as to the future uses of Sobell, following the consultation.

3. Background

- 3.1 In August 2022 Sobell Leisure Centre suffered a major flood as a direct result of a Thames Water Mains bursting on Tollington Road which has affected the entire ground floor of the Leisure Centre. This flood has caused major damage to the facilities and services on offer at the centre and both LBI and GLL have been engaging contractors and specialists in immediate remediation and in consultation with the insurers are developing a plan of reinstatement.
- 3.2 All floors will require replacement throughout, and this has added complexity as the original Granwood was overlaid in 2011 by an Olympic standard Gransprung floor for Volleyball training facilities for London 2012. Also, in 2018 GLL introduced an Extreme Trampoline Park in half of the sports hall that put trampolines and structures on top of this floor as well as 2 mezzanine floors and a central sports hall full height steel framed dividing wall.
- 3.2 All the facilities/equipment and fixtures and fittings at Sobell including the Trampoline Park and the Ice Rink, Squash courts, Soft play area, Dojo have been condemned and written off and have been stripped out, including the full height central partition wall. This has been far more extensive than initially envisaged and has been a process that has taken time to establish the full extent of damage at each stage of the investigation and have that formally written off by the insurers.
- 3.3 Whilst it was originally envisaged that GLL would simply re-instate the damaged and lost facilities the extent of the damage has meant that there is an opportunity to reconsider and re-think the facilities and offer at Sobell. The Trampoline Park facility is now 5 years old and there were plans to re-fresh the offer to keep it current and this also needs to be considered in the context of an extremely challenging operating environment for GLL with the impacts of inflation, the rise in utility costs, the cost-of-living crisis and the impact of government austerity on Council budgets.
- 3.4 Throughout the last financial year, the Leisure contract has been impacted significantly by the disproportionate rise in utility costs, wider expenditure increases in staffing, materials, maintenance and chemicals as well as the growing impact that the rise in inflation is having on the community's disposable income. Islington is not alone in this struggle, the sector has made its plight known nationally and at ministerial level. The impact of this particularly in the management of pools is posing a major viability/affordability issue for local authority providers and in turn creates a serious threat to the future of the Leisure Sector as this impact is even greater than the financial impact of Covid.
- 3.5 **Ice Rink**
- The Ice Rink at the Sobell has been condemned and the full cost of the replacement rink and infrastructure is in excess of £1.8 million exc. vat, and this does not include fees.
- 3.6 The Ice rink operated at a deficit of £0.25 million per annum and this was in advance of the increases in utilities costs. The Ice rink market is being influenced in the wider context as there is a new double Olympic sized venue reopening at the Lee Valley Ice Centre this

summer. The Alexandra Palace Ice rink has also taken significant Sobell bookings and customers that may not return.

- 3.7 This forced closure and catastrophic damage has inevitably led to a loss of custom with people instead using the Alexandra Palace rink. The Lee Valley Centre will further absorb custom when it opens in the summer. Business analysis suggests that a re-instated ice rink which is much smaller than the other two competitive providers will not be able sustain improved usage and attendance levels. Sobell did have some benefit from the closure of Lee Valley during its makeover. However, the £0.250 million deficit per annum included this so it is very likely that the financial position would be worse if reinstated.
- 3.8 The ice rink is a high energy consumer and even with new facilities would continue to be so due to the nature of the activity. Energy costs have increased for the Leisure estate by 156% from £703,000 to £1.8 million. The £250,000 deficit only includes a third of a year with the higher utility costs, so a full operating year with the higher costs will mean a higher level of deficit. GLL manage the Lee Valley Ice Rink on behalf of the Lee Valley Regional Park and with its expansion will be able to negotiate some of the Sobell Ice rink usage being dispersed into its new programme so that the customers get an improved service offer. This was already being discussed as part of the mitigation for the current loss of the ice rink provision.
- 3.9 The Ice rink was a high consumer of energy by the very nature of it. With the very high costs of electricity this makes high energy consuming facilities difficult to be financially viable. There are also the environmental impacts of high energy consumption. The Ice arena was running on 593,216kWh load per year and therefore a carbon footprint of 125.23 tonnes being emitted per annum. This equates to about 70% of the total electricity consumption for the Sobell. The Council is committed to being a net zero borough by 2030. The Sobell already has a large solar array on the roof which helps to offset the carbon impact of the centre. Opportunities to increase the renewable element of the required electricity load are limited. To not re-instate the ice rink and provide a much lower power demand facility provides an opportunity to reduce the carbon footprint of the centre significantly. Under the contract with GLL the energy price rise cost is shared on a 50:50 basis with the Council so there is a direct financial cost to the Council.
- 3.10 When it was operative, the Ice rink attracted:
- 8 Clubs – 1 club is going back to Lee Valley (Lee Valley Ice Hockey)
 - Lesson & Course numbers – 302 Per week and Average monthly casual usage is 800 user visits per month which is less than 30 per day
 - GLL Employ Coaches - 5

The ice rink does have a long history and a core base of regular users, clubs and coaches that use the facility. An on-line petition has already been started to save the ice rink which has achieved 2,286 signatories at the time of this report.

3.8 Sports Hall and Trampoline Park New Options

The Sports Hall and Trampoline Park are having to be completely replaced and reinstated along with the steelwork to the mezzanine floor and central wall to the sports

hall. This means there is a potential opportunity of reorientating the layout of the sports hall and the trampoline park which would not require the reintroduction of the mezzanine floors by flipping the sports hall and the trampoline park over to the opposite side. This would create an opportunity of connecting the ice rink space and the trampoline park by creating a seamless transition on this side of the centre by connecting these two spaces to incorporate a different offer.

- 3.9 The Trampoline Park has welcomed 3 times the number of sports hall users since its introduction. It has predominantly attracted families and young people. To build on this success, GLL have proposed that the new Trampoline Park offer is adapted to combine a new attractive offer of a Trampoline Park, Inflatable zone, "Ninja Warrior" area and junior soft play so that there is a junior to teenage (including older teens) offer in this area that leads on from the toddler baby soft play zone. When looking at users by age, there was a notable decrease in the number of users aged 10-20, 54-58, and 65-86, compared to all other ages. The first group is particularly noticeable as the Sobell Centre should be able to provide engaging activities for younger people within this age bracket. The potential offer would look to target this specific under-represented age group.
- 3.10 Appended to this report is a layout proposal that is a combination of two companies that could make the Sobell Leisure Centre one of the UK's leading family sport and leisure facilities (Appendix 1). Any proposals would be subject to consultation and engagement.
- 3.11 Under these proposals the sports hall would then be reintroduced on the western side and would encompass a newly laid sprung floor and would make a clear delineation of sports activities on the western side of the centre and leisure trampoline /adventure soft play experience space activities on the eastern side. It would put Sobell back on the map and would re-energise the offer and make it a visitor attraction centre whilst maintaining its sporting and community offer. Creating more opportunities for families and under 5s in the expanded soft play zone then generates new families and more under 5s into the centres wider programme, so ancillary activities like holiday programmes gymnastics and junior programmes will all also increase. The proposals would also provide an improved offer for older children and teenagers with a number of the features aimed towards older children, including teenagers. The 10 to 20 age group has been identified as a group that are under-represented in usage of the Sobell and this offer is aimed to appeal specifically to that age group.

Alternative Options

- 3.12 The main alternative option would be to simply re-instate the facilities as before. There would be some options to do a smaller re-fresh of the Trampoline Park to incorporate the soft play offer into it and re-purpose the old soft play and make some alterations to the community sports offer which could be done following a period of stakeholder consultation. However, for the reasons set out in this report it is officers' view that the reinstatement of the ice rink is very unlikely to be a viable option because of the financial deficit that it operates at, the levels of usage in comparison to other offers and the carbon impact of the facility.
- 3.13 The usage levels in the existing trampoline park were up to 120 per hour whereas the new proposed area has the potential for 150-300 visits per hour and projections are based on overall usage increasing up to 250,000 user visits. The new proposals would therefore bring in 110,000 new user visits a year (an extra 2000 per week). The

alternative proposals would demonstrate a significant community benefit with affordable concessionary pricing access and fee-paying customers contributing to a significantly improved business plan.

- 3.14 There is potential that when the Council and GLL engage and consult with users it may be proposed that there would be an option to re-instate the sports hall back to its original 16 court size. This is not an option that is viable for the Council to consider for two principal reasons. To re-instate the full sports hall would result in a significant reduction in visitor numbers as the previous Trampoline Park attracted far more users than the previous sports hall space. It would also be a huge financial cost to the Council as the Trampoline Park generated significantly more revenue than the half of the sports hall and so any proposals would need to generate at least the equivalent amount of income to be sustainable and restoring the full 16 court sports hall would not do that. Therefore, that is not being proposed as a viable option in the consultation.
- 3.15 Prior to the flood at Sobell Leisure Centre, the Council, GLL and Whittington Health have been in dialogue about moving the Neurological Rehabilitation Unit into the centre from their current premises to free up space to enable a wider Council development to proceed. The Council would still like to see that proceed given the clear links to early intervention and prevention in using physical activity to support people with long term health conditions in their recovery, this would be absorbed into the old soft play area.
- 3.16 With the introduction of more young people to the centre it would also like to provide more on- site youth engagement programmes through consultation and GLL would like to expand the capacity of this offer.

3.16 **Benefits and Social Value of Proposals**

In the recently adopted Islington Active Together Strategy the Council's vision is to empower our communities to be more physically active. The Strategy sets out three guiding principles:

- Focussing our resources on the residents who are least active and empowering them to become more active.
- Challenging inequalities in access to, and participation in, physical activity. The service will focus on children and young people and the groups who are traditionally less likely to be physically active, including people living with a disability or long-term health conditions, Black, Asian and minority ethnic communities, women and girls, older adults and people living in areas of higher deprivation.
- Recognising the powerful impact that physical activity can have in preventing and managing a range of long-term health conditions, including supporting good mental health.

- 3.17 The proposals that are set out in this paper for the Sobell Leisure Centre are guided very much by these principles. The introduction of the trampoline park demonstrated the vital role that more informal leisure offers are to increasing usage levels and drawing in new audiences. A formal sports offer does not appeal to all and making physical activity fun is critical in breaking down barriers, particularly for children and young people in being more

physically active. The proposals could see a rise in usage levels of 250,000 people a year with a majority being the key target group of young people. It also has a broader appeal to a much wider demographic group enabling a much broader range of people to access physical activity.

- Islington's School's health and wellbeing team conducted online surveys and focus groups with 706 local girls, they found that the girls want fun activities, things they don't try in school. Most of all they enjoy being active with friends. The new products provide an ideal opportunity for targeted activity for secondary school girls and local youth clubs.
 - GLL could provide targeted sessions to support people with disabilities to utilise the products. This would involve partnership work with local schools, Disability Sports Coach, Centre 404, Elfrida Society and more. The estimated number of Islington residents with a disability in 2021 is 36,656 or 15% of the population.
 - As of 2019 Finsbury Park was the most deprived ward in Islington. In addition to low-cost pricing GLL could work with local partners to ensure there are opportunities available for low-income families during term time and the school holidays. This would include schools, children's centres, Access to Sports, food banks and the local youth hubs.
 - Sobell Leisure Centre would provide opportunities for local schools, nurseries and children's centres to use the products. This will help improve health, wellbeing and educational outcomes for pupils, with a particular emphasis on the least active children and girls.
 - Sport England's Active Lives Survey of Young People for the academic year 2021/22 states 42.7% of 5–16-year-olds in Islington were active, which is less than the London average of 45.3%, and 36.4% were inactive, which is above than the London average of 32.7%.
 - The proposed new facilities could support young people in Islington to be more active. There are 69,259 people aged 0-15 within 9 minutes travel of Sobell Leisure Centre.
 - There were an estimated 12,220 children aged 0 to 4 years living in Islington in 2020/21 (Bright Start 2022). A higher percentage of these children live in the North and Central localities (39% and 37% respectively) compared to the South (24%).
 - It is clear that children and families would benefit significantly in terms of improvement and focus on reducing childhood obesity, improving mental health, providing access to all in order to mitigate established trends in health outcomes within specific populations and demographics.
- 3.18 This project talks directly to the Council's ambition to give its young people the best start in life, as outlined within the most recent health and wellbeing strategy for children. GLL will ensure it prioritises and focuses on these priorities and widen the focus on target groups to include e.g., looked after children, those with long term conditions and those with extreme healthcare needs This proposal creates larger routes into employment and increased abilities to offer career pathways, training, and development such as apprenticeship schemes and improved employment rates within Islington. Comparing the required working hours between the offers, there will be a potential additional 300 hours a week to be employed into. Providing, typically 20 new placements both full and part time within the facility.

3.19 Insurance Constraints.

The timing of the decision making on this is particularly important due to the critical path of the works to Sobell Leisure Centre. The extent of damage is now significantly more than initially envisaged. It has taken longer to scope and define. The investigatory works have revealed significant structural and foundation disrepair. This has resulted in the rink being taken back to a bare bone shell.

- 3.20 A detailed defined cost for re-instatement and a full scope of works. Is now available. There have been significant inroads made on the enabling phase of works across all of the ground floor damaged areas and the team now need to plan for the redesign as soon as possible without aborting works and leaving the site dormant. The cost to reinstate the ice rink has now been detailed at £1.8m excluding VAT and excluding fees and placing an order of this scale and specialism is always subject to risk due to parts and supply chains being so specialist.
- 3.21 Any decision making about the revised proposals needs to be carried out within the context of the insurance claim. The Council and GLL will be claiming from our insurers who will then seek to recover those costs from Thames Water's insurers. The insurers have agreed in principle that they will pay for alternative facilities to be installed rather than to re-instate what was there if that is now no longer considered viable or appropriate. However, the costs of that must be no more than it would be to reinstate and not take any longer. The Project team have now established what the full reinstatement costs would be and the timelines for doing that along with the timelines for an alternative offer.
- 3.22 To reinstate the ice rink would take 44 weeks. To implement the revised proposals would be 28 weeks. This is a 16-week difference. So, this allows just over 3 months to consult and decide in order to stay within the insurance limitations. The window for a decision to be made has been agreed with the insurers as the 6th of April which was the point at which the Council would have been ready to place an order if the decision was to re-instate having had all the quotation and enabling works information from its principal contractor. This takes us to the 26th of July as the point by which a decision on any alternative proposals needs to be made. The construction period is then 28 weeks.
- 3.22 A consultation and engagement plan has been developed for a 6-week period to try and balance the need to have a meaningful engagement period but to still manage that within the insurance window. If the Council can stay within that then the costs of the intervention are covered by insurance and there is no cost to the Council.

6th April – Insurance window of 16 weeks commenced.

10th May – Executive report published on decision to not re-instate the ice rink

18th May – Executive Committee decision

25th May – call in period ends

26th May – Launch of consultation and engagement

7th July – End of consultation

25th July – Key Decision on outcome of the consultation

26th July – end of insurance window and issuing of instructions to design team

28th February 24 – Final completion of all the works.

3.23 Consultation & Engagement

A consultation and communications plan alongside an engagement plan has been put together to ensure that key stakeholder organisations and target groups are engaged. There will be a particular focus on families, children and young people. There will be an on-line survey open to all that will be hosted on the Let's Talk Islington Engagement site. This will be the main tool we use to gather data and will have a mix of quantitative and free text questions. A URL / QR code linking to the survey will be added to the main information flyers which will be distributed throughout leisure centres and other community locations. Limited hard copies will be available in leisure centres and libraries for people who are not able to access the digital site and want to share their thoughts. We will also distribute flyers with the QR codes to local schools (e.g., Pakeman) and faith centres (e.g., Finsbury Park Mosque).

- 3.24 There will be targeted engagement sessions onsite with key current user groups. This will be a mix of specific hosted sessions and drop in's to scheduled activities to speak to current users and publicise the survey. There will of course be specific engagement sessions with the ice rink users about how to best mitigate any impacts.
- 3.25 Thirdly there would be targeted outreach sessions with current non-users and key target groups, particularly to include young people (particularly teenagers) and older people and those with disabilities.
- 3.26 We will do targeted survey outreach in community settings to reach these groups, making use of May half term activities on estates to reach young people and going to spaces such as GP surgeries. We will also focus on the immediate catchment of people who could benefit from the space, such as the Harvist and Andover Estates, for example by going to the Friday food project drop in at the Andover community centre.
- 3.27 The consultation and engagement exercise will focus on the proposed new offer at the Sobell to obtain feedback on the proposals and to shape and influence the final offer. It will also seek views about the proposed non-retention of the ice rink. GLL have worked with a number of companies to produce a proposal to evolve the previous Trampoline Park offer with a new offer that provides a single space experience with the old ice rink and the sports hall space to create a family experience from 0 to 19 involving an expanded soft play offer, slides, 'ninja warrior', inflatables and trampolines. The proposal is not a final design and there will be a final design that will incorporate the feedback. The consultation will also focus on the future opportunities for programming and new activities including opportunities to expand the boxing offer and the potential to provide new capacity and opportunities for new sports. One of those options will be to explore the potential to increase outdoor pitch provision around the grounds of the centre. Questions will focus around views on the proposed designs, what additional services or activities people want to see, how the centre can be made more accessible for different groups.

3.28 Discussions are continuing with GLL as the operator of the Lee Valley Ice Centre around the potential to absorb the clubs and lessons and courses into their new programme and the question of discounts will be raised. GLL are confident that lessons and courses can be easily absorbed. There will need to be discussions with the clubs around their programming needs and how they can potentially be accommodated into the new programme at the centre. The Council is keen to secure some level of discount for Sobell ice rink members at the new facility and are in active discussions about that. It should be noted that the centre is owned by Lee Valley Regional Park Authority not GLL and so any concessions would have to be agreed with them.

3.29 Elections

The Sobell Centre is the venue used for Election Counts which take place on the sports courts. The next scheduled elections in Islington are the Greater London Authority (GLA) elections which will be taking place on Thursday 2 May 2024. It is not known when the date of the next Parliamentary General election will be however it will be called by January 2025, therefore there is a possibility that it could be held on the same day as the GLA elections. While the Sobell Centre is the preferred venue, particularly for Parliamentary elections due to the location of the venue and the balcony space for media and broadcasters there is an alternative count venue which is the Islington Tennis Centre on Market Road. If the Sobell Leisure Centre wasn't available and the Council did use the Islington Tennis Centre it would be unlikely that it would be able to accommodate any broadcasters due to the outside space for broadcasting kit and vehicles and venue access points.

4. Implications

4.1 Financial Implications

The Sobell Centre Ice Rink suffered a major flood as a direct result of a Thames Water Mains bursting on Tollington Road in August 2022. The capital costs of re-instating the ice rink would be covered by the insurers (capped at £1.8M), however the operating costs would remain with GLL and the Council.

Prior to the flood, the ice rink was operating at a deficit of £250,000 per annum. Further factors affecting the viability of the ice rink are;

- Increasing energy costs that make such a facility uneconomical, particularly as the energy price rise risk is shared 50:50 with the Council.
- The changing market, in particular the opening of a brand-new facility in Lea Valley ice centre which is within relatively close proximity.

It is therefore very likely that if the Council was to re-instate the ice rink, then;

- The operating deficit would be higher than it was.

- The cost-of-living crisis would make it a more challenging trading environment for GLL to be able to support and sustain the current business position.
- If the ice rink continued to be economically unsustainable, the Council may not have the financial resources to maintain the offer.

GLL pay an annual rent to the Council. During lockdown, the Council deferred rental payments to support GLL through that period. That deferred rent is £2.76 million and GLL only pays this back to the Council when the contract can move to a surplus position. If the Sobell Centre continues to operate with such a significant operating loss, then GLL will be unable to return to that position. It is anticipated that the alternative proposals are likely to improve the business plan by reducing expenditure and significantly increasing usage and therefore income. Any surpluses that would be achieved would be a payment to Council until the deferred rent was repaid.

The costs of any new proposals would be covered by the insurers, as long as any proposals cost no more and take no longer than if the Council was to simply re-instate the rink. This therefore provides the Council with a unique opportunity to review the viability of the current provision and to cover the costs of providing something different.

The constraints of the insurance though, do mean that the decision has to be made within a particular window as set out in the body of the report. If the Council was to move outside of that time period, then there would be a financial risk to the Council as the insurers would no longer indemnify the Council for the loss of rent, or GLL for the loss of income. There would also be inflationary cost increases that the insurers would not cover. The exact financial risk to the Council is not possible at this stage to calculate, as it would involve a complex discussion with the insurers and GLL around the level of liability.

4.2 Legal Implications / Consultation

The council has a statutory power but not a duty to provide leisure centres. That power, which is set out in section 19 of the Local Government (Miscellaneous Powers) Act 1976, enables the council to 'provide, inside or outside its area, such recreational facilities as it thinks fit and, without prejudice to the generality of the powers conferred by the preceding provisions of this subsection, those powers include in particular powers to provide—

(a) indoor facilities consisting of sports centres, swimming pools, skating rinks, tennis, squash and badminton courts, bowling centres, dance studios and riding schools;'

There is no statutory duty under the 1976 Act to consult residents / users when proposing changes to introducing or changing the existing recreational facilities. Further, there is no statutory guidance that requires consultation to be undertaken.

Leisure contract

Under the leisure contract, GLL are responsible for implementing the capital works programme in respect of the leisure centres. GLL may change the programme but only

with the council's consent in accordance with the Approval Procedure (clause 95 and Schedule 26 Part 3).

The Council and GLL are required to comply with the Liaison Procedure (see clause 47 and Schedule 9). This provides for the establishment of the Project Liaison Group whose functions include providing 'a forum for joint strategic discussion and consideration of all aspects with regard to this Agreement including ensuring dissemination of information and consideration of the views of all the stakeholders connected with the Works and Services'. Whilst 'stakeholders' are not defined, the Authority's Requirements in Schedule 1 refer, in the context of the Annual Service Plan, to 'Current stakeholders are to include at least; Leisure Officers, ProActive Islington, Children and Young Peoples officers, Public Health, Access 2 Sports, Arsenal FC Community Development Team, key clubs based at the Facility and School Sports Partnership Sport Islington key schools'.

The Authority's Requirements require GLL to be /act as the Authority's leisure partner and deliver the Services both at the Facilities and outside in the community that have effective stakeholder and partner collaboration across the Borough's sport and physical activity sector to achieve wider outcomes.

GLL method statement 2.1 Increasing Participation and Sports Development refers, amongst other matters to 'Customer forums/focus groups - help GLL gain a deeper understanding of the local community, allowing us to tailor products and services to their needs.' which suggests consultation with those groups to get their views on proposed new services.

The GLL method statement on the upkeep of the leisure centres state:

'Requirements for lifecycle renewal and replacement will be identified through a number of sources of information including

- The existing backlog of maintenance work
- Best practice and manufactures recommendations
- Monitoring and measurement activities
- Consultation and communication with key stakeholders including the Council'

Reference is also made to 'Customer consultation on major refurbishments and new builds'.

GLL is required to comply with their service delivery proposals (clause 12) and the above extracts from those proposals illustrate their commitment to consulting customers / stakeholders regarding the facilities / services provided or to be provided at the centres.

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

The ice rink is a high energy demand facility. The energy load of the ice rink is 593,216kWh load per year and therefore a carbon footprint of 125.23 tonnes being emitted per annum. This equates to about 70% of the total electricity consumption for the Sobell By changing the offer it would support the Council's ability to reduce the carbon footprint and enable more of the centre's energy needs to be met through renewable sources.

4.4 Equalities 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.

An Equalities Impact Assessment has been completed, see Appendix 2. There would be both positive and negative impacts from the proposed changes. The main negative impacts from the proposed closure of the ice rink are the impact on the large portion of female users (72%) and in particular, young females, with 52% being 30 or under. The main positives are that the proposed changes to the Sobell Leisure Centre generate significantly increased usage of the leisure facilities and provide a broad and inclusive offer for young people, and inactive young people in particular. The Sobell Leisure centre changes include the expansion of two existing services namely the Trampoline Park and the soft play and the omission of the Ice Rink. The activities being proposed will appeal to a wider range of people than the ice rink, and the scale and reach of an expanded soft play will attract more families and the revised facilities would increase the offer for young people aged five to nineteen. The proposed changes would in summary include an array of reduced cost and free access times throughout the year with concessionary reduced pricing accessibility in holiday times, weekends and after school times as well as allow for schools and group access. There is also a recognition that Sobell would need to provide some more youth access times and develop some targeted youth sport at the centre and create a Youth sports evening.

If it's confirmed that the ice rink does not re-open then mitigation will be required through the absorption of the lessons and courses at the Lee Valley Ice Centre, operated by GLL along with programmed time for the clubs to be able to relocate. The Council is also negotiating the potential of discounts for the clubs and ice members at the Sobell.

5 Conclusion and reasons for recommendations

- 5.1 The financial costs of operating the ice rink at a significant deficit are not considered to be sustainable particularly in the context of high utility prices and high levels of inflation along with the changing ice offer with the opening of the Lee Valley Ice Centre.
- 5.2 The ice rink has a significant carbon footprint of 125 tonnes of carbon per year. Not re-instating the ice rink would save a significant level of carbon and enable renewable options to cover more of the utility load for the centre enabling the centre to move closer towards a net zero carbon position.
- 5.3 Usage levels of the ice rink are relatively low in comparison with the potential increases in usage levels of alternative facilities that are appealing to a broader range of users and have increased capacity. This would support the Council's strategic objective to get more inactive residents active, in particular, but not exclusively, children and teenagers.
- 5.4 It is not considered economically viable for the Council to continue to operate an ice rink and the consultation and engagement exercise will be clear that this is not considered a likely option but to seek people's views regarding that and to shape and influencing the alternative proposals and the activities and programmes that could take place in a newly restored Sobell Leisure Centre.
- 5.5 The recommendation is that the Council is strongly minded to not re-instate the ice rink and to consult on that and on the Council's preferred alternative provisions. This alternative offer increases levels of usage and physical activity, is more sustainable and provides a better financial position in the challenging economic circumstances. The outcome of the consultation and the recommendations for the final proposals are recommended to be a key decision for the Corporate Director of Resources following consultation with the Executive Member for Health and Social Care.

Appendices:

- Appendix 1 – GLL Proposal for Soft Play and Tramp/Air Park Sobell
- Appendix 2 – Equality Impact Assessment Sobell Proposals

Final report clearance:

Signed by:

Councillor Nurullah Turan, Executive Member for Health and Social Care

Date: 02/05/23

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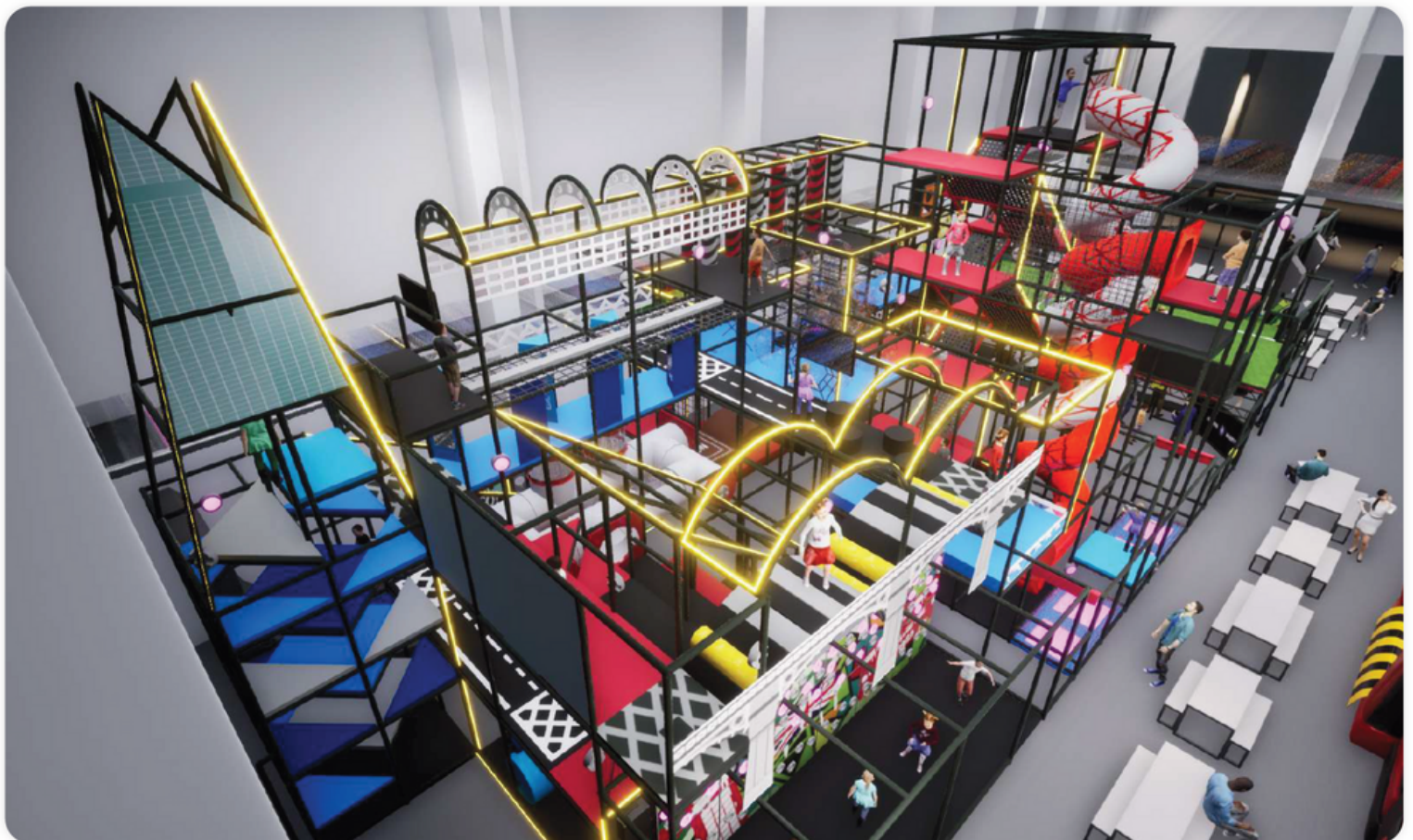
E-mail: Marie.Rosenthal@islington.gov.uk

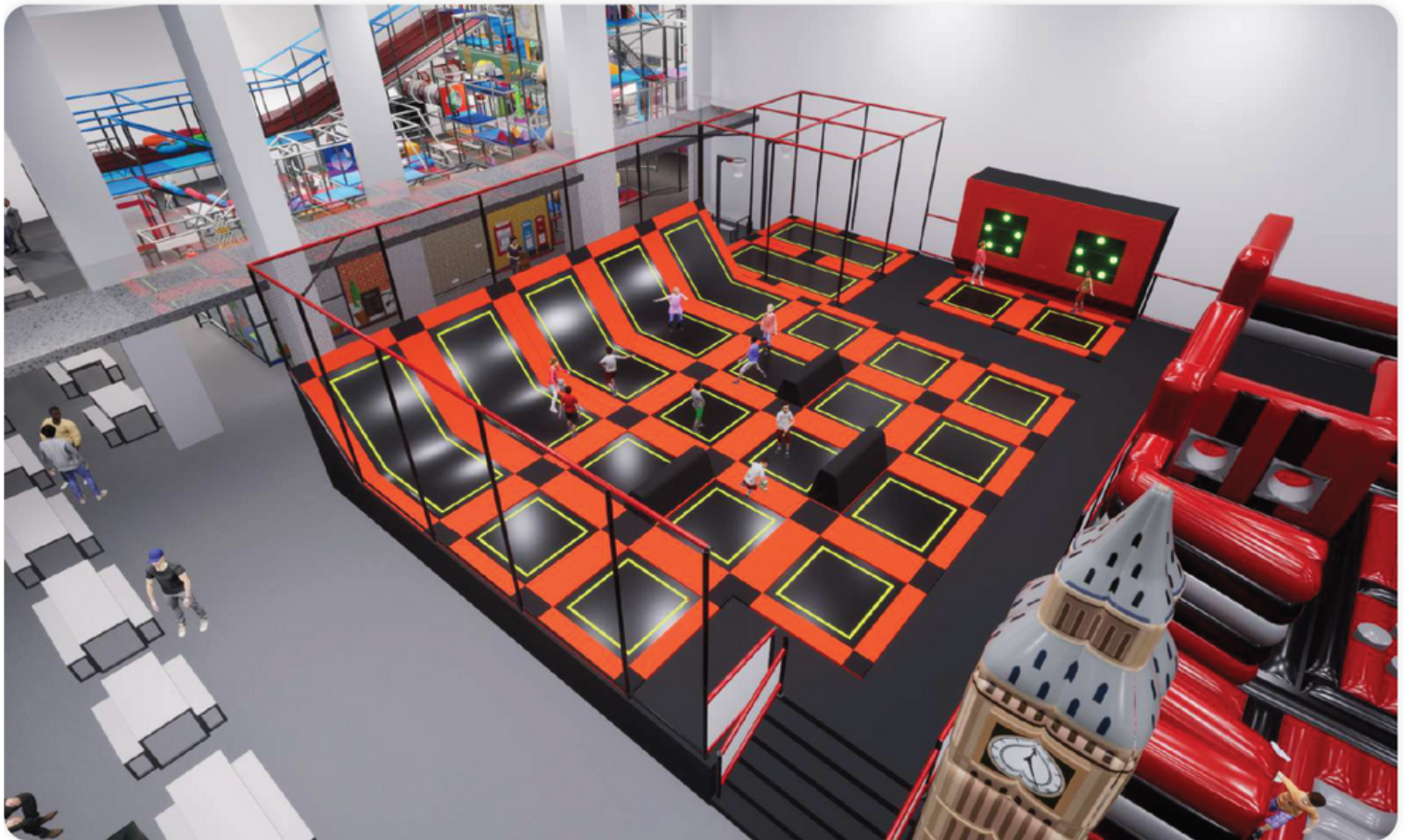
Financial Implications Author: Donna Davis

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Equalities Impact Assessment: Full Assessment

Before completing this form you should have completed an Equalities Screening Tool and had sign off from your Head of Service and the Fairness and Equality Team.

This Equality Impact Assessment should be completed where the Screening Tool identifies a potentially negative impact on one or more specific groups but it can also be used to highlight positive impacts.

Summary of proposal

Name of proposal	Leisure Contract Changes - Sobell Leisure Centre
Reference number (if applicable)	
Service Area	Environment
Date assessment completed	03/05/23

Before completing the EQIA please read the guidance and FAQs. For further help and advice please contact equalities@islington.gov.uk.

1. Please provide a summary of the proposal.

Please provide:

- Context on how the service currently operates (if relevant) and the scope of suggested changes
- The intended beneficiaries and outcomes of the proposal
- Reference to any savings or income generation

The Leisure sector has been significantly affected by Covid and more latterly by the increases in energy costs and rising inflation. These more recent impacts are even more telling on the service as throughout Covid there was Government financial support.

In August 2022 Sobell leisure Centre suffered a major flood as a direct result of a Thames Water Mains bursting on Tollington Road, which has affected the entire ground floor of the Leisure Centre. This flood has caused major damage to the facilities and services on offer at the centre and both LBI and GLL have been engaging contractors and specialists in immediate remediation and in consultation with the insurers are developing a plan for reinstatement.

All the facilities/equipment and fixtures and fittings at Sobell including the sports hall sports floor, trampoline park and the ice rink, squash courts, soft play area have all been condemned and written off and have been completely stripped out, including the full height central steelwork partition wall. There is therefore an opportunity of revisiting the services on offer at the centre to deliver innovation that will improve the energy efficiency of the building and generate increased activity levels, attract a more diverse audience, and make the centre more financially viable.

The leisure sector is very fluid and requires an ability to respond to changing customer needs and innovation, therefore it is particularly opportune to reassess the service offer at Sobell leisure centre. As an example, the introduction of the trampoline park in 2018 generated three times the user levels from the previous sport hall user base.

LBI and GLL are minded not to reinstate the ice rink for a number of reasons. The ice rink makes a significant loss of £250,000 per annum and this is before having had a full year's worth of financial impact from the energy price increases as the flood took place in August. The proposed new facilities would be less expensive to run and we estimate that they would generate a surplus, which in turn would enable us to continue to support concessionary prices and a community sports offer. The ice rink also generates relatively low levels of usage in comparison with other facilities at the Sobell, and this will be impacted by increased competition. This is also with the understanding that there is an increase in ice rink availability and competition at the new Lee Valley Leisure Centre, which is opening two Olympic-sized rinks. This increased provision elsewhere also has a bearing on the future offer, as customers can attend the temporary ice rinks that have been developed over the last decade at high footfall areas such as Somerset House. These other ice rinks are financially viable as they are only temporary and offer a themed experience in unique settings around the festive periods.

Please provide:

- Context on how the service currently operates (if relevant) and the scope of suggested changes
- The intended beneficiaries and outcomes of the proposal
- Reference to any savings or income generation

The ice rink is also a high energy consumer at over 500,000 Kwh. This accounts for 70% of the total electricity consumption for the Sobell and equates to 123 tonnes of carbon a year.

We are therefore proposing to use the space in a different way and maximise the opportunity by introducing an activity that reduces energy consumption and provides increased levels of physical activity and to increase the scale and size of the offer. This is by connecting the sports hall area behind this with the now vacant ice rink space and develop a new, major state-of-the-art combined trampoline park/soft play and inflatable facility. Currently there is a soft play and trampoline park but in separate locations. It is also proposed to move the sports hall to the other side of the arena to enable this to take place.

There is a time pressure on deciding around these proposals. This is because the re-instatement of the centre cannot be completed until a decision has been made on the proposals and the Council is keen to consult with its local community and users on their views. There are also financial constraints as there is a limited timeline imposed by the insurance claim.

The most recent usage levels of the ice rink prior to the flood damage were 475 people per week broken down into lessons and courses in the learn-to-skate programme and casual usage and club usage including seven clubs, which is 68 people per day on average. The ice rink has a longstanding history, and this has served its local community for many generations. There is a petition that has generated support for the rink.

The make-up of the ice rink users is 74.2% female and 24.8% male. It attracted 15,500 user visits, whereas the existing trampoline park attracted 96,000 user visits a year, which had a capacity of 120 people per hour. The new proposed soft play and trampoline park adventure space area could increase usage up to 300 participants per hour, taking the anticipated projected usage levels up to 250,000 (these projections are based on the designed capacity of the facilities and corresponding estimates based on the operating hours). The existing soft play customers and trampoline park customers would be consulted as well as the ice rink customers about the proposals and include programming opportunities to ensure equality of access is achieved across the calendar year.

The ice rink market is being influenced in the wider context as there is a new double Olympic-sized venue reopening at the Lee Valley Leisure Centre in the next month and Alexandra Palace Ice Rink also absorbed a lot of its bookings and customers that may not return

The projections are based on overall usage increasing to 250,000 user visits per annum, an extra 110,000. This usage would be made up of young people and families with a range of ages due to the variety of the offer. We expect that there will be a broader reach into our local

Please provide:

- Context on how the service currently operates (if relevant) and the scope of suggested changes
- The intended beneficiaries and outcomes of the proposal
- Reference to any savings or income generation

community by providing this new exciting offer that will supersede the trampoline park and connect the centre with multi-generational attendance due to its family nature.

The demographic profile of the ice rink users shown below shows that it is a facility that is used significantly by females at 74%, (compared to the male membership profile at 52%) with the highest age proportion being females aged between 10 and 20. 52% of female users are 30 or younger. The Council currently does not have data for disabled users. It is recognised that the ice rink does have an appeal to female users in particular in greater portions than the membership profile. Any decisions on new proposals should take this into account. They would have much greater capacity to increase the actual numbers from these groups as well as the user numbers of the ice rink are much lower than other facilities.

Islington has developed an Islington Active Together Strategy and at its core is targeting inactive communities and making them active. This proposal reaches out to a wider audience and will engage people in physical activity in a different way than the traditional sporting approach. Traditional, competitive team sports are a barrier for many young people, especially girls. In order to get a greater range and number of people active then facilities need to offer, fun, inclusive and engaging activities to break those barriers down and encourage regular activity. It will also engage inter-generational families in the visit as well and will introduce sections of the community into a leisure centre that would not normally attend. The proposed offer has facilities for 0 to 19 all in one space. The offer is also not exclusive to young people, it has an appeal for adults as well for families to take part in physical activity together. There would be programmes to give access to the facilities to older people and disabled groups in specific targeted sessions. As part of the consultation the Council will seek to tease out additional activities that would be appealing to these audiences and will specifically do some direct targeted consultation with families and young people in the neighbouring estates.

2. What impact will this change have on different groups of people?

Please consider:

- Whether the impact will predominantly be external or internal, or both?
- Who will be impacted – residents, service users, local communities, staff, or others?
- Broadly what will the impact be – reduced access to facilities or disruptions to journeys for example?

If the proposals are adopted, then Sobell ice rink users will be displaced to the Lee Valley Centre and Alexandra Palace. When Lee Valley centre reopens this summer as it will have double the capacity that it previously had in a newly built and appealing facility. GLL, our leisure management operator, will create an opportunity for existing ice users to access this new facility; for example, customers on our learn-to-skate programme can be transferred into the new centre. New users will be attracted by the proposal; existing trampoline park and soft play users will have improved and enhanced facilities.

Islington leisure centres attract about two million user visits per year. This is made up of local and transient communities, which has reduced since Covid. The impact of a fluctuating transient workforce is having an impact on the return to these numbers. This proposal seeks to increase usage in another way that is less impacted by that return and more reliant on a young people family-centred offer that is less influenced by the impact of the work from home issue.

Our centres are open seven days a week with extensive operating hours and attract a range of diverse communities. This level of uptake is enhanced by an extensive concessionary pricing regime that is controlled by the Council. This price differentiation enables access to services for all and this will be translated into the new service offer proposed ensuring families on low income have access to quality services in one of the most deprived wards in the borough.

Trampoline Park usage was 96,000 visits last year, soft play was 25,000 and the ice rink was 15,000. The combined new offer proposed would attract 250,000 visits, which is over double what was previously being provided by the combined total of trampoline park and soft play. We also anticipate that with this increase that it will have a knock-on impact on our wider programmes for young people and families and would like to gauge this through our consultation. There is also an impact on the health suite that provides sauna and steam facilities. This is proposed to be closed to free up space to create room to accommodate the wider changes. This facility can be mitigated by providing this service at five of our other leisure centres. Uptake was low and the facility needed a significant amount of investment. This area was not impacted by the flood so there were no funds to replace or refurbish. Neighbouring facilities at Highbury and Archway can absorb local custom and facilities at Ironmonger Row Baths, Islington Tennis Centre and Cally Pool can pick up custom further afield.

Sobell leisure centre was designed as a destination centre attracting local and regional usage. This proposed change builds on this and will provide Islington and its community with a unique service offer.

3. What impact will this change have on people with protected characteristics and/or from disadvantaged groups?

This section of the assessment looks in detail at the likely impacts of the proposed changes on different sections of our diverse community.

3A. What data have you used to assess impacts?

Please provide:

- Details of the evidence used to assess impacts on people with protected characteristics and from disadvantaged groups (see guidance for help)
- A breakdown of service user demographics where possible
- Brief interpretation of findings

A formal sports offer does not appeal to all and making physical activity fun is critical in breaking down barriers, particularly for children and young people in being more physically active, especially girls and disabled young people. The proposals would see a rise in usage levels up to 250,000 people a year with a majority being the key target group of young people. It also has a broader appeal to a much wider demographic group enabling a much broader range of people to access physical activity.

- Islington schools' health and wellbeing team conducted online surveys and focus groups with 706 local girls. They found that the girls want fun activities, things they do not try in school. Most of all they enjoy being active with friends. The top three activities in the survey were swimming, fitness/gym and netball. The new products provide an ideal opportunity for targeted activity for secondary school girls and local youth clubs.
- GLL will provide targeted sessions to support people with disabilities to utilise the products. This will involve partnership work with local schools, Disability Sports Coach, Centre 404, Elfrida Society and more. The estimated number of Islington residents with a disability is 16% of the population (Fairer Together: A strategy for early prevention and intervention in Islington). 1,224 residents have a learning disability. (Office for Health Improvement and Disparities Public Health profiles)
- Sobell Leisure Centre will provide opportunities for local schools, nurseries, and children centres to use the products. This will help improve health, wellbeing, and educational outcomes for pupils, with a particular emphasis on the least active children and girls.

Please provide:

- Details of the evidence used to assess impacts on people with protected characteristics and from disadvantaged groups (see guidance for help)
 - A breakdown of service user demographics where possible
 - Brief interpretation of findings
- Sport England's Active Lives Survey of Young People for the academic year 2021/22 states 42.7% of 5–16-year-olds in Islington were active, which is less than the London average of 45.3%, and 36.4% were inactive, which is above the London average of 32.7%.
 - The new products would support young people in Islington to be more active. There are 69,259 people aged 0-15 within nine minutes travel of Sobell Leisure Centre.
 - There were an estimated 12,220 children aged 0 to 4 years living in Islington in 2020/21 (Bright Start 2022). A higher percentage of these children live in the North and Central localities (39% and 37% respectively) compared to the South (24%).
 - Children and families would benefit significantly in terms of improvement and focus on reducing childhood obesity, improving mental health, providing access to all to mitigate established trends in health outcomes within specific populations and demographics.

The ethnic profile of users and members of both the Sobell and the ice is representative of the borough profile.

32% of residents were in Black Asian and other Ethnic Groups and 20% of residents were in "Other White" in 2021, compared to 32% and 17%, respectively, in 2011. "Other White" consists of Caucasian people from Europe, America, Africa and Asia and Oceania. White Gypsy and Traveller groups were also included in the "Other White" category.

The proportion of Islington residents of Mixed and Asian or Asian British ethnicity slightly increased from 2011 to 2021 (from 6% to 7% and 9% to 10%, respectively), the proportion of residents of Black or Black British ethnicity slightly decreased, from 13% to 12%. Children growing up in Black Asian and other Ethnic Groups households in Islington are more likely to be living in poverty in comparison to white children.










According to the 2021 census Islington has a Muslim population of 25,840 which is 11.9% of the population. Finsbury Ward has a higher proportion at 15.9% (OCSI Insight data)

It will be essential to ensure that the new proposals and facilities are accessible and appeal to people in those communities. These communities are less active compared to white residents, the latest Sport England Active Lives survey for November 22 showed the portion of Black residents as active at 56% and Asian residents at 55% in comparison to 64% for White British.

Please provide:

- Details of the evidence used to assess impacts on people with protected characteristics and from disadvantaged groups (see guidance for help)
- A breakdown of service user demographics where possible
- Brief interpretation of findings

Finsbury Park Ward Data – based on [Local Insights Profile](#)

 Population	<p>There are 18,208 people living in Finsbury Park</p> <p>See pages 4-9 for more information on population by age and gender, ethnicity, country of birth, language, migration, household composition and religion</p>	 Education & skills	<p>21% of people have no qualifications in Finsbury Park compared with 17% across Islington</p> <p>See pages 46-48 for more information on qualifications, pupil attainment and early years educational progress</p>
 Vulnerable groups	<p>23% of children aged 0-19 are in relative low-income families in Finsbury Park compared with 19% across Islington</p> <p>See pages 10-23 for more information on children in poverty, people out of work, people in deprived areas, disability, pensioners and other vulnerable groups</p>	 Economy	<p>40% people aged 16-74 are in full-time employment in Finsbury Park compared with 42% across Islington</p> <p>See pages 49-55 for more information on people's jobs, job opportunities, income and local businesses</p>
 Housing	<p>3% of households lack central heating in Finsbury Park compared with 3% across Islington</p> <p>See pages 24-33 for more information on dwelling types, housing tenure, affordability, overcrowding, age of dwelling and communal establishments</p>	 Access & transport	<p>69% of households have no car in Finsbury Park compared with 65% across Islington</p> <p>See pages 56-58 for more information on transport, distances services and digital services</p>
 Crime & safety	<p>The overall crime rate is lower than the average across Islington</p> <p>See pages 34-35 for more information on recorded crime and crime rates</p>	 Communities & environment	<p>The % of people 'satisfied with their neighbourhood' (77.1%) is similar to the average across Islington (77.1%)</p> <p>See pages 59-66 for more information on neighbourhood satisfaction, the types of neighbourhoods locally, local participation and the environment, air pollution</p>
 Health & wellbeing	<p>18% of people have a limiting long-term illness in Finsbury Park compared with 16% across Islington</p> <p>See pages 36-45 for more information on limited long-term illness, life expectancy and mortality, general health and healthy lifestyles</p>	Appendix A	<p>Page 67 for information on the geographies used in this report, publication dates for new indicators and acknowledgements.</p>

GLL user data

The users of the Sobell Centre **are representative** of the wider Islington population, comprised of 56% White users, 22% Black and Black British. 13% Asian and Asian British, 7% Mixed and 3% Other.

The sex of the users is also representative, at around 51% male, 47% female and 2% prefer not to say.

Users **are primarily local**, with 48% of users coming from Islington. Residents from neighbouring boroughs such as Haringey, Camden, and Hackney also use the centre and make up 16%, 13%, and 7% of users respectively.

When looking at **usage by home centre**, we can also see that users of the Sobell Centre also attend other neighbouring gyms. The **most popular neighbouring gyms**, who's users also attend the Sobell Centre, are Highbury Leisure Centre, and Archway Leisure Centre.

Please provide:

- Details of the evidence used to assess impacts on people with protected characteristics and from disadvantaged groups (see guidance for help)
- A breakdown of service user demographics where possible
- Brief interpretation of findings

Placing flyers, or leaflets regarding the refurbishment of the Sobell Centre in these centres will be useful as the numbers are not high enough to warrant active engagement but are high enough that these users should be informed.

Non-users – who else could be benefitting from these facilities who don't currently?

When looking at users by age, there was a notable decrease in the number of users aged 10-20, 54-58, and 65-86, compared to all other ages. The first group is particularly noticeable as the Sobell Centre should be able to provide engaging activities for younger people within this age bracket.

There also appears to be a significant lack of visually impaired people that attend the Centre. Of all disabled users of the Sobell Centre, only 1% are classed to have a visual impairment. However, 16% of disabled users are classed as having 'multiple impairments' which may encompass visual impairment. Despite this, it points to the Sobell Centre potentially lacking facilities that are friendly for visually impaired users.

Prepaid membership of Sobell leisure centre:

- Gender. Male 53%; female 46%; not stated 1%
- Ethnicity. White 51%; Black/African/Caribbean/Black British 20%, other ethnic group 13%, Asian/Asian British 8%, Mixed 8%
- Age. 0-10 1%; 11-20 6%; 21-30 22%; 31-40 27%; 41-50 17%; 51-60 16%; 61+ 11%

Usage of ice rink:

- Gender. Male 25%; female 74%; not stated 1%
- Ethnicity. White 40%; Black/African/Caribbean/Black British 23%, other ethnic group 20%, Asian/Asian British 8%, Mixed 9%
- Age. 0-10 23%; 11-20 27%; 21-30 18%; 31-40 15%; 41-50 9%; 51-60 6%; 61+ 2%³

Please provide:

- Details of the evidence used to assess impacts on people with protected characteristics and from disadvantaged groups (see guidance for help)
- A breakdown of service user demographics where possible
- Brief interpretation of findings

3B: Assess the impacts on people with protected characteristics and from disadvantaged groups in the table below.

Please first select whether the potential impact is positive, neutral, or negative and then provide details of the impacts and any mitigations or positive actions you will put in place.

Please use the following definitions as a guide:

Neutral – The proposal has no impact on people with the identified protected characteristics

Positive – The proposal has a beneficial and desirable impact on people with the identified protected characteristics

Negative – The proposal has a negative and undesirable impact on people with the identified protected characteristics

Characteristic or group	Positive/Neutral/Negative	What are the positive and/or negative impacts?	How will potential benefits be enhanced or negative impacts be eliminated or reduced?
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Age

Positive and Negative

Increased access to a new vibrant activity offer that has a broad appeal to a wide age range is a positive benefit. A negative impact is that 49.2% of users of the ice rink are people aged 20 and under. Closing the ice rink would disproportionately impact this group. When looking at users by age, there was a notable decrease in the number of users aged 10-20, 54-58, and 65-86, compared to all other ages

Differential pricing and programming will seek to ensure access is fairly targeted to all sections of the community. There will be concession prices for low incomes and off-peak prices and programmed time. There will be a family price to ensure those families with larger numbers of children are able to access the facility. The new proposals will introduce facilities that are specifically designed to appeal to older children in the 10-to-19-year bracket and increase capacity for more people to use the centre. In the programme we will establish youth sessions to provide reduced cost access targeted to local youth. We will also programme sessions for older people 55 plus to enable older people to access and

Characteristic or group	Positive/Neutral/Negative	What are the positive and/or negative impacts?	How will potential benefits be enhanced or negative impacts be eliminated or reduced?
			make use of the facilities. We are seeking to mitigate the impact by transferring the clubs and skating lessons and courses to the Lee Valley ice centre and seeking to negotiate a discount for those groups and current members and users. We will also explore transport options for groups.

Disability
(include carers)

Positive and Negative

The proposals enable access for people with disabilities to be increased both on the scale and type of new offer also the services will be able to be booked by individual organisations at off peak times as well. Current disabled groups that use the ice rink will be negatively impacted if they are unable to travel to and access the alternative facilities at the Lee Valley Centre as it is further away.

Transferral of disabled access to the ice rink will be absorbed into the programming of the new Lee Valley Ice centre and this will be enhanced by increased availability and scale. Distance and transport may be a particular barrier for these groups and so we will explore the option of using Accessible Community Transport to mitigate this. The new facility proposals are more inclusive and accessible than the previous trampoline park and soft play and can cater for mixed ability provision. The toddler soft play area includes a sensory space that is designed to appeal to children with learning disabilities and neurodivergent young people. Specific sessions and facility time for specific disabled groups will be built into the

Characteristic or group	Positive/Neutral/Negative	What are the positive and/or negative impacts?	How will potential benefits be enhanced or negative impacts be eliminated or reduced?
			<p>programme. There will be specific engagement with neurodivergent groups, in particular those with autism to ensure the design is accessible and inclusive for them and to again ensure that there are specific autistic sessions.</p> <p>The membership data has shown that only 1% of disabled members have a visual impairment which suggests the centre currently lacks suitable facilities for visually impaired users. This will need to be considered and addressed in the design of the new facilities.</p>

Characteristic or group	Positive/Neutral/Negative	What are the positive and/or negative impacts?	How will potential benefits be enhanced or negative impacts be eliminated or reduced?
Race or ethnicity	Neutral	The user profile of the Sobell is reflective of the racial demographic profile of the borough and the local area. It is not anticipated that the proposals would have a specific negative or positive impact on this protected characteristic group.	However, it is recognised that this group are generally more inactive than white residents according to the Sport England Active Lives survey. We would therefore want to use the opportunity enhance the positive impacts of the proposals to this community by ensuring that they are specifically marketed to these communities to ensure that uptake and usage is enhanced to tackle the greater levels of inactivity.

Characteristic or group	Positive/Neutral/Negative	What are the positive and/or negative impacts?	How will potential benefits be enhanced or negative impacts be eliminated or reduced?
Religion or belief (include no faith)	Neutral	There is currently already significant uptake of services at Sobell from the Jewish community this could be expanded due to the scale of the proposal	<p>Further targeting of religious communities namely the Finsbury Park Mosque will be included in our consultation plan.</p> <p>There is potential to host female only sessions at the centre to enable Muslim women and their children to access and use the facilities.</p>

Characteristic or group	Positive/Neutral/Negative	What are the positive and/or negative impacts?	How will potential benefits be enhanced or negative impacts be eliminated or reduced?
Gender and gender reassignment (male, female, or non-binary)	Positive	Gender neutral toilets will be provided as part of the new facilities.	
Maternity or pregnancy	Positive	The expanded soft play, baby and toddler facilities along with improved café will provide an important facility for new parents to socialise.	These benefits will be enhanced with specific stay and play sessions that will be developed with Bright Start early years at the Sobell.

Sex and sexual
orientation

Positive and Negative

The ice rink had a high portion of female users at 74.2%. Closure of the ice rink would have a negative impact on this specific group if they are not able to access the alternative facilities as they are further to travel.

The new facilities though are designed to appeal to young female users and the increased capacity of the facility could mean that many more young females are able to be active in a fun, social and non-competitive way which is a barrier for many young females.

We are seeking to mitigate the impact by transferring the clubs and skating lessons and courses to the Lee Valley ice centre and seeking to negotiate a discount for those groups and current members and users. We will also explore transport options for groups.

Characteristic or group	Positive/Neutral/Negative	What are the positive and/or negative impacts?	How will potential benefits be enhanced or negative impacts be eliminated or reduced?
Marriage or civil partnership	Neutral		

Characteristic or group	Positive/Neutral/Negative	What are the positive and/or negative impacts?	How will potential benefits be enhanced or negative impacts be eliminated or reduced?
Other Age (e.g. elderly) (e.g. people living in poverty, looked after children, people who are homeless or refugees)	Positive	Adults will also be able to access the services at targeted times and will also be a key service customer with regards to bringing their families to the service offer.	Specific targeting, holiday programmes and free access or low fee access are a range of concessionary methods that will be used to target those in need

4. How do you plan to mitigate negative impacts?

Please provide:

- An outline of actions and the expected outcomes
- Any governance and funding which will support these actions if relevant

GLL were and will be the management operator for the Lee Valley Ice Rink and will manage the transition of Ice Rink custom to this new expanded facility by means of brokering some access for clubs where possible and absorbing the learn-to-skate customers onto the lesson programme at the new facility.

GLL manage the facility on behalf of the Lee Valley Regional Park Authority so are not in control of the governance. However, it will be a captive ice rink audience that can be parachuted into the new programme, which from a business perspective will be in all their interests.

The lessons and courses will be absorbed into the new programme and allocated time can be provided for the ice hockey clubs. The new rink can also be sectioned off to allow for Ice Hockey to be played alongside normal skate programmes, which enables the clubs to access affordable rink hire and this price will be protected by GLL for Sobell clubs.

Alexandra Palace and Lea Valley are further away and this will be a barrier for mitigation. The discount if it can be negotiated for current Sobell ice users would help to offset this. For some of the groups, in particular disabled users the Council will explore the option of whether transport can be arranged and funded to enable groups and clubs to more easily access the Lee Valley ice centre.

Some stakeholders will see this as an opportunity to reinstate the sports hall, this is not a viable option as it would significantly reduce usage and would not generate anything like what the trampoline park did so it would be completely uneconomical and unviable to now go back to that. This will be managed through programme and the consultation.

Displaced health suite users have five other Health suites across the borough.

The insurance remediation will pay for the proposed works as these are not more than a like for like replacement cost and the consultation results and feedback will be taken back through the Council's governance to review its findings

This project talks directly to the Council's ambition to give its young people the best start in life, as outlined within the most recent health and wellbeing strategy for children. GLL will ensure it prioritises and focuses on these priorities and widen the focus on target groups to

Please provide:

- An outline of actions and the expected outcomes
- Any governance and funding which will support these actions if relevant

include, for example, looked after children, those with long term conditions and those with extreme healthcare needs This proposal creates larger routes into employment and increased abilities to offer career pathways, training and development such as apprenticeship schemes and improved employment rates within Islington. Comparing the required working hours across the products, there will be an additional 300 hours a week to be employed into, providing, typically, 20 new placements both full and part-time within our facility. GLL in partnership with the Council have already developed several positive local employment initiatives for young people including the recent Free Swimming programme whereby a partnership was developed with White Lion Youth Club and young people took on Lifeguarding courses for free and qualified as lifeguards and gained immediate employment on the programmes.

5. Please provide details of your consultation and/or engagement plans.

Please provide:

- Details of what steps you have taken or plan to take to consult or engage the whole community or specific groups affected by the proposal
- Who has been or will be consulted or engaged with
- Methods used or that will be used to engage or consult
- Key findings or feedback (if completed)

The Council has agreed to consult on this matter with regards to the proposed changes. The Council is strongly minded to not reinstate the ice rink and instead to consider an alternative offer (subject to consultation). Ice rink users have developed an online petition for the ice rink to be reinstated and another user group are calling for the reinstatement of the sports hall rather than have a trampoline park.

The key outline of the consultation plan that is being developed using the Council's new Lets Talk platform is set out below and we are seeking to do this throughout May and June to enable this to fit in with the overall works timetable.

Strategic approach and objectives for communications and engagement

Communications and Engagement will support the consultation process by:

- Informing residents, stakeholders, and staff about the facts of the current situation as context to the council and GLL's proposal. We want to extend the reach beyond existing users to the wider community to gauge interest and support for the new proposals.
- Explaining the potential development options for the building so that residents understand the choices on offer and potential impacts.
- Generating understanding of/enthusiasm for the potential new offer and the elements of the proposals that the community can influence.
- Answering FAQs and concerns – especially around the skating rink
- Providing a feedback mechanism and opportunities to engage.
- Protecting the council and GLL's reputation – and demonstrating the link with core council priorities.

Approach

Limited time will require a high-profile burst of activity at launch and a sustained and co-ordinated drumbeat thereafter to raise profile quickly and get the wider community involved

We will need targeted engagement with user groups and influencers. Ideally, we need to recruit advocates from among our local community – residents, parent groups, sports groups, health reps as part of the process. Engagement will include:

- Children and young people – Bright Start/children centres, adventure playgrounds, schools, youth hubs/clubs, activity deliverers for young people, Friends of Parks groups that may have many grandparents
- People with a learning disability – SEND schools, learning disability organisations such as The Elfrida Society and Centre 404, commissioners for learning disability
- Groups that may not currently use Sobell leisure centre – tenants' and residents' associations, community groups, community centres, health sector (GPs, social prescribing organisations, and other healthcare professionals), Finsbury Park mosque, Muslim Welfare House, Age UK Islington, Octopus Community Network and other groups that work with people from Black, Asian and minority ethnic communities

Consultation information (on and offline) will set out the background, options, some FAQs + invite people to express an opinion on what they like / dislike about proposed options.

The Council intends to be clear in the consultation information that the Council is presently strongly minded to not reinstate the ice rink for a number of reasons explained elsewhere.

We have an opportunity to build a better and more inclusive facility. Ideally, we need to offer an experiential element as part of the engagement.

This EqlA is a live document and will be updated and amended following the consultation and engagement session.

Please provide:

- Details of what steps you have taken or plan to take to consult or engage the whole community or specific groups affected by the proposal
- Who has been or will be consulted or engaged with
- Methods used or that will be used to engage or consult
- Key findings or feedback (if completed)


6. Once the proposal has been implemented, how will impacts be monitored and reviewed?

Please provide details in the table below.

Action	Responsible team or officer	Deadline
Annual Survey of Users	GLL will carry out the user survey and LBI will review progress	1 Year after Opening

Please send the completed EQIA to equalities@islington.gov.uk for quality checking by the Fairness and Equality Team. All Equality Impact Assessments must be attached with any report to a decision-making board and should be made publicly available on request.

This Equality Impact Assessment has been completed in accordance with the guidance and using appropriate evidence.

Member	Name	Signed	Date
Staff member completing this form	Mark Christodoulou Head Of Leisure		03/05/23
Fairness and Equality Team			
Director or Head of Service	Andrew Bedford Head of Greenspace & Leisure		04/05/23