

LONDON BOROUGH OF ISLINGTON
COUNCIL MEETING - 22 SEPTEMBER 2022

MINUTES OF PROCEEDINGS

At the meeting of the Council held at Council Chamber, Town Hall, Upper Street,
N1 2UD on 22 September 2022 at 7.30 pm.

Present:

Bell-Bradford	Hyde	Russell
Bossmann-Quarshie	Ibrahim	Spall
Burgess	Jackson	Turan
Champion	Jeapes	Ward
Chapman	Khondoker	Williamson
Chowdhury	Khurana	Woolf
Clarke	Mackmurdie	Weekes
Comer-Schwartz	Nathan	
Convery	Ngongo	
Gill	North	
Graham	O'Halloran	
Heather	O'Sullivan	

The Mayor (Councillor Marian Spall) in the Chair

199 MINUTES

RESOLVED:

That the minutes of the previous meeting held on 30 June 2022 be agreed as a correct record and the Chair be authorised to sign them.

200 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

None.

201 MAYORAL ANNOUNCEMENTS

(i) Apologies

Apologies were received from Councillors Gallagher, Kay, Klute, Poyser, Shaikh and Wayne.

(ii) Order of Business

No changes were proposed to the order of business.

(iii) Declaration of Discussion Items

No items were declared.

(iv) Mayor's Announcements

The Mayor said that it had been a very busy few months, during which she had been particularly proud to celebrate the achievements of our local residents and organisations. This has included attending awards ceremonies for the 329 (Finsbury) Squadron Air Cadets and also for young people in Islington who have graduated from Chance UK's mentoring programme.

The Mayor had also congratulated Fatima Makalo, who works at Bridgeside Lodge, on being recognised with The Chief Nursing Officer Silver Award and the Octopus Community Network who were recently given a Queens Award for Volunteering.

However, a summer of celebration had turned into a September of deep reflection due to the death of Her late Majesty Elizabeth II and the accession of King Charles III. The Mayor reflected on the life of Her late Majesty and said she would be remembered with affection and gratitude for her unwavering devotion to our country. The Mayor had, on behalf of the borough, extended her deepest condolences to the Royal Family, and sent her very best wishes to King Charles III on his accession to the throne.

(v) Length of Speeches

The Mayor reminded all councillors to take note of the timer and stay within the permitted length for speeches.

The Mayor also reminded all present that the meeting was being webcast live on the council's website.

202 LEADER'S ANNOUNCEMENTS

The Leader expressed her sadness at the passing of her late majesty Queen Elizabeth II, and welcomed the accession of King Charles III. The Leader had met the King following the Finsbury Park terror attack and his support at such a difficult time was appreciated. The Leader also thanked the Mayor for leading the Council through the recent events to mark the Queen's passing and the proclamation of the new King. The Leader was proud to stand with so many Islington residents at these important events over the last couple of weeks.

The Leader was delighted to join the Mayor at the reception in recognition of the Octopus Community Network's Queen's Award for Voluntary Service. This was in

recognition of their work during the Covid-19 pandemic, but the Leader also noted the vital work of the organisation to support local people with the cost of living crisis.

The Leader commented on the cost of living crisis, noting the government's role in the crisis through inaction and austerity. The Council's budget had been cut by £171,000,000 since 2010, and the removal of the universal credit uplift, failure to implement a real living wage, no serious attempt to stop the reliance on fossil fuels, and a hard Brexit which had restricted supply chains and increased inflation had contributed to the current challenging situation.

The Council was doing all it could to support people, despite the lack of support from central government, including allocating £676,000 into cutting council tax bills for those on lower incomes, quadrupling the size of the childcare bursary to support people back into work, protecting free school meals for all primary school children, retaining the school uniform grant, helping 5,000 people into good jobs over the next five years, and encouraging more local businesses to pay a real London living wage. Meanwhile, the government was prioritising tax cuts to the richest in our society.

The Leader called on the government to increase universal credit payments in line with inflation, invest in retro-fitting homes to help people with their energy bills, provide support for local businesses to protect local jobs and high streets, implement rent controls, and invest in renewable energy so we are not put in this situation again.

The Leader of the Opposition responded and shared her own reflections on the passing of Queen Elizabeth II. The Leader of the Opposition noted the huge volunteer and policing operations to keep the public safe during events connected to the funeral and accession, however expressed concern at some police tactics to prevent protest, including the police challenging people holding blank sheets of paper.

The Leader of the Opposition had attended a protest outside New Scotland Yard following the fatal shooting of Chris Kaba by a police officer. This has been portrayed by Sky News as mourners heading to Buckingham Palace rather than people standing with the family of Chris Kaba in seeking answers from the Metropolitan Police.

The Leader of the Opposition was glad that Islington had continued to hold scrutiny meetings through the 10 day mourning period, particularly given the current economic crisis and the need to protect residents and businesses. The country was already facing soaring inflation due to the fallout from leaving the European Union and the economic impact of the pandemic. The war in Ukraine and government inaction posed an additional challenge, and there was a clear need for every part of the council to work effectively together in response to the crisis.

The Leader of the Opposition thanked the officers who were working on the site allocation consultation for Gypsy and Traveller sites, for their help with responding to large volumes of correspondence, and for their speed in covering up racist graffiti that was sadly painted on the gates to the proposed site.

The Leader of the Opposition reflected on the terrible fatal stabbing of Deshaun James Tuitt in Highbury Fields in August and noted the thoughtful and collaborative

way that Councillor Woolf and officers worked with local ward councillors during that time. The Leader of the Opposition also thanked the gardening volunteers in Highbury Fields who had carefully looked after the flowers that had been left by family, friends and many local residents.

203 PETITIONS

The Council received a petition from Marie Hamon-Smith asking for a zebra crossing to be installed on Thorpedale Road.

204 QUESTIONS FROM MEMBERS OF THE PUBLIC

Question (a) from Rebekah Kelly to Cllr Woolf, Executive Member for Community Safety:

Between July and December last year, Islington Council ran the Safer Spaces consultation. I believe there was an insufficient amount of publicity and promotion to call it the largest community safety consultation of its kind. The results were broadcast in a series of community events at which the former Executive Member for Community Safety presented the Safe Haven scheme and stated the results of the consultation would be published and available, although I'm struggling to find evidence of this publication so am dubious of its existence.

Will the newly appointed Executive Member for Community Safety continue the Safe Haven scheme, working with communities to make the scheme effective, and actually hear our concerns?

Response:

Thank you very much Rebecca for your question and the very short answer is yes and yes to both. If I can elaborate slightly further I'd like to start by putting on record my thanks to the predecessor in my role Sue Lukes who did so much great work to make Islington a safer place for all.

We know that community insight into crime is an essential component of any community safety strategy and therefore the Council set out to listen to residents, partners and businesses to ensure that we understood the different experiences of crime, perceptions of safety, broader community insights, priorities and community aspirations for a safer for borough.

With this in mind from July to December last year the Council initiated work to address these concerns locally by consulting on a five-year violence reduction strategy, as well as running the safer places campaign. The safer spaces consultation was the largest community safety engagement programme in the country last year. I know you said that you believe there might have been insufficient publicity or promotion but the Council did write to every household and business individually, to get their views on what could be done to improve the local area.

In addition, we also held a Violence Reduction public launch event at Islington Assembly rooms with over 100 people in attendance, attended 19 library and community centre events, joined 8 virtual partnership meetings, convened 30

community led discussions, in conjunction with the voluntary and community sector, as well as parent champions, and developed an online reporting platform which received 1,700 public responses.

We are proud that a Labour run Council, through its wider Safer Islington Partnership, has been the first borough in London to undertake such consultation. Our approach is being adopted by other London boroughs with the work recognised as best practice.

The information we received from this consultation directly fed into the Council's five-year violence reduction strategy, as well as making sure that we were listening and responding to those issues raised. We look forward to continuing to work with local people to ensure we are making Islington the safe place for all. Thank you for your question.

Supplementary question:

Thank you for your reply. I was part of the formal consultation last year. I believe there were 100 thousand leaflets produced. I didn't get one. My road didn't get one. In fact, I got in touch with the Community Safety Team and collected 200 to distribute in our ward of Canonbury. I put them up in blocks where there had recently been burglaries. I attended the public engagement sessions where my views were disregarded, particularly about the Safe Haven scheme. When I walk through my low traffic neighbourhood there is no safe haven scheme for me then. What really concerned me about that consultation with the low participation of children and young people and that not one respondent who was under 18 said that they felt safe in Islington, so what can we do to improve their participation and make young people feel safe? Obviously, we had these community engagement events and with the slideshows there was a lot of information to take in at once. I was promised that these would be put into a report to be distributed and I can't find them anywhere and I don't believe they have been distributed. If it was the biggest safety consultation in the country, what are we going to do with the results?

Response:

Thank you very much for your question Rebecca. As I said, it was the largest consultation in the country. I don't need to repeat the answers. I think in terms of the Safe Haven scheme we're looking at trebling the numbers and are going from 100 to 300 across the borough. What we're doing with the results from the Safer Spaces consultation, is going through those analysing them and then tasking our resources to particular areas and hotspots directly informed by what local people have raised with us, and this is particularly evident in certain hotspot locations around the borough.

Subsequent to that, my promise to you is that, as we're implementing the safety measures across the borough in response to the Safer spaces consultation, we will then go back to the community in the new year to say, this is what you said and this is what we've done in response. Let's continue that listening exercise and make this an ongoing conversation and dialogue with the community. I know in our ward in Canonbury we've already been in dialogue, the two of us, and I hope that that will continue, but you have my assurance that this is not the end of it. We are working on

the data now, we're implementing safety measures across the borough and will be going back out to consultation at the beginning of the new year to feedback those results. I should say we're doing that regularly at a local level as well, but you know if you have any further questions or concerns, you are always welcome to come to me. Thank you.

Question (b) from Hilary Green to Cllr Ward, Executive Member for Finance, Planning and Performance:

Is the planning department at Islington Council willing to undergo a public review of its policy on mansards, taking into consideration the complex needs and wishes of residents?

Response:

Thank you very much for your question Madam. Islington Council is committed to tackling the climate emergency by achieving net zero carbon emissions by 2030.

You correctly identify that the planning policies are a key mechanism for achieving this goal, with our draft Local Plan setting out some of the most ambitious net zero carbon and sustainability policies in London.

The Council is currently working on a supplementary planning document (SPD) to set out in detail how the Council's net zero carbon planning policies can be delivered. This will include clear guidance for local residents and businesses who want to install carbon reduction measures in their buildings, including listed buildings and conservation areas. This guidance will be based upon up-to-date technical evidence relating to specific types of buildings in Islington and the SPD will be subject to two rounds of public consultation.

Once this has been developed the council will examine whether any changes are needed to the Islington Urban Design Guide and Conservation Area guidelines to ensure that they better support our net zero carbon objective. Any review of this will, of course, be based on clear technical evidence and any changes to policy will be subject to statutory procedures including consultation with local people and local organisations.

In the coming months the Council will focus on the adoption of its Local Plan. The policies set out in the plan are crucial to building a fairer Islington by delivering desperately needed genuinely affordable housing, supporting an inclusive economy and achieving net zero carbon emissions by 2030. Thank you very much again for your question.

Supplementary question:

Thank you for your considered reply. My initial question, however, was actually in regards to policy on mansards specifically in Islington. The question, if I may read it, was 'Is the planning department at Islington Council willing to undergo a public review of its policy on mansards, taking into consideration the complex needs and wishes of its residents?' so I appreciate what you've said about sustainability environmental

concerns and that is certainly a part of it, but it's not getting to the heart of the question.

Response:

Thank you very much Madam, I did say that the Council will examine whether any changes are needed to the Islington Urban Design Guide and the Conservation Area Guidelines and both of those things are part and parcel to the heart of what you're saying on the specific issue of mansards, so the answer is that we are specifically looking at the planning policies which relate to mansards.

Question (c) from Max Campbell to Cllr Ngongo, Executive Member for Children, Young People and Families:

Islington Boat Club provides vital services to the whole community from children, young people, the older generation and those with Special Educational Needs. It's closure over this summer has had a devastating effect.

In the last Council meeting in June, the Executive Member for Children, Young People and Families stated that "Islington Boat Club has been closed due to failing a health and safety audit and needs significant repairs". However, upon investigation it seems that redevelopment was highlighted in Site Allocation from 2019. Why hasn't the Council helped more to keep the Boat Club open?

Response:

Max Campbell was not present in the Chamber and a written response was sent, as follows:

I agree that Islington Boat Club provides important services to local people and the Council is completely committed to ensure its activities are retained. However, it is important to note that the Boat Club is not a Council service and is run by a third party.

Following concerns about the state of repair across the boat club site, the council commissioned an independent building condition survey. The results revealed substantial disrepair and health and safety issues as well as other breaches of tenancy obligations. It is the Boat Club's responsibility to ensure the premises are safe to operate, and following consultation with the Boat Club, it made the decision to close the site as it was not in a position to safely reopen the site.

The Boat Club's lease expires in December 2022 and will be writing to them in the near future to consider next steps.

The Council wants a thriving, inclusive boat club providing water-based leisure and sports opportunities for Islington's residents. We are potentially willing to grant a new lease to support these ambitions, but it needs a robust, financially sustainable and locally rooted organisation in place with the ability to raise the funds needed to deliver new facilities. Thank you very much again for your question

Question (d) from Helena Farstad to Cllr Ward, Executive Member for Finance, Planning and Performance:

As part of the Dixon Clark Court negotiation process (when the site was occupied by tree protectors), one of the conditions for leaving the site was that Islington Council would hold a Citizen's Assembly on the Environmental Emergency in Islington. While not defined the idea was to focus on how to address the Housing Crisis in Islington alongside achieving the commitment of Net Zero Carbon by 2030.

The agreement was signed on 21st October 2020 and the occupation of which negotiation parties belonged, then ceased. Since that point, several attempts to get a confirmation on when such a Citizen's Assembly should be held has taken place. The Councillor has not yet responded providing any clarity on the matter and already two years have passed.

Is the Councillor intending to hold this promise, and if so, when will they deliver on it?

Response:

Thank you very much for your question. Islington's Labour run Council is focused on tackling the Tory housing crisis, which has led to a housing waiting list of 19,000 people and the climate emergency, which we're seeing the effects of more and more every year.

The Dixon Clark Court development is very important for our borough; building brand new, genuinely affordable Council homes for local people, whilst also increasing the amount of trees and greenery on the site. We agreed to a minimum of 63 new trees being planted in Dixon Clarke Court and around other sites in the Borough; a mix of small medium and large species and a range of habitats.

Sadly the occupation didn't end as planned and many of the people who had been occupying the site, including members of your negotiating team, continued to take part in the subsequent occupation. As you are aware, we would have been able to plant even more trees, if we hadn't spent so much money on legal costs. We did agree to that and sadly that didn't happen because we had to use legal means to regain the site.

Nevertheless, we, as a Council, have chosen to honour the agreement of Extinction Rebellion Islington because we think is the right thing to do for our borough. The Council is determined to work with people from across the borough to achieve our goal of net zero carbon by 2030 and as part of this, in October 2021 we held our Let's Talk About a Greener Future festival, which involved around 100 events over two weeks and was an important opportunity to raise the profile of the Council's work on net zero. One of the events was the Housing and Environmental Assembly. I was on paternity leave suddenly, but my colleague Rowena Champion was in attendance at the event. I understand you didn't attend which I was a bit disappointed about, but our approach to delivering net zero carbon homes in our new build programme and investment in our existing homes, as well as the steps private homeowners and businesses need to take to keep their carbon footprint down and what support and advice is available were all covered. We held the event as a hybrid event to be able

people to attend online, or in person, at socially distanced venues with workshops. A great number of ideas came from that event and they have steered our work since. I'd love to have more those events – it was great.

Subsequent to the festival we have had a major borough-wide engagement on equality called Let's Talk Islington and housing emerged as a key priority for residents during this process. We continue to make new, net zero carbon, genuinely affordable homes a priority, as well as investing in our existing homes to reduce the carbon footprint and energy consumption. The council is keen to continue working with residents across the borough to tackle housing, climate change and the cost of living emergencies.

Supplementary question:

Thank you very much for your answer Councillor Ward, but this question was specifically on Citizens' Assemblies. You know because it has been discussed in some detail that there is a specific definition of a Citizens' Assembly. What you described in your comprehensive answer was not a Citizens' Assembly by that definition. I am asking if you will deliver a Citizen's Assembly on the climate emergency, perhaps with a specific focus on the housing crisis, as discussed and, if you are going to honour your commitment and your promise, when that will be? Thank you very much.

Response:

Thank you very much for your supplementary question. Could I ask you to reflect on what you're saying this evening. Your group held what you describe as a People's Assembly at the site of the occupation. That People's Assembly voted to end the occupation, but many of the people who attended the Assembly and members of your group actually chose to ignore that and didn't end the occupation, they continued to occupy, including a member of your negotiating team.

So I would ask you, if Extinction Rebellion have got strict definitions of a People's Assembly and Citizens' Assemblies, I'm not sure they're actually quite effective. We haven't done this kind of engagement before but we are very, very keen to and we're keen to work with you on further assemblies, but I don't accept the kind of the strict prescriptive definition that Extinction Rebellion have. I think we have honoured the agreements but we're happy to continue to work with you and to continue to honour agreements. Thank you.

Question (e) from Leyla Boulton to Cllr Ward, Executive Member for Finance, Planning and Performance:

The UK has signed the Paris Accord on climate change and enshrined its objective of carbon neutrality in law. Now, the double whammy of soaring energy bills and Russia's use of gas as a weapon of economic warfare make the development of renewables and increasing energy efficiency more urgent than ever before.

Islington's grade 2 listed properties are numerous and among the most energy-inefficient in the borough. Yet current planning regulations are preventing the

landlords, tenants and residents of such homes from taking steps to radically reduce their carbon footprint, including the installation of solar panels and double-glazing.

For instance, a resident who installed sensitive double-glazing that is invisible from the street has been refused planning permission while secondary glazing on a neighbour's house, which is visible from the street, is allowed. Listed homes were mostly discouraged from joining the Mayor's now-closed Solar Together scheme on the grounds they would not get planning permission from Islington Council.

Councils such as Kensington & Chelsea are adapting their planning rules to help. With its strong record on the need to tackle climate change, will Islington Council quickly change planning regulations to facilitate the installation of solar panels and double-glazing on grade 2 listed homes and help make street properties in Islington warmer in winter and more affordable to heat for all tenants and residents?

Response:

Thank you very much for your question. Islington Council is, as I've said committed to tackling the climate emergency by achieving net zero carbon emissions by 2030. The Council's planning policies are a key mechanism for achieving this goal, with our draft Local Plan setting out some of the most ambitious net zero carbon and sustainability policies in London.

Many measures to reduce carbon emissions do not need planning permission as they are considered to be permitted development. There are however important exceptions set out in national planning policy. These exceptions include listed buildings. The installation of many carbon reduction measures on listed building are not considered to be permitted development and would therefore require planning permission and listed building consent. There is nothing in the Council's planning policies that specifically prohibit these measures on listed buildings, for example the Planning and Development Service has approved applications for solar panels on listed Buildings in the borough.

In making decisions on carbon reduction measures on listed buildings the council's planning department is obliged to apply the statutory national policy test. This involves weighing the possible harm to the listed building, or conservation area, against the public benefits that may include a reduction in carbon emissions. As mentioned in a previous answer, the council is currently working on a supplementary planning document to set out the detail of how the Council's net zero carbon policies can be delivered. This will include clear guidance to local residents and businesses who want to install carbon reduction measures in their buildings, listed building and conservation areas. This guidance will be based on up-to-date technical evidence relating to the specific types of buildings in Islington. As I've said earlier, the supplementary planning document will be subject to two rounds of public consultation.

We are of course aware of the approach taken by Kensington and Chelsea and will contact them to find out how well that approach is working there. You provided with specific details of the case of that you refer to in your question to me and I'm very

happy to look into this and ask a planning officer to respond to you in detail. Thank you very much again for your question.

Supplementary question:

Thank you Councillor Ward. The Council tonight has reminded us of its intention to tackle the cost of living crisis which is urgent, as the winter looms, my question is how quickly do you envisage making the changes you speak about tonight and whom can I stay in touch with to follow progress?

Response:

Me. Very, very happy to talk to you about this over the phone or by e-mail. I'll also involve are absolutely wonderful planning team who will be happy to keep you updated.

Question (f) from Lucy Facer to Cllr Champion, Executive Member for Environment, Air Quality and Transport:

100% of Islington exceeds the World Health Organisation's (WHO) air quality guidelines. The guidelines provide evidenced, health-based standards that cities should adopt. Last year, an estimated 74 people in Islington died from diseases caused by air pollution.

There is far-reaching evidence that shows how air pollution affects many aspects of health, even at low levels. Air pollution particles reach unborn babies through the placenta and children are being exposed daily to unsafe levels of air pollution on their journeys to school, the park or the local library.

Islington Clean Air Parents would like to know does the council have a comprehensive plan for the borough to meet WHO's air quality guidelines?

Response:

Lucy Facer was not present in the Chamber and a written response was sent, as follows:

Before I answer the question, I would just like to say that I am pleased that the Air Quality report we published shows that there continues to be a significant improvement in air quality in Islington. However we know that air pollution even at the current levels remain a serious threat to public health resulting in premature deaths and ill health. Recent research only make this more apparent.

In recent years, we have implemented a number of measures including School Streets, people-friendly streets, air quality monitors at schools, providing more space for walking and cycling, planting hundreds of new trees, and much more. Measures such as the Mayor of London's ultra low emission zone have also made a big difference. Continuing measures we are taking to tackle the primary sources such as from motor transport remains vital as it moving towards a net zero carbon Islington with the replacement of polluting sources such as gas boilers.

In relation to the specific question about the new WHO guidelines which were updated in 2021. In short. No, we do not yet have a comprehensive plan.

Work is going on. Over the next year the council is reviewing our Air Quality Strategy, and the new WHO guideline levels and interim targets will be very much part of this. It is fair to say that the new levels, particularly in relation to pollutants giving rise to PM2.5 or fine particulate matter, which are particularly damaging to health, are very very challenging.

As you know PM2.5 pollution is very complex, and comes from natural sources, such as from salt spray, soil, volcanic eruptions, Saharan sand etc, as well as sources over which we have some control, transport, energy, industry, and homes. It can also form in the air from complex chemical reactions involving other pollutants, like ammonia from agriculture or organic chemicals from domestic products, and remains in the atmosphere for weeks at a time and drift between nations so a concerted global effort is required and even national regulations, long with regional and local efforts may not necessarily on their own reduce pollution far enough to meet the limit set at 5µg/m³. It is for reasons such as this that 99% of the world's population live in areas over the WHO guideline levels in this regard.

Recent studies from organisations such as the Clean Air Fund and Imperial College London show that achieving air quality within the World Health Organization's interim target for fine particulate matter (PM2.5) of 10µg/m³ (WHO-10) is possible across most of the UK by 2030, if current and proposed government policies related to net zero and air pollution are implemented in full.

In relation to nitrogen dioxide more confident there is a clear pathway, if clean technologies work as hoped, and the implementation of net zero progresses at pace, this is something that we think can be achieved in Islington. But it is dependent on the pace at which, for example gas heating and cooking systems are replaced by clean technology.

Saying all that it does not mean for one minute that we should not do all we can to try and come up with a pathway to meet the goals. We are really happy to continue working with ICAP on what is such an environmental risk to human health.

Question (g) from Zak Vora to Cllr Ward, Executive Member for Finance, Planning and Performance:

Islington Council have once again failed to conduct adequate consultation, this time with the residents of Braitwaite House and Quaker Court, the residents most directly impacted by any potential development on the Podium and surrounding area behind Braithwaite House on Bunhill Row. Will the Council commit to a full and thorough consultation with defined thresholds for objections to nullify plans and, if it somehow passes these thresholds, commit to all properties being offered for social housing given the desperate need for such confirmed by the Council itself?

Response:

Thank you very much for your question Mr. Vora. You're still continuing your campaign against building council homes in the borough. I can confirm there is a defined set of thresholds that can be used in this instance and we have used those thresholds in poll was held on the 5th of May 2022. The results were as follows Valerie Bossman-Quarshie, 1,277, Troy Gallagher, 1,174, Phil Graham, 1,057, Zak Vora, 337. You and the Tory party's long campaign against council housing for families in desperate need in Islington has failed Mr. Vora. It's been rejected by the residents of Bunhill. You know there's a housing crisis here caused by over 12 years of a Tory government which not only fails to build enough homes, it stops us from building homes as well. It actively stops us from building homes.

We only get a third grant for every home and the government makes us sell homes under Right to Buy, then the Treasury take some of the money and tells us how we can spend our own money. The Council has been consulting residents in these blocks about proposals to build homes since 2016 and it's helped shape the proposals. We're now finalising the planning submission to deliver 44 homes, over half of which will be council homes for local residents on the estate in desperate need.

Residents have a further chance to have their say on the proposals as part of the statutory planning consultation and all the responses are reviewed and assessed by our Planning Committee. You've been Planning Committee and you know our Planning Committee are not a pushover. These schemes are all gone through with a fine tooth comb by our Planning Committee. Local people will continue to have a voice throughout the development process and if the plans are approved will be seeking views on landscaping play areas, planting, as well as 'Meet the Contractor' in due course, to discuss how these works are managed to minimise any disruption.

We would build 100% council housing on every site. Sadly, Mr. Vora, your rotten Tory government makes that impossible. £271 million pounds we've lost since 2010. If Mr. Vora would like to have a word with his new Tory leader to get her down here, families are in desperate need of council homes. We will tell her what we need, we need new council homes for local people Mr Vora. Thank you for your question.

Supplementary question:

Thank you so much for spending most of your time just having a dig at the Conservatives without actually answering most of the questions which were bought to you. Firstly, will you have a threshold with regards to residents, where their objections will actually register with the Council and you will not go ahead with the planned permission. With regards to the fact that that you boast so well about trying to build and also question the merits of this council, claimed by your Leader to be on the side of local residents, why is it when a historical site at Junctions station was torn down, it was sold by the Council to private developers just so that the threshold for properties to be developed went all for private and none for residential. How, with regards to the development at the Holloway Prison the terms were changed after signing in favour of Peabody to have more for private sale as opposed to social housing. How is it on Windsor Road with a development for 11 residents, the costs have gone up from £2M to £8M without even doing anything? This is incompetence on the terms of the Council and the Labour Council that has been in charge for well

over a decade. At Netnet we are having residents at Braithwaite House and Quaker Court suffer from your incompetence and mismanagement of housing stock and the manner in which things are being conducted.

Response:

Have a word with yourself Mr Vora. I am proud of all of my brilliant colleagues at the Council, who ensured that there were 60% genuinely affordable homes on the Holloway site, including 42% for social rent. In the meanwhile your mates in the Tory government came in to see us and said 'No you can't do this, you can't put in this Supplementary Planning document which talks about at least 50 percent genuinely affordable'. We said 'Yes we can' we are the local planning authority

Every step of the way when we try to build social rent homes and council homes, we are faced by your government, your party, stacking the deck against us. I have been to the drop ins at Braithwaite and Quaker about the new build. I'm proud that I was there with my colleague Councillor Bossman-Quarshie, listening to residents. Every month at our surgeries we get families in desperate need of a council home. If you want to continue your Tory rotten campaign against council homes, be my guest, but I know that Councillor Bossman-Quarshie, Councillor Gallaher and Councillor Phil Graham, of course, will be there to oppose you every step of the way with the strong, huge mandate they have from the people of Bunhill. Thank you.

Question (h) from Claire Davies to Cllr Ward, Executive Member for Finance, Planning and Performance:

Regarding the proposed redevelopment of the Banner Estate (Braithwaite house and Quaker Court EC1Y) for Private and social housing-

What steps have been take to fully investigate nearby alternative sites for redevelopment, namely the properties and sites in close proximity to the already densely populated Banner Estate, that have been left vacant, empty and disused for numerous years and could be feasible for compulsory purchase? For example the site at Oliver's Yard on City Road.

Response:

Thank you very much for your question Miss Davies. As I have said in my previous answer, for the past 12 years the Tory government has created a housing crisis in our borough and we're doing everything we can tackle the housing crisis. Were focused on building as many new genuinely affordable homes for local people as possible and we're always looking for potential sites.

As I've said, Cllr Bossman-Quarshie, Graham and Gallagher will tell you all about the families who come to their surgery in Bunhill in desperate need of a home. The capacity for existing estates to accommodate further homes is carefully assessed and the density you refer to is also reviewed by the local authority with standards protected by planning policy.

The Council does seek to acquire a new land and buildings where it's possible to do so and it regularly engages in with other public sector partners such as the NHS, the GLA and central government to look for new sites for development.

I'm sorry to say that this idea that we can just compulsory purchase a piece of land because it's not being used is not accurate. Believe me, if we could acquire every unused piece of land and every unused building in the borough and convert them into council housing, if we had that power to do that, this borough would be a very different place. I genuinely want to say that, if we had the power, we would do it every step of the way and work with you as well.

In some limited circumstances the Council does acquire land or buildings through compulsory purchase but the Secretary of State has to approve it and we have to pay market rates and would have to pay compensation to affected landowners as well. As you've just heard that we only actually get one third of the cost of a new council home in the grant regime brought in by this government, but we will continue to look at all possible sites in the borough to build genuinely affordable homes for local people and tackle the Tory housing crisis.

I do encourage residents like yourself to come to me every step of the way. If you find a bit a bit of the council land you think could be used better, come to me. We are always on the look-out for bigger and better sites to build council homes for families in genuine need. Thank you.

Supplementary question:

I understand that you're doing your best to solve the social housing problem. As a social housing resident myself, I very much appreciate that. I think most people that live in Braithwaite House and Quaker Court, a large percentage of them are social housing residents and we encourage new social housing. However, it seems like the budget which had been estimated at the beginning of the year as approximately £30M for this redevelopment, seems a very high cost given the fact there's just 24 suggested council houses / apartments / affordable housing that's going come out of it. There seems to be a large percentage of the build is going to be private. I understand that's going to fund the social housing, however, it still seems like a high cost.

I understand that the Council is in the process of trying to improve recycling, looking at ways of using things again, looking at the cost of living crisis. Surely £30M in the grand scheme of things, for 24 social houses, is a massive, huge undertaking given at this point in time where contractors can't be guaranteed in terms of their costs and expenditure, loans and borrowing is increasing, no cost can be estimated, how can you even guarantee that the cost that you estimated back in in in March or last year, whenever that was prepared, is even applicable now, as so much has changed over the last 2,3, 4 months.

Response:

We can't guarantee that money. That's the sad reality of it. This Tory cost of living crisis has thrown inflation through the roof and the entire building industry is in disarray. As I've said, we do have to build some private homes because we just don't

get the funding from the government. We only get the funding for a third of each home and when the government makes us sell off homes, they actually pocket some of the money. So the position is that we have to get the rest of the money through borrowing and building some private homes; that's the way we have to do it. But I absolutely agree with you that this is a very, very uncertain market and there are unique challenges to our council housing programme. We've pledged to build 750 council homes by 2026 and that's part of a programme of 1,550 genuinely affordable homes by 2026. It's going to be challenging but hold me to that. Come back here in April 2026 and even before, hold me to that because, even in these challenging times, we owe it to families who are in desperate need here in our borough.

Question (j) from Pete Gilman to Cllr O'Halloran, Executive Member for Homes and Communities:

As a proportion of income rents in Britain are the highest in Europe and high rents are a major cause of poverty and deprivation. There is an understandable fear among council tenants that on top of the huge rise in the price of food and fuel we will see a huge rise in council rents in Islington.

Can the council give an assurance that there will be no such rise? In addition, many housing associations operating in Islington are planning big increases in rents and service charges. Can the council give an assurance it will use its power and influence to stop and/or curb such increases?

Response:

Thank you, Pete, for your question. I completely agree that rising rents are having a severe impact on local people with private rent increasing, even further exacerbated this year by the cost of living crisis. The Council knows that socially rented homes are the fairest, most effective way of providing safe, decent housing for local people. We will continue keeping rents as low as we can to protect our much-loved Council tenants but sadly we have far less influence over private rented homes and we know this is very worrying for local people too.

We are deeply concerned about the impact the cost of living pressures are having on residents of Islington. Islington Council have increased support for residents including providing additional funding for vital crisis support, on top of the work we are doing to bring down people's energy bills by improving the energy performance of the homes we provide. The support that the government has announced for energy bills is welcome but it is clear that further assistance is urgently needed, but it is the Tory government which is stopping us going further. We want to extend our selective landlord licensing scheme to cover the whole borough ensuring better standards of homes for tenants and the Labour Mayor of London is seeking the powers to implement rent controls, capping rents at an affordable rate for people but unfortunately the Tories to continue to block both of these requests, denying private tenants the support they need.

Islington Council is here to support our residents in these difficult times and any residents who are concerned about paying the rent to Islington Council partners or housing associations or private landlords should seek advice and assistance and

support from Islington Council. And again thank you Pete for coming tonight with this question.

Supplementary question:

I just want to say, on behalf of the tenants of Islington, Council tenants and Housing Association and also private tenants, that we were very grateful for what Islington Council is doing for us. It is one of the few councils in Britain that actually represent the interests of tenants and when I say that I don't just mean that we are under attack from Tory and Lib Dem Councils, I mean some of our own Labour Councils as well are attacking tenants of all kinds, so we are very grateful for what you are doing. Big rent increases are causing real poverty and hardship for millions of people and what we are saying is that what we need in Britain is rent controls.

Response:

Thank you.

205 QUESTIONS FROM MEMBERS OF THE COUNCIL

Question (a) from Cllr Poyser to Cllr Champion, Executive Member for Environment, Air Quality and Transport:

On 13 August 2022, at 12.10am, Police attended a serious road traffic collision outside the Shell Garage on Hornsey Rise, N19, in Hillrise Ward. Four people were injured, one with life threatening injuries. Our deepest sympathies are with the families of the victims. Obviously the incident will be investigated by the relevant authorities and blame cannot be apportioned until this has happened

Some local residents that have cars on this road drive too fast. Is there anything Islington can do to make this stretch of road safer in future?

Response:

Cllr Poyser was not present in the Chamber and a written response was sent, as follows:

I was very saddened to hear about the collision in your ward and the Council is working with the police to fully understand the circumstances surrounding it. The collision is currently still part of an active investigation by the police and we have recently attended a site meeting with them, as part of this investigation.

Whilst we wait the outcome of the police investigation, we are commissioning speed counts to understand the extent of speeding here and we will be reminding drivers of the speed limit through the installation of additional 'SLOW' and '20' mph road markings. Once we've received the final police report and speed data, we will be in a position to discuss and consider additional speed reduction measures.

As you are aware, our Labour Council is committed to reducing road danger on the borough's road networks to eliminate deaths and serious injuries by 2041 and the occurrence of other types of road collision and incident and work with the Mayor of London to achieve this.

We are clear that having fewer cars on the road, and reducing the speed of the cars that are on the road, are important aspects in making our roads safer. Our 20mph borough policy, as well as our people-friendly streets schemes, are intended to make our streets cleaner, greener and safer. I look forward to working with you and your Hillrise colleagues to make the streets safer in the ward.

Question (b) from Cllr Convery to Cllr Champion, Executive Member for Environment, Air Quality and Transport:

On Wednesday 17 August, heavy rainfall caused "flash" flooding in Islington on Upper Street and Pentonville Road at Kings Cross seemingly worsened by blocked drains on TfL roads. In the previous week, a Thames Water mains burst on Tollington Way caused extensive damage partly exacerbated by the slow speed at which drains could remove water.

With the risk of such extreme events recurring, please will you say whether Islington's preventative programme of gully maintenance will be adjusted to ensure that further episodes of very heavy rain do not cause flooding on Borough roads and residential streets?

Response:

Can I just thank officers who attended the events mentioned in the question so quickly and particularly the emergency planning team, who we all know always do such a brilliant job in ensuring that the damage and disruption events like this are kept to a minimum and have just been very, very busy over the past few months and recent years.

There are two parts to the premise of the question. The first is the recent water main burst which has caused so much damage to homes and businesses and of course to the Sobell Centre and great distress to those affected and I think that we are both painfully aware this wasn't the only burst in the last few months which has damaged homes. Residents of Offord Road have now suffered a number of bursts in the past years and it hasn't just caused property damage, it has and continues to cause anxiety as we anticipate the next burst and the consequences thereof.

Of course, drains play some role in moving water, but a pressurised water main burst will always overwhelm the system. Responsibility firmly lies with Thames Water to invest in the network properly to make sure that bursts don't happen in the first place and I am very grateful to my colleagues on the Policy and Performance Scrutiny Committee who held Thames Water to account and to the residents who came and gave such powerful testimonies.

The second part of that is drainage more generally, which I think is the nub of your question. I absolutely agree that going forward we need to make sure that our infrastructure is able to cope with the level of rainfall we are experiencing, and we are likely to experience going forward. As you say, we are already seeing flash flooding, which is only likely to get worse, so we are looking at what we need to do to make our public run more resilient and this does include looking at whether maintenance needs to be increased. Currently, the Council has a preventative programme gully maintenance where gully pots receive twice yearly service. In addition, where water is not draining, Highways officers will investigate the reasons and will instigate remedial works where necessary, but that's of course reactive.

As part of the review we are investigating the use of sensors that are able to detect when a gully pot needs to be cleaned, using technology to maximise performance. If this is successful it would enable the Council to redirect gully maintenance to places that require more frequent cleansing.

But it is likely that whatever we do, there will be times when the drainage system is just not able to cope, so changing our public realm to make surfaces more absorbent including through greening and adding sustainable urban drainage such as rain gardens is absolutely vital to a sustainable future. Which is why I'm pleased to say that we've introduced programmes such as Islington Green Together, which is not only working with local people to create more attractive green community spaces across the borough, but will make us more resilient going forward not just in relation to rainfall but also in relation to extreme heat events, which unfortunately we also experienced this summer. Thank you.

Supplementary question:

I would like to thank Rowena for that answer. I entirely support the observations about the extraordinary hard work of our officers in dealing with these emergency bursts and I'd like to join the remarks made by many of our colleagues on Policy and Performance last week, rightly criticising Thames Water for their persistent failure to invest in the water mains infrastructure and the repeated incidences of very catastrophic bursts. Offord Road happens on average once a year and the impact down the Cally is really extensive not simply people's homes being flooded and lives being completely upended, but extensive damage to the highway. Paradoxically the fact is that a water burst isn't just erupt a large amount of water, it sends vast amounts of grit and sand down the highway thereby blocking the drains.

So as these risks persist and as Thames Water fail to invest in the infrastructure and climate instability poses greater risks, I very much welcome what you've just said and wonder whether you would agree with me that we need mechanisms to identify where risk is at the highest and we need to put in additional resourcing. The sad fact is that when these things happen, particularly Thames Water's failure, it is Islington Council that cleans up the mess. We need to make sure that we do that expeditiously and well, in order to protect our citizens from further flooding. Thank you.

Response:

I agree.

Question (c) from Cllr Gallagher to Cllr Ward, Executive Member for Finance, Planning and Performance:

The conservative government has spent 12 years making this unprecedented cost of living crisis through 12 years of deliberately planned austerity, attacking working people from all ages, backgrounds and all sectors. To add insult to this injury inflicted on normal working islingtonians and people across all of the UK, the average pay of FTSE 100 CEOs jumps by 39% - an inflation busting pay-rise which is at a rate of 109 times that of the average UK worker; energy firms make £170 billion excess profits. People are living in fear and despair at being unable to survive. Winter is coming. What can the council, our key partners and organisations do to prevent normal people from having to turn to crime to make ends meet, pay the daily bills or feed their families?

Response:

Cllr Gallagher was not present in the Chamber, it was advised that a written response would be sent. This will be appended to the minutes.

Question (d) from Cllr Gallagher to Cllr Turan, Executive Member for Health and Social Care:

Has the Executive Member received the latest up-to-date figures on male suicide and suicide in general within the London Borough of Islington? Could he share with me and members what is the strategy to tackle male suicide within the borough and to have an integrated approach across all council services and departments to address this issue and prevent the cost of living crisis becoming a cost of life crisis?

Response:

Cllr Gallagher was not present in the Chamber, it was advised that a written response would be sent. This will be appended to the minutes.

Question (e) from Cllr Jackson to Cllr Khondoker, Executive Member for Equalities, Culture and Inclusion:

Black men are 17 times more likely to develop severe mental health problems than any other group. They are also 4 times more likely to be sectioned under the Mental Health Act. These stark statistics show us a focus on mental health for Black men is more important than ever before. Can the exec member tell me their plans to tackle and ensure Young Black Men can live well and access the support they need?

Response:

Thank you for your question Jason and thank you for the work you've done on this important project. Challenging inequality and racism and injustice is at the heart of this Council's work. We recognise the profound impact of intergenerational cycles of racial injustice and inequalities affecting young black men.

We know they are 17 times more likely to be diagnosed with psychotic disorders and there are higher admission rates into secondary level care and psychiatric provision and there's a disproportionate number of exclusions from school. Equally, we know this endemic cycle is not new. Here in Islington we want to develop something that was pioneering, truly new, that could leave a lasting impact; a legacy to transform the lives of young black men.

Islington Council and the NHS were successful in receiving investment funding of £1.6M to lead a programme designed to tackle mental health inequalities, which will help to create a better future for young black boys and men and support the Council and the NHS efforts to tackle this inequality. It's a three year programme named 'Elevate young black men and mental health' and it will see a much more holistic approach to addressing mental health issues among young black boys and men in Islington with the aims of improving personal mental health and wellbeing, aspirations and life chances.

It's got four pillars of delivery they are: the 'Becoming a man programme', a pioneering 24 month programme delivered in three secondary schools through a full time 'Becoming a man' counsellor based in each school. This is launching in three secondary schools this month already. There's also the 'Elevates' innovation hub delivering holistic and wraparound therapeutic support through a small team of community therapeutic coaches lead by a clinical psychologist. This will take on referrals and commence work with young people in October, alongside the launch of the Barbers Round Chair project, training of barbers to become Community Mental Health Ambassadors and lastly, rolling out cultural competency and anti-racist training across the workforce. We're very proud of this work that we're doing here in Islington, in creating significant shifts in thinking, approach, practice in challenging mental health inequalities for young black men, that we believe will lead to longer term system changes and greater life chances for young black men living in Islington. I am also delighted to announce a formal event to mark the launch of the 'Young black men in mental health programme' is being planned to take place in October 2022, next month. Thanks again for your question.

Question (f) from Cllr Heather to Cllr O'Halloran, Executive Member for Homes and Communities:

What action is being taken by the Council to protect renters, including private renters, in Islington amidst the cost of living crisis?

Thank you Councillor Heather for your question. You are completely right, this Tory cost of living crisis is having severe impact on Islington renters, both social and private. We are continuing to protect social rents and building more council homes for local people, as well as keeping Council rents as low as possible and investing more into our estates via the £10M thriving neighbourhoods programme, which will be launched from Monday.

While we want to get as many people into social housing as possible and as the second biggest social landlord in the country we are doing a good job, we know not

everyone can access good social housing and many are forced to rent through the private sector. Our Council is working hard to protect private renters through our landlord licensing scheme but we know more needs to be done. It is high time this government allowed the Mayor of London to introduce rent controls so we can bring down the rents. It's unfair in the private sector how high the rents are.

In the meantime, our Council is supporting private renters by providing dedicated housing advice assistance and support services for all tenants living in the private rented sector, to prevent homelessness, providing housing advice and increase financial inclusion by maximising benefits private renters are entitled to. Working with the private landlords to ensure we minimise people be made homeless from the private sector, adopting a borough-wide HMO and selective licensing scheme for landlords operating in Islington, currently undergoing expansion from Finsbury Park to Tollington and Hillrise, organising private renters focus groups and liaison meetings to help redesign our services to meet the needs of the private rented sector tenants. Working across the council to address the needs of private rented sector tenants through the cost of living crisis, providing financial assistance and support to private rented sector tenants to help access discretionary housing payments, supporting people to obtain employment through the Council's employment services, providing money advice, debt management and financial services, working with food banks and partners to address fuel poverty and food poverty, the Shine team are working to provide advice on reducing energy consumption and signposting residents to any available grants, to other council support services working with the Job Centre and the DWP to maximise the income for our residents working with private landlords.

The Mayor advised that the time to answer the question had expired and Cllr O'Halloran advised that she would provide the remaining information in writing to Cllr Heather.

Supplementary question:

Thank you Councillor O'Halloran for that very comprehensive answer about what Islington Council is doing to protect renters in the borough. Of course what we know is another issue is housing supply for renters as well and therefore it's really concerning the we have housing associations in this borough that are selling off properties as a cash cow so they can actually invest elsewhere. Now, that's not good, what I would say is that the Council has got really proud record on this one. Councillor Ward met with the Peabody, who are a particular offender and implored him not to sell off the homes. Today, Peabody, at auction, sold of yet another home in Islington, so that's one less home for residents. Clearly, we clearly need to address this in some way and my question really is what can we do to highlight this issue and deal with Peabody and other housing associations selling homes, when we have 14,000 people on the waiting list that need homes. Thank you.

Response:

I want to say on record that Councillor Ward was right, he went and faced Peabody, face to face, and when I got that e-mail today that's what I intend to do. We are not a cash cow, we do not want people selling off and not investing back in Islington, so be

assured, people give us this mandate and I am very proud that we are building council homes everywhere, even on build overs and small places, because I am someone that lived in Quaker Court and there was 8 children, so I know what overcrowding is like, but trust me, we will be facing them, I will be ringing and on their doorstep.

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

We were delighted by the fantastic GCSE, A Level and vocational results this summer which significantly improved compared to 2019. What work is the Council doing to maintain these high standards in the years ahead?

Response:

Thank you very much Councillor Chapman for your question. I completely agree, we had the best results for our young people. Our young people couldn't achieve these results by themselves. I recognise the great work the schools are doing and Islington Council. If they don't have a decent life and a decent home to live in, they can't achieve this great result. That means housing also impacts on this. I agree with my colleagues, we must make sure we do decent work for our young people, our families, if we want really to carry on celebrating these great results.

These great result. All of us, we are proud of our young people who have surpassed expectations. We need to carry on to ensure we go better, because I believe in Islington we want to be the best and we are the best borough. This is what leads us to work in full collaboration with our schools and different partners.

We are in the process of developing our Education Plan, where we have nine pillars and six priorities. Among those priorities is to make sure that every single young person, every single child in this borough, deserve the best in terms of education, skills and employment and we do have a powerful plan through Fairer Together; they start well, live well and they age well. As soon as we can pull it all together and we give them a great place they can call home where they can live, we're going to carry on to celebrate these results.

We managed to bring our secondary school head teachers together around the table to speak with them, to discuss, to make them understand we are together in this journey. Our children come first and through that network we are discussing how can we improve the quality of education, with our help.

We are focussing on school improvement, what we can do together and I'm proud to see what we are doing Islington and I feel we still have a better future for our young people. Thank you again for your question.

Question (h) from Cllr Poyser to Cllr Ward, Executive Member for Finance, Planning and Performance:

This summer has demonstrated the severity of the climate crisis we face and the urgency to respond. Coupled with the energy crisis, not only will our residents feel the impact through their bills, so too will our council buildings and schools. With this in mind, what steps are the council taking to retrofit and insulate our council buildings and schools?

Response:

Cllr Poyser was not present in the Chamber, it was advised that a written response would be sent. This will be appended to the minutes.

Question (i) from Cllr Hamdache to Cllr Woolf, Executive Member for Community Safety:

Can you give an update on the progress of expanding the selective licensing scheme for landlords operating in Finsbury Park and the positive impact that the scheme has had?

The Mayor advised that the question would be answered by Cllr O'Halloran, Executive Member for Homes and Communities.

Response:

As I mentioned in my long answer to Councillor Heather earlier we are committed to supporting private renters. Sadly without the government's help we know rents are out of our control and we are unable to extend our landlord licensing scheme as far as we would like. However, we are still taking action. The consultation for the second phase of our licensing scheme finished at the end of March. Officers are currently in the process of doing some further analysis on the responses to provide more context for the results, which were heavily skewed, as more landlords appeared to answer the consultation than any other stakeholder.

The next stage will provide a report to the Executive for consideration. If this agreed then we will designate the scheme and it becomes enforceable three months after that. Looking at the current licensing scheme that became operational February 2021, due to the Covid restrictions at the time, we were not able to inspect property straightaway, so we focused initially on processing applications and other reactive work, but since year one, we've now inspected 226 properties. Benefits include that tenants are more empowered to contact the council to complain about poor housing conditions and unlicensed premises. This is the case even for un-licensable premises and since the scheme began we've had a 105 unlicensed complaints compared with 56 in the previous two years.

We have definitely improved over 200 properties that have received an inspection, but the application process itself is increasing compliance, as landlords generally start work on improving their properties before we inspect, which allows us to focus resources on non-compliant properties. Previously problematic landlords have now started to get on board with the process, the conditions and standards, but we know that compliant landlords are those who have applied so far, which will narrow down

the search for the rogue non-compliant landlords. The software has quickened up the application process and currently 1,754 licences have been issued and more currently are being processed. We will continue to put pressure on the Tory government and I hope you will join us to allow the Mayor of London to implement the rent controls and allow us to roll out a landlord licensing scheme across the borough, but I'm not holding my breath because we know what the Tories are like. Thank you for your question.

Supplementary question:

As a private renter, I find a lot of common ground with what Cllr O'Halloran has said. I think there's a lot of great work there. One thing that I want to draw attention to is the London Renters Union manifesto. I think a really sound document, created by renters from across the borough and I know many of us as Councillors at the last election signed a pledge to support their work. As part of their manifesto one of their calls is to expand selective licensing borough as far and wide as possible across the borough. Councillor O'Halloran how far do you think we will be able to reach that ambition and will eventually Islington Labour and Islington Council sign the manifesto and back in full?

Response:

Many of my colleagues, and we have our own private renters champion, Cllr Kay, have been doing lots of work. So I am actually a meeting and we've had several meetings with them to discuss how we can work together, because we are about protecting, so it's important to us. A resident is a resident, you know and deserve a fair rent, so I will fill you in with progress.

Question (j) from Cllr Russell to Cllr O'Halloran, Executive Member for Homes and Communities:

The papers to the Executive on 1st September showed that Council tenants and leaseholders living in the 57 council buildings with communal heating systems will be subject to escalating costs for heating and hot water. Can you set out how many buildings with communal heating systems are in each EPC category from A to F?

Response:

Thank you Councillor Russell. The Council holds data for energy performance certificate banding on tenanted homes and those served by communal heating systems. 67% of these are in Band C with a further 0.5% in band B and 22% falling into Band D and 0.6% in Band E. Individual properties within the buildings receive different ratings according to their particular features and positions within the building.

We are pursuing funding opportunities to support work to improve the energy performance of residents homes. However, without improved funding from the Tory government, again, it's extremely difficult to invest as much as we would like into improving our council homes and their energy efficiency. National statistics demonstrate that social homes generally have better performance than homes in the private rented sector and this is borne out in Islington too. We have been proactive in

the work we do. We do ensure all homes are insulated in cavity walls and many loft spaces, however, there are some buildings that are much more challenging to carry out improvement measures to and we are piloting new techniques and approaches in street property homes, to better understand how we can apply these to housing stock.

There is still more we can do and we're committed to improving the performance of blocks. We have successfully applied for wave one in the social housing decarbonisation fund and will continue to seek future ways of funding and to the green heat networks fund for future proofed homes. Cyclical improvement works have been commissioned to our communal heated homes as part of the Council's capital programme we are seeking to undertake works to improve the energy performance for all of all our homes under C banding.

Supplementary question:

Obviously, I agree with you entirely that if the Conservative government hadn't decided to stop funding installation, when David Cameron decided to cut the green crap, back in 2012, we would be looking at a completely different situation right now. So a couple of things, one is can you give me those numbers in writing because I've written them down, but I haven't necessarily heard every word that you said correctly. My supplementary question would be, have you got a priority list for when funding does become available, which homes will be insulated and does that priority include buildings with communal heating systems where there are people who are very exposed to energy prices.

Response:

I am happy to give any information to any councillors. We have definitely got programme, we are doing work with UCLH for this and I'm happy to share any finding as a result, but you're right I think the more we could do together, is all to fight to the Tories, so while you stand this in this Chamber it would be really great to just do what you can with us. I'm always happy to share.

The Mayor announced that the 30 minutes allowed for questions had expired and the remaining questions will receive a written response from the Executive Member.

Question (k) from Cllr Jegorovas-Armstrong to Cllr Woolf, Executive Member for Community Safety:

Can you update us on the Safe Havens program? How many people have used a safe Haven in Islington?

Response:

As the time allowed for questions had expired, it was advised that a written response would be sent. This will be appended to the minutes.

Question (l) from Cllr McHugh to Cllr Champion, Executive Member for Environment, Air Quality and Transport:

With fuel prices at near-record highs, the impact on our vital public and community transport providers is proving substantial. In particular, we were saddened to learn of the difficulties faced by HCT Group, a social enterprise, resulting in the withdrawal of the 812 community bus service and the forfeit of several TfL routes to for-profit competitors.

Given this, and the ongoing funding constraints faced by TfL as a consequence of Government austerity, what steps has the Council taken to protect our local transport services and support those residents affected by the cuts, and what further steps need to be taken to protect our transport network from rising costs over the coming months?

Response:

As the time allowed for questions had expired, a written response was sent, as follows:

I agree. Hackney Community Transport (HCT) has been a really valuable partner to us, not only providing the service but also helping support it financially.

It is very sad that the financial impact of the pandemic, the recent surge in fuel prices, and the cost-of-living crisis have resulted in Hackney Community Transport no-longer being able to operate the 812 bus service. Officers did see whether we could work with HCT to try to save the service but HTC were clear that was not possible.

In those circumstances the action the council could and did take was to communicate the closure of the service as quickly as possible, letting users know and inviting those with concerns to contact the 'We are Islington' helpline for advice on alternatives and any other support they need.

Officers are looking at the options now that HCT can no longer run the service and we are looking at how best to support those who rely on the service, and we will be engaging with councillors and local people in due course.

In relation to your broader question about transport services, the 812 was unique in Islington, and we believe across London in that it was a public service over which we have some control. All other forms of public transport are outside our direct control.

As we have seen in recent months, the severe funding constraints placed on TfL by the Tory Government has put a lot of pressure on TfL and its ability to provide a high-quality public transport network. The recent settlement does not give confidence that pressure of TfL finances will not remain. We have all been concerned about the proposed loss of or degradation a number of bus services in the borough. Colleagues here were very much part of our recent campaign to Stop the Proposed bus cuts which culminated in us delivering the petition to the DfT.

The Council put in a submission to the recent consultation on the proposed bus cuts and will continue to impress upon TfL and the government the importance of reliable and resilient public transport in tackling climate change but also in tackling inequality

and fairness. We know that people on lower incomes, older people and people with disabilities are disproportionately impacted by cuts in particular to bus services. If we are serious about tackling the public health crisis that is caused by air pollution a reliable public transport system is vital. We can offer support to people affected in other ways.

We know that if we make walking, wheeling and cycling safer and more attractive many people will see that as an alternative and that has a huge benefit in terms of health and well being. That is why I am so pleased that for the second year running Islington has achieved the top score among the London boroughs in the Healthy Streets Scorecard ranking.

But walking, wheeling and cycling are often not alternatives to public transport, they are complimentary. And some people can not or do not want to walk or cycle instead of hopping on a bus. We will continue to roll-out of our people-friendly streets programme, continue with active travel initiatives including a network of 500 bike hangars by the end of this financial year, continue to expand free and secure cycle parking on council estates, continue to support for schools to encourage students to walk and cycle as part of the STARS programme, and continue free cycle training for adults and children in Islington.

We will also continue Our Try Before You Bike scheme allows anyone who lives, works or studies in the borough to try out a new or nearly new bike for a monthly fee to help with the cost of purchasing a bike.

But we will also continue to not just defend our current public transport system but also continue to put pressure on TfL to make it more inclusive and accessible so that all local people can choose it as a sustainable way of travelling. Thank you for posing your question.

Question (m) from Cllr Russell to Cllr O'Halloran, Executive Member for Homes and Communities:

What is the Council's timeline for insulating and ventilating every council home in the borough?

Response:

As the time allowed for questions had expired, it was advised that a written response would be sent. This will be appended to the minutes.

Question (n) from Cllr Jegorovas-Armstrong to Cllr Ngongo, Executive Member for Children, Young People and Families:

What has Islington Council and Islington schools planned for Anti-Bullying Week 2022 (Monday 14th - Friday 18th November)?

Response:

As the time allowed for questions had expired, it was advised that a written response would be sent. This will be appended to the minutes.

206 CHIEF WHIP'S REPORT

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

RESOLVED:

- (i) That Councillors Croft, Gill, Mackmurdie and Staff be appointed as substitute members of the Licensing Regulatory Committee;
- (ii) That Councillor Heather be appointed as a substitute member of the Housing Scrutiny Committee;
- (iii) That Councillor Heather be appointed as a substitute member of the Health and Care Scrutiny Committee;
- (iv) That Councillor Williamson be appointed as a substitute member of the Planning Committee;
- (v) That Councillor Croft be appointed as a substitute member of the Environment and Regeneration Scrutiny Committee;
- (vi) That Councillor Zammit be appointed as a substitute member of the Audit Committee;
- (vii) That Councillor Bell-Bradford be appointed as the Council's representative to the Moorfields Eye Hospital NHS Foundation Trust for the remainder of the municipal year, or until a successor is appointed.
- (viii) That Councillor Bossman-Quarshie be appointed to the Board of St Luke's Trustee Ltd for a four year term, or until a successor is appointed.

207 NOTICES OF MOTION

Motion 1: Declaration of cost of living emergency

The Mayor advised that an alteration to the motion had been circulated in the second despatch of papers and this was formally noted by the Council.

Councillor Pandor moved the motion; Councillors O'Sullivan and Russell seconded.

The motion was put to the vote and CARRIED.

RESOLVED:

To build an inclusive local economy that works for all, by calling on the Government to:

- Secure our energy future and support a new generation of skilled green jobs by investing in a rapid rollout of renewables and storage technology, held in common ownership for the public good.
- Increase the National Minimum Wage to the level of the real Living Wage, as identified by the Living Wage Foundation

- Uplift Universal Credit and all other benefit payments in line with inflation
- Introduce universal free school meals for all children, as Islington Council has done for primary school children since 2009.
- Allow the Mayor of London to bring in rent controls, saving tenants money and supporting people through the cost of living crisis.
- Implement the official national opposition's proposal to freeze gas and electricity prices immediately to give people breathing space over the winter. This means the domestic energy price cap would stay at its current level of £1,971 from October to April rather than £2500 price cap announced by Prime Minister Liz Truss; it would mean no rise in household energy bills until April 2023 with pensioners and low to middle income families still receiving planned additional support with already elevated bills.
- Support a £1bn fund to help energy intensive industries with the higher cost of energy.
- Increase the business rates threshold for small business rates relief (from the current threshold of £15,000 to £25,000), to give SMEs a discount on their business rates bill for 2022/23, ahead of more fundamental reform proposed by the government.
- Fully fund a further investment in the Islington Council Tax Support Scheme
- Restore the £20 Universal Credit uplift along with a further increase taking the uplift to £40
- Urgently fund a national retrofitting scheme, to ensure every home has the insulation needed to keep people warm and reduce energy bills.

Motion 2: Bring water back into public ownership

Councillor Craig moved the motion. Councillor Nargund seconded. Councillor Hamdache contributed to the debate.

The motion was put to the vote and CARRIED.

RESOLVED:

- (i) To continue calling on Thames Water to invest further in water infrastructure to avoid the burst water pipes and leaks we have seen in Islington this summer;
- (ii) To call on Thames Water, and all other water companies, to cease the release of raw sewage into seas and rivers, to keep our waters clean and safe;
- (iii) To write to Central Government to ask for the water industry to be brought back into public ownership, delivering better services for the benefit of local people.

Motion 3: Cost of living crisis

As Motion 1 had been carried, Councillor Russell withdrew the motion.

The meeting closed at 9.30 pm

MAYOR