

LONDON BOROUGH OF ISLINGTON

COUNCIL MEETING - 27 JUNE 2019

MINUTES OF PROCEEDINGS

At the meeting of the Council held at Council Chamber, Town Hall, Upper Street, N1 2UD on 27 June 2019 at 7.30 pm.

Present:

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

The Mayor (Councillor Rakhia Ismail) in the Chair

53 MINUTES

RESOLVED:

That the minutes of the Awards Council meeting held on 14 March 2019 and the Annual Council meeting held on 16 May 2019 be approved and the Mayor be authorised to sign them.

54 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

None.

55 **MAYORAL ANNOUNCEMENTS**

(a) Apologies for absence

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors Caluori, Convery, Fletcher, Gallagher, Gill, Mackmurdie and Woodbyrne.

Apologies for lateness were received from Councillor Shaikh.

(b) Order of business

The Mayor announced that the order of business would be revised. Motion 1, tackling the environment and climate emergency by achieving a net zero carbon Islington by 2030, would be considered as the next item of business, prior to Item 4, Leader's Announcements.

(c) Declaration of discussion items

None.

(d) Mayor's Announcement

The Mayor highlighted several events she had attended since becoming Mayor and said that it was a privilege to serve the borough's communities.

As the mayoral year started during Ramadan the Mayor had attended many Iftar parties; the Mayor had especially enjoyed the Iftar at Finsbury Park Mosque which was attended by hundreds of people. The Mayor was also very excited to be invited to the Royal Observatory in Greenwich to the New Crescent Society's Moonsighting event to mark the start of Eid.

The Mayor had attended the Active Officers' Dinner at the Honourable Artillery Company and thanked her hosts for agreeing to hold back the start of the main course until 8.57pm, to allow the Mayor and her Consort to break their fast.

At the end of May, the Mayor and Cllr Webbe had greeted over 200 primary school children outside the Town Hall who were protesting about the climate emergency. You may have seen some of their posters outside of the Council Chamber. The Mayor understood that this issue was very important to councillors and Islington residents and said that she looked forward to hearing interesting discussions on these issues at the meeting.

The Mayor noted that June was LGBT Pride Month and many fantastic events were being held all over London. In May the Mayor had attended an event at Islington Museum to commemorate the International Day Against Homophobia, Transphobia and Biphobia. The Mayor said that Islington has a proud history of LGBT activism and was very important to celebrate all of Islington's diverse communities.

The Mayor was pleased to attend the first "Autism Hour" event hosted at the Finsbury Park Mosque. This has been organised by ex-councillor Tim Nicholls who works with the National Autistic Society. The lights were dimmed and a quiet space provided for the children who came along. The Mayor said that she was proud to be Mayor in a borough that is accommodating to all of its communities.

The Mayor also highlighted several successful events she had attended; the opening of Caledonian Park Clock Tower, the Soul in the City festival on the Andover Estate, and the Cally Festival.

The Mayor also noted that June was a time of remembrance. 14 June was the second anniversary of the Grenfell Tower fire. The Mayor said that safety of Islington's residents must always be the council's highest priority, and her thoughts were with the survivors of the tragedy.

19 June was the second anniversary of the Finsbury Park terror attack and the death of Makram Ali. The Mayor said that we must never forget the way in which Islington's communities came together after that awful attack. We must always stand together and show that our communities won't be divided by hate.

Finally, the Mayor thanked two officers who were leaving Islington Council. Kevin O'Leary, the Corporate Director of Environment and Regeneration, was leaving Islington after 18 years' service and 43 years in local government. Alan Layton, the Chief Finance Officer, was retiring after 15 years' service at Islington and 37 in local government. On behalf of the Council, the Mayor thanked Kevin and Alan for their contribution to the borough.

(e) Length of speeches

The Mayor reminded members to keep within the permitted time allowed for speeches.

56 **NOTICES OF MOTION**

Motion 1 - Tackling the environment and climate emergency by achieving a net zero carbon Islington by 2030

The motion was moved by Councillor Webbe. Councillor Clarke seconded. Councillors Russell, Jeapes, Poyser and O'Sullivan contributed to the debate. Councillor Webbe exercised her right of reply and thanked the members of the public who had attended the meeting to express their concerns about the climate crisis.

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

RESOLVED:

- (i) To declare an environment and climate emergency;
- (ii) To pledge to work towards making Islington net zero carbon by 2030, ahead of the current 2050 target;
- (iii) To make representations to regional and national government to urge them to take action to support the goal of a net zero carbon Islington by 2030, including through the provision of the necessary resources and legal powers to the Council and others to support the action needed to achieve this;
- (iv) To continue to work with partners across the borough to deliver this new goal through all relevant strategies and plans, ensuring that reducing carbon emissions is embedded in all relevant Council decision making;
- (v) To publish on an annual basis details of carbon emissions reduction interventions the Council is delivering and commissioning, including the progress these actions are delivering in reducing the tonnage of carbon emissions in the borough;
- (vi) To ensure local people are able to contribute to the formulation and scrutiny of the strategic actions needed to address the environment and climate emergency by consulting on proposals and by organising an annual 'Tackling the Environment and Climate Emergency' meeting, hosted by the Environment and Regeneration Scrutiny Committee, in addition to the wide-range of existing opportunities for local people to make representations to the Council;
- (vii) To report to Full Council on 27th February 2020 what strategic actions the Council is taking to address the environment and climate emergency, including plans and milestones to achieve emissions reductions within the Council's control, and to share details of representations being made to other institutions to achieve reductions in emissions outside of the Council's direct control.

57 LEADER'S ANNOUNCEMENTS

Councillor Watts said that declaring a climate emergency was an enormously significant moment and thanked the councillors, campaigners, community groups and others who had worked on this issue. Councillor Watts said that action was needed for the borough to achieve the target of net zero carbon emissions by 2030. These actions would build on the borough's strong record of delivery on environmental issues, including bringing forward the target to reduce carbon emissions between 2005 and 2020, leading on the decarbonisation of the pension fund, and leading a community campaign to get climate justice across the country. Councillor Watts said that we needed to go even further and work together to develop a plan for the borough to meet its targets. It was really important to engage with local people on this issue, as the climate emergency required all of us to make major changes to how we live our lives, how our homes look and how we travel. This was not only an issue for Islington Council, but for everyone.

Councillor Watts said that currently the Council did not have the powers or budget to achieve net zero emissions by 2030. It was important to be honest about this fact, as

we would need to campaign for the powers and resources to be able to achieve the target.

Councillor Watts had joined the Mayor at the events to mark the second anniversary of the Finsbury Park terror attack and the 75th anniversary of the V1 bomb attack on Highbury Corner. Both of these events resulted in a tragic and horrific loss of life and both were a result of hatred of others. At this most difficult time, all of us must stand up for a single united community. Councillor Watts strongly believed that diversity was a strength and what made Islington one of the best boroughs in the country, but we could not assume that everyone shares those values. It was not enough to assert our support of diversity in council meetings, but we had to work as a whole community to share the message of love and diversity. Councillor Watts appealed to all those in attendance to go out of their way to spread the message that everyone is welcome in Islington.

Councillor Watts said that he was increasingly concerned about the risks of a no-deal Brexit and the catastrophic impact that it would have on the borough. Councillor Watts said it was absolutely right to put any Brexit deal back to the people so people knew what they were getting.

Councillor Watts welcomed the latest round of police raids targeting the drugs economy. The local drugs economy had a huge impact on young people's safety and other crime issues in the borough. Jeremy Corbyn MP was coordinating a meeting with councillors to talk to key figures in the Finsbury Park community on this issue. Keeping young people safe was a top priority for the Council and the drugs economy was fundamentally linked to the rise in youth crime and serious youth violence over recent years. Councillor Watts commended the work of the council, particularly the Integrated Gangs Team, the Youth Offending Service, youth outreach teams and other youth provision for working to keep young people safe. Youth crime and violence was very concerning to local residents and the latest round of arrests was very welcome.

Councillor Watts was delighted to attend the opening of Caledonian Park Clock Tower. It was noted that there had been some criticism of the Clock Tower project and the development of the small and unobtrusive visitor centre and café, however Councillor Watts was pleased that the centre had opened and said it was a fantastic facility for local people. Councillor Watts thanked the Holloway ward councillors and others who had supported the project.

Councillor Watts also noted the opening of Beacon High School and said he was sure that it would have a bright future. Young people of Holloway and Tufnell Park deserved an outstanding world class school in their local area and, on behalf of the Council, Councillor Watts wished Beacon High every success.

Councillor Watts thanked Kevin O'Leary and Alan Layton for their contribution to the Council and wished them the best for the future.

58 **PETITIONS**

Hannah Staab presented a petition on behalf of Fossil Free Islington on the climate emergency and associated actions.

Sebastian Sandys presented a petition regarding the parklet in Baldwin Street.

Councillor Heather presented a petition objecting to the licensing application for Nag's Head Covered Market.

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

Question (a) from Youth Councillor Jemelia Furtado to Councillor Webbe, Executive Member for Environment & Transport:

A Times investigation shows there are around 6,500 British schools, with 2.6m pupils, in areas where air pollution levels exceed World Health Organisation limits. The total includes 3,900 nursery and primaries. The numbers involve fine particles, known as PM2.5, which are the most dangerous form of air pollution. Every school in London is over the limit. What is Islington Council doing to improve air quality to minimise damage to young people's health in the borough?

Response:

Thank you for your question. This is a very important issue. Children and young people are particularly vulnerable to air pollution. Air quality in Islington is improving but we are determined to do more to tackle this silent killer as quickly as possible. Our Air Quality Strategy includes a detailed Action Plan which sets out what we will do to improve air quality in the borough.

In terms of air quality outside of schools, we have already installed air quality monitors at all schools across the borough. We are the first council to do this and are using the data collected to produce an audit report which will describe the specific pollution related to each school and what actions can be taken to reduce pollution and reduce exposure. Of course we also encourage our residents to walk and cycle.

It is important to remember that children are exposed to the highest levels of pollution not whilst they are in school but on the commute to and from school. In Islington we have 37 primary schools and 7 secondary schools which exceed the nationally set carbon level. As part of our efforts to clean up our air around our schools, earlier this month I opened our tenth School Street, just over six months after opening the first. We are moving at speed, we are ahead of other boroughs, and we want to do this for all schools. School Streets close roads near schools to all vehicles, except those with exemptions, at drop off and pick up times. This helps to reduce pollution, as well as encouraging road safety and encouraging people to walk, cycle and scoot to school.

I was delighted to mark Clean Air Day by launching our pioneering Moreland Street scheme, the road has been completely redesigned in favour of children and local people walking and cycling, with wider footways, traffic calming measures and new plants and seating. All of which was designed by the children of Moreland Primary School and Moreland Children's Centre themselves. This makes our streets healthier and safer for local children walking to and from school, this is real action we have taken. We agree that tackling poor air quality is extremely important and we are committed to doing all that we can. Thank you again for raising this important question.

Question (b) from Youth Councillor Lydia Banjo to Councillor Comer-Schwartz, Executive Member for Children, Young People & Families:

A Government review led by former children's minister Edward Timpson is to recommend that schools must be held accountable for the results of excluded children, with head teachers responsible for pupils even after they have been expelled. The review is also expected to say there is a correlation, but not causation between exclusions and gang violence.

What can Council Leaders do encourage Heads to reduce exclusions and provide more support to young people who may have issues leading to challenging behaviour?

Response:

Thank you for your question and for raising this important issue. Our mission is to make Islington a fairer place for all, especially young people. To achieve that we want Islington to be the best possible place to grow up.

Exclusions are ultimately an issue of fairness. We believe they should only be used as the very last resort. We've had a brilliant scrutiny review of exclusions which ran in parallel to the Timpson review and our own recommendations were very similar to the findings of the Timpson Review. As an example, both reports identified inconsistent practice, school ethos, fairness, inclusion and cost as key factors at play.

The Timpson review also made many of the same recommendations to reduce the number of exclusions, including the development of Behaviour and Attendance Partnerships involving all schools, and taking a whole school approach. Our Safeguarding Board has also been running trauma-informed practice training for all our schools which I hope will make a real impact.

We also agree with the recommendations that the Department of Education, should make schools responsible for the young people they exclude and accountable for their educational outcomes' and hope that the Secretary of State for Education, Damien Hinds will deliver on his promise to consult with schools and councils on how to take this forward.

As a council we are now developing an action plan in response to the Timpson Review and our own review. The next time I meet the Youth Council I am happy to talk you through what we are doing on this issue.

Supplementary question:

As a Youth Council we have worked with Headteachers to tackle the issue of young people being excluded. As young people ourselves we know people who have been excluded for reasons we don't agree with, one young person was excluded after being stabbed. We think a problem is that Headteachers aren't working collectively together on these type of issues. We want to know how you will push these Headteachers to work collectively to bring about change for young people.

Response:

Thank you. I cannot comment on particular cases, but I absolutely empathise with the difficult position of schools in dealing with very worrying safeguarding issues, particularly when knife crime is involved. Exclusion has a long term impact on a person's life and decisions cannot be taken lightly. I mentioned our trauma informed practice training, this looks to support teachers in understanding young people's issues, particularly those involved in criminal activity and child exploitation. It's really important. We also want to set up a board that reviews exclusions, involving all schools, so we can share best practice and concerns, and support schools more in identifying concerning behaviours early on.

Question (c) from Youth Councillor Abubakar Finiin to Councillor Webbe, Executive Member for Environment & Transport:

As you know young people have a real interest in climate change and many of us took part in the recent protests. Islington currently recycles just under 30% of household waste, whilst we are pleased that this is the 5th highest of the 13 inner London Boroughs. We are also pleased with the new recycling bins on the streets. What more can be done to increase recycling and get businesses and residents to reduce waste in the borough?

Response:

Firstly, can I thank you for your activism on the issue of climate change. It's been fantastic to witness local young people at the heart of these campaigns.

I'd also like to echo your comments about the positive recycling rates in our borough. As a central London borough, especially with a large number of flats and estates, maintaining a high recycling rate can be challenging. Resident's engagement with the service in delivering such high-levels of recycling is crucial and we are pleased they continue to do so. However, as you have highlighted in your question there is more that we can and must do to help manage the increasing environmental issues we all face.

We have produced a Waste Reduction and Recycling Strategy which includes details of how we will deliver key waste reduction and recycling targets for the years ahead. As a borough we are absolutely committed to providing an ambitious plan to contribute to London's overall targets and to drive both waste reduction and improved recycling performance.

Key areas we are targeting for improvement include a programme for the improvement of communal recycling sites, and a recycling champions programme to encourage engaged residents to learn more and engage with other borough residents. It is not just about residents; it is about businesses too. We provide comprehensive services to recycle waste from businesses, however we are exploring extending our food waste service to commercial properties, as well as flats and apartments, which would mean the provision of food waste recycling to almost all properties in the borough.

It's not just about recycling, it's about re-use, it's about dealing with the producers of waste in the borough. Businesses must do more to take action, they must recycle more, and we will support them by offering a comprehensive service. We will also tackle the producers of unnecessary waste and challenge them in private and in public as well.

Question (d) from Youth Councillor Jemelia Furtado to Councillor Comer-Schwartz, Executive Member for Children, Young People & Families:

We successfully collaborated with the Islington Safer Neighbourhood Board, Ben Kinsella Trust and Targeted Youth Support to organise and deliver YouthFest. Over 200 young people attended the event at Lift Youth Hub. It gave us a chance to engage with our peers on a Friday night and share some of the positive opportunities available for young people in the borough.

What collaborations and partnerships is the Council actively forging to reduce knife crime and youth violence in the borough?

Response:

Thank you for your question on this important issue and your work on YouthFest, it was a brilliant event and I look forward to the next one. It was a wonderful way to show how the majority of young people are engaged in positive and meaningful activities and to really showcase all of the positive things we have on offer.

I completely agree that partnership working and taking a community response to the devastating effects of knife crime is the way to go, I'm proud to say that we've protected our Youth Hubs and our Children's Centres and we've also invested a further £500,000 in targeted support for young people in acute need of additional help.

I also want to mention, as an example of great partnership working, our Integrated Gangs Team. This service brings together council staff, the police and other partner organisations and is having really positive outcomes in diverting young people away from criminal behaviour. We are also working closely with schools and parents, we've been doing a lot of training around trauma and knife crime prevention, and tomorrow Cllr Watts and I are meeting community partners and Jeremy Corbyn MP on what we can do together. I'm really looking forward to working with the Youth Council on this issue too. I know it's one of your key priorities and I'd welcome any ideas you have in this area.

60 **QUESTIONS FROM MEMBERS OF THE PUBLIC**

Councillor Russell moved a motion to suspend procedure rule 19.2(d) governing the time set aside for questions, in accordance with procedure rule 22(k) of the Council's Constitution. Councillor Russell proposed that, due to the significant number of advance questions from members of the public, the time allowed for questions should be extended to allow all advance questions from the public to be heard. Councillor Watts spoke in support of the motion, commenting that he supported the suspension of procedure rules given the special circumstances, however Cllr Watts proposed an amendment to allow all advance questions submitted by members of the Council to be heard also. Councillor Russell exercised her right of reply to confirm that she concurred with the proposed amendment and altered her motion accordingly.

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

RESOLVED:

That Procedure Rule 19.2(d) be suspended for the duration of the meeting, to allow all questions submitted in advance to be heard.

Question (a) from Gulus Egilmez to Councillor Webbe, Executive Member for Environment & Transport:

Why are there no traffic signals at two crossings on Holloway Road (Palmer Place N7 and Drayton Park) for pedestrians? Pedestrians attempt to cross the road safely when they perceive a safe gap in traffic but also quickly (not everyone can cross at the same speed). This presents a high risk of accidents. It also seems the council is giving higher priority to cars over pedestrians.

Response:

Thank you for your question. Islington Council is working hard to promote active, sustainable travel and to make the borough's road safer. We have already delivered a number of major improvements to make our borough safer for cyclists and pedestrians, and our Transport Strategy will shortly be published for consultation. This will set out plans to make improvements for pedestrians and cyclists.

You raise the issue of Holloway Road specifically; this forms part of Transport for London's Road Network and therefore comes under their responsibility. Transport for London are also responsible for all traffic signals in London.

We share the concerns you have raised and I am pleased to say we have already been in contact with Transport for London about this junction and they are actively looking into the possibility of a pedestrian crossing on all arms of the junction. We would support this in going to public consultation, to ensure there are safe pedestrian crossings in this area. I'm really pleased that Transport for London and the Mayor of London are listening to these types of concerns, raised by residents and ward councillors. We are very happy to work with them to make Islington's roads safer.

Supplementary question:

Is there anything that members of the public can do to speed up the process? I've lived in different parts of the borough and one thing I've noticed is the different quality of the street crossings in different areas. As a young person I can attempt to cross busy roads, but for older people, disabled people, people with children, it is an issue. If there is anything the public can do to help the process?

Response:

It is clear that our roads were designed for cars and not people and that has to change. Earlier this evening we declared a climate emergency and called for net zero emissions by 2030. In order to achieve that our roads have to be better for pedestrians and cyclists. We have raised the issue and the Mayor and Transport for London are listening, we now need to get this out to public consultation so our residents can respond. The Council has already demanded that we want transformation of Holloway Road as a whole and we want to see that in the Mayor's plans. So join us in that campaign, as we continue to ask for the total transformation of Holloway Road, to make it better for pedestrians and cyclists and make it safer for our future.

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

Dog owners in Islington ignore all warnings and don't clean up after dogs. The reason for this is that the Council fail to prosecute and fine in practice. When I walk out of my door and I am getting surrounded with dog mess. I saw a little girl with her mum. The mum was pushing a buggy and the girl was playing around as all children do, one moment and this girl ran behind the tree, picked up dog mess and played with it like it's clay. Her mum called her pretty quickly. Is this what we want our children to play with? What is your view on this issue and how do you prosecute dog owners in practice? How many cases have you investigated and how many penalties have been paid around Islington in the last month?

As Tanya Vyshniakova was not present at the meeting, a written response was sent, as follows:

I'm very sorry for the experiences you've described in your question, which of course, in my view are unacceptable. Tackling dog fouling is a one of the Council's key priority issues and the Council has dedicated significant resources to both enforcement and education of dog owners.

The Council has dedicated staff covering every ward and they focus their efforts on dealing with all types of low level anti-social behaviour including dog fouling. The Council's dedicated staff are in their specific wards every day monitoring and find that the majority of people both residents and visitors clean up after their dog. The Council also undertakes education and encouragement programmes across Islington including on estates and in parks. The Council does not record all interactions with dog owners as there are very many of these. The actions the Council can take can range from giving advice and warnings, to issuing fixed penalty notices and prosecuting. In total the Council has issued 45 fixed penalty notices and prosecuted 2 individuals since 2013. These numbers may seem small but most dog owners are responsible and take the advice Council staff provide.

It can be very difficult to witness the offence too and the Council can do more if people help and support the Council with our investigations. If anyone does want to make a complaint to the Council, they can email pollution@islington.gov.uk, giving what information they can – description of dog and owner, relevant addresses and locations, time when it happens etc. Any information given to the Council is entirely confidential and immediate and appropriate resources will be targeted by the Council to investigate.

Unfortunately there will still be times when the Council will need to clean up dog fouling; I'm pleased to report that we will be able to do this more effectively and efficiently through our new dedicated neighbourhood street cleansing service, which began in June 2018 and thus I am hopeful there will have been an improvement in your area. If you need the Council to clean up at any time, you can report this instantly via the Islington Clean Streets app or your My e-account.

Question (c) from Sebastian Sandys to Councillor Watts, Leader of the Council

Extinction Rebellion Islington are proud to live in a Borough with the country's first female Somali Mayor. We are proud too of the several hundred people who signed the petition demanding a Citizens Assembly. Would the Leader of the Council tell me when he will be in a position to meet that demand?

Response:

Thank you Sebastian. As we have discussed already this evening, this is an incredibly important issue. It is important that we engage with members of the public and that we use the experience and expertise of people in this room and the whole

community if we are to take on this massive task of making this borough net zero carbon by 2030. I mean that sincerely, but your question is not about whether we do that, but how we best do that.

Just to be absolutely frank, our worry about the citizens' assembly, which I understand is a core ask of Extinction Rebellion, is that where there is genuine political commitment here in Islington, it's not actually very helpful in taking things forward. My reason for thinking that is that the boroughs who are announcing citizens' assemblies are taking the power away from locally elected politicians. Citizens' assemblies also take a lot of time which I don't think we have. I have experience of citizens' assemblies, and think they are a really good way of getting engagement, but it takes a very long time and a lot of money to do it properly.

I think the core of my worry about all of this is taking the matter beyond politics, because I don't think this matter can be taken beyond politics. It is inherently political. It was a political decision to expand Heathrow Airport, it was a political decision to impose austerity on this borough which is the biggest barrier to us implementing what we want to achieve. It will be a political decision of a future government to get us out of this mess. It has to be the people who are democratically accountable to take the lead on this, genuinely with the community, because politics is central to getting this sorted. Politics got us into this mess and politics can get us out of it.

Supplementary question:

I am relieved by your answer, as I think you may have misunderstood the nature of a citizens' assembly, we don't have the time to talk about that now but perhaps we can discuss a way forward. The decision to reject the petition must also be seen alongside the overwhelming vote of the Environment and Regeneration Scrutiny Committee to reject the proposal to co-opt two non-voting experts onto the committee to advise and support them. My question is, are you confident that you are doing everything you can, as the Leader of your councillors, that they have available to them the best information, the best expertise, and the best science in order to make the decisions they will have to make?

Response:

Yes, I am, for a number of reasons. That expertise is found in this room, there is genuine expertise among some of the elected members of the Council, the members of the various organisations here, and I want to pay tribute to Fossil Free Islington. A couple of weeks ago myself and Cllr Webbe had an hour booked in the diary to meet with them to talk about this, and the meeting went on for three hours because of the richness of the conversation and the genuine expertise of the people in this room. I find that very impressive and I thank Fossil Free Islington for giving us their time that evening. There is absolute openness for that kind of dialogue and using that expertise from those in this room and council staff. My door is open and we will do what we need to do without all of the bureaucracy that goes around a citizens' assembly.

Question (d) from Jackie Noone to Councillor Ward, Executive Member for Housing & Development:

From the annual public health report released by the Town Hall earlier this year it highlighted the challenges that Islington had with a rising population and ageing demographic. It showed a predicted 60% increase in the predicted number of adults over the age of 65 in the borough in the next 15 years. I'd like to understand how the Council propose to support this when Community assets are being lost through "consolidation" or closure such as Sotheby Mews Day Centre and the increasing reliance on the voluntary sector?

Response:

Thank you for your question. Islington Council has clear ambitions for residents to live healthy, independent lives. Extending the number of years people live free from disability and poor health is an essential part of our response to an ageing population and improving quality of life for all our older residents.

Islington has an extensive range of community centres and facilities. There are over 70 community centres in the borough, over 50 of these are owned by the council. The council, housing associations and our voluntary sector partners have recently invested in building new state of the art community facilities across the borough, including Brickworks, Vibast and the Goodinge Community Centres, others including Ronald's Road will be ready soon. These facilities are something that we can rightly be proud of, and will enable us and voluntary sector partners to respond to the changing demographics of the borough, providing opportunities for residents of all ages to connect and thrive.

In addition, we have secured the provision of community space through our planning policy and affordable workspace strategy, enabling Islington's voluntary and community to access affordable delivery space to provide services to the community. In recent years, there has been a net increase in community assets, and an increase in the number of voluntary sector partners making use of these spaces.

The brand new community centre at Ronald's Road provides more additional new space than is currently at the Sotheby Mews site. Ronald's Road will be the new location for the existing service that runs from Sotheby Mews. Islington Labour was re-elected with an overwhelming mandate to deliver genuinely affordable council homes to help tackle the housing crisis. The site at Sotheby Mews will be used to deliver much needed council homes for local families. That will happen in conjunction with a thriving service at the Ronald's Road site.

Supplementary question:

It is understood that the council are dealing with underfunding in various sectors, mental health and social care for example. Is it not time that we see budgets

realigned, to account for windfall benefits such as HM Prison Holloway, whilst recognising that housing is a challenge. The current users of Sotheby Mew Day Centre, plus over 2,000 people signing our petition to keep the day centre with housing on top, realise what a loss to Islington and the community it will be. The site is a community asset, it has a large, beautiful mature garden that is valued and appreciated for its therapeutic and wellbeing benefits. It is a quiet haven that in this busy city is a necessity for us and future generations. Please reconsider and let us work together to keep our community centre open.

Response:

Thank you. This council is facing huge budget cuts, but this is not what this is about. This is about providing genuinely affordable council homes for the families in need right across this borough. We can do that whilst also providing a thriving, state-of-the-art community centre at Ronald's Road. I will happily work with you for as long as it takes to make sure that, even though we build genuinely affordable council homes for those who need them, we also make sure that the thriving service at Sotheby Mews continues at the brand new state-of-the-art centre at Ronald's Road.

Question (e) from John Dear to Councillor Ward, Executive Member for Housing & Development:

Despite the windfall of 1000 dwellings at HMP Holloway of which 600 will be deemed affordable or for social rent and Islington Council exceeding its GLA targets for new housing why has the Council not considered a compromise with mixed use at Sotheby Mews Day Centre as the site currently, from Planning, will only accommodate 10 dwellings?

Response:

Thank you for your question, John. As I have just said in my answer to Jackie, Islington Labour was re-elected overwhelmingly on a manifesto which committed to tackle the housing crisis by delivering new council and genuinely affordable homes for local people. Of course we welcome the anticipated large number of homes forecast to come from the HMP Holloway Development. However, there are still over 13,000 people on the council's waiting list. If we are going to tackle the housing crisis, we must continue to build more new council housing. Even sites that can supply a small number of new homes still mean a life changing experience for local people in need of a home, like families living in overcrowded conditions, for example. This site will be made up of homes for local families on the housing register. Ten homes might not seem like a lot, I can tell you, it will be of immeasurable value, unquantifiable value, to those residents and their families. There are a number of community facilities in the area, and the floor space in the new community centre at Ronald's Road provides more space than is currently at the Sotheby Mews site. Thank you again for your question.

Supplementary question:

In the Labour Manifesto, on which this administration was elected, there was a statement which read 'We will continue to deliver services that help tackle isolation, encourage exercise, and allow older people to enjoy activities that improve their wellbeing'. For the last two years, Highbury Roundhouse, service users at Sotheby Mews and others have been raising funds to provide a mini-bus to ensure those who need transport to attend Sotheby Mews currently can continue to do so once council transport is withdrawn. We have made note that the new Highbury Roundhouse where services are to be consolidated is difficult to get to for many. I'd like tonight to get assurances that those who cannot get to the new centre, and this is over 60% of the users from a recent survey, will not be isolated due to transportation issues.

Response:

They certainly will not be isolated due to transport issues. We are working on this, I am working closely with my Executive colleagues and officers. I am very excited about the new centre at Ronald's Road and we will ensure that everybody can enjoy the centre.

Question (f) from Christopher Procter to Councillor Ward, Executive Member for Housing & Development

In light of the new evidence from the IPCC that we have only 12 years to save ourselves from runaway climate change does the council plan a new Local WWII style 12-year EMERGENCY Supplement to the revised Local Plan?

Response:

Thank you for your question, Christopher. While we do not plan to introduce a new Emergency Supplement to the revised Local Plan, the Council is doing everything we can within our existing planning powers to reduce the impact of the built environment on our climate. The Draft Local Plan includes robust and ambitious policies promoting zero carbon development which will ensure that the Council is on track to achieve net zero carbon for all new and refurbished buildings in Islington by 2030.

Further to the draft Local Plan, a motion has been passed tonight with a commitment to work towards making Islington net zero carbon by 2030.

Supplementary question:

We are facing human extinction. To prevent this, all public resources must be temporarily shifted to decarbonisation, away from growth. As an architect specialising in residential homes in this borough, I find the Local Plan is not fit for purpose. The borough's response to climate change rests on tighter standards in new build without addressing the vast bulk of existing below-standard buildings. The proposed Local Plan states that buildings represent 8% of carbon emissions, with the proposed

reduction in these emissions by 66% by 2034, this is not consistent with the climate emergency motion passed tonight requiring net zero carbon by 2030. How will reduction be achieved without serious retrofitting of current building stock? Do you have any data on the number of homes in the borough that need gas boiler replacement, for instance? The proposed local plan summary, at 3.27, also clarifies the need for additional heritage design guidance. How are we assured that this guidance will not further inhibit necessary climate emergency retrofitting?

Response:

Thank you for your question. If I had advance notice of the specific statistics I would have a more substantial response, but I am proud of all the work that has gone into the Local Plan, and would like to thank council officers for pushing the parameters as far as we are currently legally able to do. The draft policies in the Local Plan will lead to a significant reduction in emissions in new and refurbished buildings, putting us well on track to meet the 2030 target. What we need is for other national and regional policies and for the government to go further to give boroughs like Islington the powers and resources we need to tackle issues like requiring retrofitting of existing buildings.

Quesiton (g) from Helena Farstad to Councillor Webbe, Executive Member for Environment & Transport:

Islington Council's Climate emergency declaration and commitment to become net zero carbon by 2030 is demonstrating that you are taking the Climate Emergency seriously and are a truly progressive Council. How will the Councillor look to communicate (channels e.g. social media/ printed press, advertising, collaboration with local groups & partnerships and frequency e.g. daily social media, weekly press, continuous marketing & advertising campaigns etc.) this important message to its residents, and the many future changes that will be required as part of meeting the target, recognising that behaviour changes and involvement of Islington's residents and businesses is required to be successful in its quest?

Response:

Thank you Helena for your question, and your kind words about the motion to declare an environment and climate emergency, which we have passed already this evening. Meeting this ambitious target of achieving a net zero carbon Islington by 2030 will require an unprecedented effort from both the council, the wider community and others, including the government.

Communicating and involving Islington's residents, business, visitors and partners in the steps they can take to contribute to the overall target is vital. The council therefore will develop and deliver a sustained, high-profile, multi-channel campaign to explain very clearly the challenges, call for support and engage local people and partners in practical day to day behaviour change.

We will also explain the work the council is doing, as this is about action. We will explain our work, alongside the work of partners, to reduce carbon emissions through strategic decisions; making the buildings we own or manage more efficient, improving the transport infrastructure to encourage walking and cycling and reduce emissions and launching initiatives such as our low plastic zones and our refill stations to support people to reduce plastic use. We will also support and amplify the efforts of partners and the community who share our ambitions and are taking action.

As laid out in the motion, we will provide regular updates on progress, the first of which will be a report to Full Council in February 2020. We will also ensure that local people are able to contribute to the formulation and scrutiny of the strategic actions needed to address the environment and climate emergency by consulting on proposals and by organising an annual 'Tackling the Environment and Climate Emergency' meeting, hosted by our Environment and Regeneration Scrutiny Committee, in addition to the wide-range of existing opportunities for local people to make representations to the Council.

Supplementary question:

Thank you. What is the timeframe for rolling this out, and secondly please could you tell me the council's plans for assessing progress on communicating with residents? Communicating with people on these issues can be difficult, so how can we assess that they understand the message and are on board with the council's commitment?

Response:

Thank you, these are important questions. We start now. We have passed the motion and we need to crack on. In terms of how we will measure success, how will we know that people have got the message, we will know by people who tell us we are not doing enough, we will know by those who tell us they don't understand what we are doing, we will know by the people who tell us they want to see clear action. Because that will tell us if we haven't communicated our actions clearly enough. We will know if we haven't communicated effectively when people tell us they just don't understand what it all means and what this is all about. We will be working on this agenda with others, to raise awareness and understanding, because it's really important that everybody gets this agenda.

When we embarked on our campaign to address the scourge of diesel and its contribution to air pollution, we were the first council in the country to do so. We took on the industry at a time when nobody else would. We put the diesel surcharge on our resident parking permits and we communicated that message. Our residents were some of the first to be aware of these issues, they understood why that diesel surcharge is important. That is an example of how we can use our resources to deliver an agenda for change. It is a powerful agenda, but communication is very important and campaigning is what we are about as a council. We will campaign to deliver on this agenda and to amplify the voices of those residents who are

demanding change and action in response to this climate emergency. I hope you are reassured by our response today.

Question (k) from Mx. A Doodle to Councillor Watts, Leader of the Council:

Does the council provide documents in appropriate alternative formats for people with a range of reading impairments?

Response:

Thank you for your question. The simple answer to your question is yes, all of our communications are available in a range of alternative formats. It's really important to us that we make communications as accessible as possible to everyone. Depending on an individual's requirement this could include braille, large print, easy read or sign language interpretation. Our standard letters and literature all include a prompt inviting people to contact us if they would like information in a different format. Each edition of our printed quarterly magazine, Islington Life, is also read out and recorded for Talking News Islington who distribute CDs and cassettes on our behalf. We build accessibility into all the guidelines we use for our website, all of the council's website and copy, to ensure they are as widely used as possible. Our online communications can also be read by those using screen readers. These guidelines are subject to change and we are currently reviewing them in line with the latest advice. If there are any suggestions at all about further improvements that can be made then we would be delighted to hear them. Please either email me or contact the council's Head of Communications.

Supplementary question:

I have constantly struggled to get possibly the most widely used accessible format to be used by officers of the council. Tagged PDFs are in standard use everywhere else and they are very easy to produce, yet this council does not seem to understand what a tagged PDF is, let alone being able to produce one. The Sensory Team has wrongly informed council officers that PDFs are not accessible and it would be great if that advice was very quickly corrected. Will the council make it a requirement that all documents of any kind are provided to disabled and dyslexic people in the format of their choice? I stress that Tagged PDFs are possibly the widest used in terms of accessible documents and I am horrified that the council does not understand what they are or use them. Will the council ensure that it will use this platform, provide training to staff, and ensure that the very cheap software that is required to produce a tagged PDF from a scanned document is available in every single council department?

Response:

Thank you for that very helpful and useful question. I am sympathetic to your question and we will absolutely look at this. It's a really helpful and constructive suggestion and we will do everything we can to make sure that happens.

Question (j) from Sophie Talbot to Councillor Ward, Executive Member for Housing & Development:

How many disabled people live in secure housing managed by the council?

Response:

We have 6,264 disabled people living in council secure tenancies. It's really important that council housing is there for disabled people and we do all that we can to make sure people live in homes which meet their requirements. This includes our programme of providing adaptations to people's homes.

Supplementary question:

I act as an advocate for a person with multiple disabilities. It is coming up to the second anniversary of my client first reporting damp in their council flat. After making a complaint they have been subject to a year of negligent patch repairs, disrespect from council officers talking down and patronising them. Social services have refused to risk assess the flat which means my client couldn't employ carers or PAs, direct payments have been constantly delayed, the council has been unable to provide basic information leaving my client vulnerable and alone. Repairs has ignored, bullied and refused to speak to my client. My client's mental and physical health has significantly deteriorated as a result of negligent repair works, a breach of the Human Rights Act, the Care Act and the Equality Act, and breaches of the general duty of care. The council fails to book temporary accommodation for the duration of works, causing stress, anxiety and panic for my client. Today I received a copy of the third report, from three different companies, showing their home is still damp and dangerously contaminated with high levels of toxic mould. At least one officer has said that they don't believe the testing and my client is expected to move back in shortly. Councillors refuse to intervene saying the case is too complicated to understand or is above their paygrade. I believe this local authority is not fit for purpose to provide housing services to disabled people. I believe this council needs to look to good practice models like Hammersmith and Fulham and completely overhaul the way that services are provided to disabled people. I also believe that this council needs to start complying with the Care Act requirement to integrate services and the Equality Act requirement for reasonable adjustments. Will you commit to sort this out?

Response:

Thank you for raising this really important issue. We really appreciate you coming here tonight. I am very sorry for these issues and I do commit to doing everything I can to investigate this alongside the Corporate Director of Housing and offer you any assistance I can. As I understand it the flat is now undergoing repairs, if that isn't the case I apologise, and I'm very happy to speak to you about this, and I promise to do

everything I can to investigate this and to make sure that your client has housing that is accessible and suitable to their needs.

Question (h) from Kate Pothalingam to Councillor Burgess, Executive Member for Health & Social Care:

I would like to submit a question about the works to repair Highbury Pool which was so badly damaged in a fire on 25th September 2018. This much loved and well-used community resource has been out of action for months and no information on the timetable for repairs is being provided to users - including the many Islington school children who now have to travel across the borough to alternative pools for their swimming lessons. It is also worrying to observe that the holes in the roof of the female changing rooms and over the main pool are not covered, but remain exposed to the elements, perhaps allowing further damage (e.g. from recent heavy rains). It would be helpful if the Council and management of the Leisure Centre could provide regular updates and take steps to keep residents better informed - particularly since we no longer have useful Ward Partnership meetings in Highbury East. Is it correct that an inspection of the roof steels only happened in mid-May, some 8 months after the fire, and that there is still no start date for the repair project?

Response:

Thank you for your question. I appreciate it is really frustrating that the pool at Highbury Leisure Centre remains closed. I'd like to assure you that we've been extremely busy behind the scenes. In the weeks following the fire priority was given to restoring partial services at the centre as quickly as possible. Once the safe areas of the leisure centre were secured, these were configured to provide gym equipment and classes. This was completed only ten weeks after the fire, which is quite an achievement. Due to the extent of the fire, it was known from the outset that restoring the pool would be a longer term project. Our focus shifted to the pool at the start of this year. We have protected the plant room, but it wasn't feasible to cover all of the exposed areas. First of all, we needed a full assessment of the damage to see how much of the remaining infrastructure could be used and how much needed replacing. We are all keen for work to get underway quickly and I understand your frustration that it might seem that progress is slow, but we have to get it right. We want to reassure residents that we are working through the necessary processes. The good news is that our surveyor recently confirmed that much of the steelwork in the roof does not need to be replaced, which should reduce the timeline for the rebuild. The next steps include investigative works on the pool plant and the pool tanks which are currently full of debris. Once this is complete we will finalise the full scope of works and embark on the next stage of the rebuild project. Our best estimate – and I must stress this is an estimate at this stage – is that we will be able to re-open the pool in early 2021. Given the scale and complexity of the restoration and rebuild project there are other factors which could affect this, but we will update people as the project progresses. I note your point that people would like more regular updating and I will try to make sure that that happens. I'd

like to thank everyone for their continued patience as we push ahead with the reinstatement of the pool.

Supplementary question:

GLL Better who run Highbury Leisure Centre didn't do a great job of cleaning it and maintaining it when they were running pool services. The changing rooms were disgusting and there were many complaints from users and members of Highbury Fields Association about that. When they managed the build of the extension, they failed to comply with the council's own planning application and produced a building that didn't meet the council's criteria. Can the council ensure Islington residents that the pool rebuild is a priority, as there is nothing on GLL's website at all, that you will closely supervise GLL to ensure the work starts as soon as possible and is completed to a high standard, and that there are no insurance or any other financial barriers to the work starting.

Response:

I have been promised that a report on this will go on the website shortly. I can certainly pledge that we will continue to do things as soon as possible. In terms of the cleanliness, there are user representatives who can be approached and who I know work very hard to make sure the facilities are kept up to the standard they should be. Please contact me, or the Centre Manager, if there are any issues there.

Question (i) from Lucy Facer to Councillor Webbe, Executive Member for Environment & Transport:

Islington Council has only committed to installing 100 electric car charging points per year over the next four years. Do the council think this will make any impact on improving air quality or could they implement a much faster rate of installation like other London boroughs to facilitate a much more significant number of EV cars in the borough, and discourage petrol and diesel ownership by implementing higher parking tariffs?

As Lucy Facer was not present at the meeting, a written response was sent, as follows:

I would like to thank you for your question. Islington has committed to a minimum of 100 electric charge points per annum or a minimum of 400 by 2022 in order to help tackle the climate and environmental emergency we all face. This will also contribute to addressing air pollution by encouraging a move away from polluting diesel vehicles, including Euro VI diesels. We have called for the eradication of all diesel vehicles from London by 2025 and have already implemented a substantial diesel surcharge on resident parking permits and an additional surcharge on short stay parking towards bringing an end to diesel ownership and use, we remain one of the few boroughs to do so.

Road transport accounts for the majority of NO_x and PM₁₀ emissions in Islington. Pure electric vehicles emit zero tail pipe emissions and they have the potential to significantly improve local air quality, and we are committed to encouraging those residents who cannot use other modes of travel, to switch to low emissions vehicles.

To support the ever growing number of residents switching to electric vehicles, Islington has already rolled out over 150 on-street charging points including our recent launch of innovative lamp column charging points. Our commitment to install a minimum of 400 charging points remains ambitious in, geographically, the second smallest London borough. However, we know that there are still parts of the borough that lack convenient access to public charging points and it's important that we continue to ramp up our efforts to deliver a comprehensive charging network

Islington has also engaged in a wide range of activities to tackle air pollution and promote active travel (walking and cycling) and discourage car use, for example, we have piloted Zero Emission Streets in the streets surrounding Central Foundation School, implementing enforcement and banning all but electric vehicles at peak hours; we have delivered the most School Streets of any local authority area, which we will continue to roll out, where possible, for all schools in the borough; we have prioritised the transformation of key transport areas like Archway, Highbury Corner and Old Street to deliver safe spaces for cyclists and pedestrians and we will continue to deliver a wide range of projects to encourage even more residents to cycle, walk or use public transport. As a result of our efforts, activities and policies, Islington has the lowest car ownership of any borough and we will continue to take action to discourage petrol and diesel ownership towards tackling air pollution and meeting net zero carbon by 2030.

Question (I) from Rachael Swynnerton to Councillor Webbe, Executive Member for Environment & Transport:

Air pollution from transport is of huge concern in particular to people living in inner city borough's like Islington. About 15% of Islington overall CO₂ emissions stems from traffic and the annual legal mean limit of 40µg/m³ NO₂ exposure is not upheld. Please note that the World Health Organisation guideline is for no human exposure to NO₂ over 200 micrograms per cubic metre (ug/m³) measured over one hour. The EU legal limit for exposure to NO₂, also in UK law, is 18 hours in a calendar year. According to Clean Air in London (<https://cleanair.london/legal/breathtaking-breach-of-no2-annual-legal-limit-in-eight-days/>), London is exceeding the legal limit of NO₂ exposure within the first month of the year.

Recognising that reducing air pollution is not exclusively within the Local Authority's control, it is however understood that local initiatives can have material positive impact. e.g stopping rat-runs through residential streets by introducing Low Traffic Neighbourhoods, regular borough-wide road closures, significantly increasing parking charges for all fossil fuel vehicles, reducing the number of parking spaces available, stopping endorsement of residential car use by the Islington roaming policy, actively and seriously targeting idling, banning wood burners, introducing outdoor air

filtration systems at most polluted roads (eg red routes), setting up green screens and overall greenery etc. Informing and educating the residents is also seen as effective as many still do not know the impact air pollution has on their health.

Can the Councillor identify what measures need to be taken, to reduce air pollution across the borough below EU legal limits before 2025?

Response:

Thank you for your question, Rachael. Islington is a great place to live, work and visit. It has a diverse population, cultural opportunities and is home to many international businesses. But as you know, it is also a borough that faces challenges, Islington is the 24th most deprived borough in the country and has some of the highest poverty rates. We also know that levels of air pollution are poor and it is our residents who are having to deal with the impact this can have on health and life expectancy.

To truly make Islington a fairer place for all we must improve air quality. I'm proud that Islington has made a huge amount of progress in recent years and is leading the way in many areas by rolling out pioneering schemes and influencing London-wide policy. Whilst levels of pollution in the borough are improving, we know we must go further and faster to clean up our air. That why we have delivered a new Air Quality Strategy, which has gone out for public consultation. The strategy sets out our very bold plans and we will also incorporate some of the responses we have from the public too.

Poor air quality in Islington is caused by a variety of factors, with damaging emissions from diesel buses, lorries and cars contributing to dangerous levels of pollutants in the air. We have already taken a number of ambitious steps to tackle the biggest issues, including introducing a 'diesel surcharge', whilst continuing our programme to install 400 more electric vehicle charging points across the borough by 2022. We were proud to be the first borough to introduce a 20mph speed limit on our roads and to implement an engine idling ban. We will continue plans to improve air quality near local schools by closing streets at school opening and closing times where feasible and installing air quality monitors to find more ways that we can improve air quality. To do this agenda we need more investment from government and others. We cannot to this on our own, but we are pioneering and leading this agenda.

Supplementary question:

Thank you for your response. I welcome the strategy that you mentioned, although I don't think it is clear what the council is going to be doing to measure the effectiveness of their plans and initiatives, how progress will be monitored, what measurements will be taken to work out the impacts of those strategies. Please could you explain?

Response:

One of the things we want to do is absolutely stop the long term negative impacts that air pollution has on our residents. We want to stop people dying from air pollution, it is a life and death matter. Air pollution causes 100 deaths a year and we want that to be zero. But our actions alone are not enough unless our neighbouring boroughs, London as a whole, and the EU take action. We know that London exceeds the safe limit for air pollution, we know that diesel causes high levels of air pollution, and we call on the Mayor of London to place a ban on diesel by 2025. That is what we have asked for London-wide because that is what we think is necessary to protect the residents of our borough. These targets are about stopping the long term health impact and will be measured against that impact, but our actions cannot happen in isolation. Which is why I am proud of our work with Hackney, for example, on zero emissions streets, because what we did was protect the streets around Central Foundation School, the most polluted secondary school in London. We want to do more, and we will do more.

Question (m) from Justin Portess to Councillor Webbe, Executive Member for Environment & Transport:

Islington Clean Air Parents is a fast growing network of parents and carers concerned about the effects of air pollution on the health of their children. We welcome Islington's initiative to implement the first 10 school streets, but parents all over Islington want to see school streets outside their children's school and don't want to wait until 2025. Please can councillors respond to parents' concerns across the Borough and consider how to install School Streets outside all schools by the end of the next academic year?

As Justin Portess was not present at the meeting, a written response was sent, as follows:

I'd like to start my response by thanking Islington Clean Air Parents for their support for our School Streets Programme. As I said to Youth Cllr Baker during the meeting, we are committed to taking bold action to improve air quality in the borough, particularly for our children and young people.

We are working on a number of projects to improve air quality across the borough, including hitting a major milestone, earlier this month by opening our 10th school street in just over six months. Despite 70% cuts to our core funding from Central Government in a decade, we are committed to rolling out more school streets and I'm pleased to tell you that our ambition is to deliver School Streets, or similar, within our powers, for every school in the borough over this council term, which ends in 2022, which is three years ahead of 2025.

It is important to recognise the need for appropriate consultation to take place on each scheme, which understandably takes time, But We are absolutely determined to

deliver to more of these schemes, and look forward to continuing to work with Islington Clean Air Parents to build even more support for School Streets.

Question (n) from Ernestas Jegorovas to Cllr Hull, Executive Member for Finance, Performance & Community Safety:

How important is it that every citizen is enfranchised to take part in the democratic process does so without barriers? What percentage of European citizens in Islington were denied their vote in 2019 European Elections?

Response:

Thank you for your question Ernestas. It is extremely important that every citizen is able to take part in the democratic process. Lots of work is done throughout the year and in the lead up to elections by our election teams to ensure that everyone that is eligible to vote is registered and able to vote if they want to.

For the European Parliamentary elections, European Union citizens can choose to vote in the UK or their country of origin. If an EU citizen chooses to vote in the UK, the law requires that they complete and return a UC1 form by the statutory deadline, which is set by the electoral commission. In Islington, no EU elector that returned their UC1 form by the statutory deadline this year was unable to vote at the European Parliamentary election on 23 May. Only those EU electors that either didn't return the UC1 form or returned it after the statutory deadline were unable to vote, which I fully appreciate will have been extremely frustrating for them.

Letters including a UC1 form and business reply envelope were sent to all 17,515 EU nationals the week commencing 15 April and then a reminder email, again with a UC1 form, was sent on 27 April to the 13,500 EU electors that we held email addresses for. From the 15 April, any newly registered EU electors were sent the UC1 form by post or email encouraging them to complete and return the form if they wanted to vote in Islington and this continued daily up until the 7 May deadline. The Islington Council Communications team updated the Islington website dedicating a page to the EU elections and the UC1 form was available to download. To publicise the fact that EU citizens had to complete the UC1 form the Islington Council Communication's team sent out an election bulletin to about 5000 people on 2 May and The Islington Tribune ran an article on EU registration in which Maggie Kufeldt the Local Returning Officer gave a quote advising EU citizens on what to do if they wanted to vote in Islington.

All of which is to say, that European Citizens in Islington were not denied the chance to vote, and Islington Council did everything it was meant to do, and more, to enfranchise the borough's European citizens so they could cast their vote last month.

Supplementary question:

I think I was privileged because I applied on the last day online and I got an email to say that my form was received and that I had the right to vote. I know a few people in both Islington North and Islington South who didn't get that confirmatory response once they replied by post. My question, looking forward to the London Elections, is what is the communications plan to make sure that people are aware what their rights are?

Response:

My understanding is that the requirement to complete that form varies from election to election, so I'm not sure if it applies in the way that you describe, but regardless it is a lot easier to give people notice to fill in a form if the government gives us notice that there is an election. We didn't know the election was happening until late in the day. This is completely the government's fault due to their handling of the Brexit process. They gave us almost no notice and we still managed to get thousands of people signed up to vote and many more than elsewhere in London. If you look at the figures, only 24% of European citizens managed to register and vote in 2014. In 2019 that figure rose to 30%. Nonetheless, 437 UC1 forms were received after the deadline, letters were sent to all of those electors, advising that their form was received late, and therefore they would not be able to vote in the election, as we didn't want them to turn up to the polling station and not be able to cast their vote. We did everything we could to enfranchise everyone we could, we did better than other councils, we did better than four years ago, and we will do it better still in future.

61 **QUESTIONS FROM MEMBERS OF THE COUNCIL**

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

Congratulations to Cllr O'Halloran on becoming the Executive Member for Community Development. Islington has a proud record of supporting the voluntary sector with its grants programme when other boroughs have gone down the route of commissioning. Islington has also managed to sustain its many community centres throughout this period of massive government cuts to its budget.

The Voluntary sector and our community centres are both important assets in our community, can Cllr O'Halloran confirm that we as a council will continue our commitment to fund the Voluntary sector and our support of community centres?

Response:

Islington's voluntary sector and our community centres are at the heart of our ambitions to be the best council in the country at early intervention and prevention. We are proud to have perhaps the most vibrant and dynamic voluntary sector of any local authority in the country, It's a fantastic privilege to work with the many fantastic

voluntary and community organisations across Islington and see the important role they play in the lives of local people every day.

The sector reaches parts of the community that statutory services can't, providing an extensive range of services that enable residents to thrive, give and connect. We firmly recognise the value of providing core grant funding to voluntary and community sector organisations that are key strategic partners of the council. Core grant funding is hardest type of funding for any voluntary sector organisation to obtain. The council's commitment to core grant funding has helped create resilience in the sector and enabled the sector to bring in £18 million of grant funding into the borough in 2018.

This council has faced unprecedented financial pressures, by 2020 the government will have cut our core funding by 70%, with a further £50 million of central government cuts by 2022. Despite these challenges, we remain fully committed to core grant funding for Islington's voluntary and community sector, including community centres, and are working across the council and with Islington CCG to renew financial commitments that are required to ensure that core grant funding remains a key part of our approach to supporting Islington's voluntary and community sector. I anticipate that our new VCS Partnership Grants Programme will be launched later this year.

Supplementary question:

Thanks very much. It is a great achievement that we have a vibrant voluntary sector supporting and enriching people's lives. It is important to remember that previous administrations sold off community assets that cannot be replaced. Can we have reassurance that community facilities will not be sold off by this administration?

Response:

Thank you. I'm really proud of this council. We have protected community facilities, children's play areas, libraries. This council is leading the way. Some councils don't have a strong voluntary sector or don't work with them; we do, and I can assure you that we will do everything we can to support them. We will not sell off our assets, in fact we are bringing services back in house. I'm happy to talk to anyone about this after the meeting.

Question (b) from Councillor Heather to Councillor Ward, Executive Member for Housing & Development:

It is of great concern to me that since the year 2000, Land Registry data, as reported by the Islington Gazette, shows that 3,136 council houses bought under Right to Buy in Islington by former tenants have been re-sold at a collective profit of £861million. Tenants who purchased publicly funded and owned council homes made an average profit of £153,260 each. Forty-nine properties were bought from the local authority for less than £20,000 and later re-sold for a combined total of £11.7m.

This may be within the law, but it is wrong and immoral when we have over 14,000 households in Islington on the council's housing waiting list and the council has lost 70% of its funding from central government since 2010. And that is why the law on right to buy needs changing. To his credit, Cllr Diarmaid Ward, Islington Council's executive member for housing and development, is on the record as opposing the current right to buy laws as they have hampered our council's ambitions to deliver council homes and genuinely affordable homes in the borough.

Given the critical nature of this issue for the council and its residents, can I ask if we can step-up our campaign to reform the wrongs of the Right to Buy laws?

Response:

Thank you for your question. I couldn't agree more. Right to Buy is in urgent need of reform. It is absolutely scandalous that when we face a housing crisis, the government is still offering massive discounts to people to sell-off vital council homes. What's even worse is that the receipts from these sales are so tied up in government red tape that we simply can't offer replacement homes. We can only use those right to buy receipts to fund a third of the cost of building council homes. We have to find the other two thirds ourselves. We have made repeated representations to the government on this issue, as have many other councils across London and elsewhere across the country, and we will keep doing so. Let's sit down and talk about how we can combine our efforts to make the government see sense on Right to Buy.

Supplementary question:

Thank you Cllr Ward. I want to respond to Cllr Clarke's point, on the selling off of community assets. There has never been such a bigger fraud perpetrated on the people of this country than the Right to Buy, flogging off community assets with subsidies is totally and utterly immoral. As you've already mentioned, not only are our assets sold off, but the income can't be spent in full on replacing housing. We need to get rid of the Right to Buy, that's for sure. I do welcome the article in the Gazette on this scandalous issue. It highlighted that some properties are sold to former tenants and are then sold on very quickly for enormous profits. I think that shows there could be something that needs looking into. I want to ensure no stone remains unturned in making sure we are looking into that, to make sure that there is no impropriety. Congratulations on raising that we need to look into this, but is this council doing everything it can to look into this issue?

Response:

Absolutely. All instances of housing fraud, including Right to Buy sales, are investigated very thoroughly. We see this for what this is, theft. Theft of public assets. Theft of genuinely affordable secure homes for local people. Our housing fraud team work in partnership with the conveyancing and valuations team to keep a close eye on Right to Buy sales. We have indeed challenged and stopped sales when

we have identified fraud. In fact, there have been four criminal convictions over the last five years, and also 33 properties have been recovered in the last five years as a result of this.

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

Does this council recognise non binary identities in all its work?

Response:

Thank you Cllr Russell for your question. Islington is a wonderfully cohesive borough that has always celebrated the diversity of its residents. In recognition that Islington's diversity is one of its greatest strengths, we take very seriously the right of all people in Islington to feel recognised for their unique identity and to feel included and valued in the scope of council services, and wider community. We are doing some work currently to make sure that inclusion of non-binary identities is referenced in all of the council's various documents and policies. I know that there is always more to learn and I am very happy to meet with you and discuss any suggestions you would like to make to help Islington Council be even better in the future.

Supplementary question:

Thank you Cllr O'Halloran for that very constructive answer. I've been told that standard letters and forms used by the council do not allow people to specify their use of pronoun or title. It also seems that some officers are not being supported to understand the importance of preferred gender pronouns or titles. Genderqueer people have told me they do not feel respected in interactions with the council. I welcome your offer of meeting, and wonder if you were prepared to set a timetable to update the forms and letters, and provide appropriate training to officers where this is needed.

Response:

Thank you for bringing this to my attention. I'm quite happy to meet afterwards to look at specific examples and in due course I'll get back to you with a timeline. I'd be more than happy to.

Question (c) from Councillor Poyser to Councillor Hull, Executive Member for Finance, Performance & Community Safety:

Would councillor Hull like to support me in congratulating Islington Council, Haringey Council and TfL for co-operating in the construction of anti-suicide measures on Hornsey Lane Bridge this month?

Response:

Thank you for your question. I'd like to echo your comments and I am very pleased to say that construction of the measures began on schedule. Officers at Haringey Council are confident that the works will be completed on schedule too, with the costs of the scheme being shared by the two local authorities and Transport for London. Once installation is complete, the scheme will be kept under review to ensure that the measures are effective at reducing the number of incidents on the bridge. I would particularly like to thank the Police, Fire Brigade and ambulance services. All three services have worked very constructively with the two local authorities to agree and finalise the design. By taking this action the council is demonstrating that it is on the side of those who, for whatever reason, feel the need to take their own life. I sincerely hope that the actions we have taken will give at least some people in such awful circumstances pause for thought, as evidence from elsewhere suggests it should. I am aware that there has been some limited criticism of the measures we are taking, particularly on aesthetic grounds. One person wrote online 'life is temporary anyway, but beauty is forever'. Another compared the installation to a Nazi concentration camp. Let me just state, unequivocally and on the record, that these are sentiments for which I have zero sympathy and even less respect. We have done the right thing. Those fences are there to protect people in the very darkest of places. It could be any of us and we should be proud of the steps we have taken to save lives and I will defend them to the hilt.

Supplementary question:

I would just like to add my personal thanks to the Junction ward councillors, Haringey councillors, Jeremy Corbyn MP who has campaigned on this issue for 15 years, Catherine West MP who was on a demonstration recently about it, doctors in the Whittington A&E who have responded to suicide attempts for many years, psychiatrists from the suicide prevention group, local vicars and others from the community, council officers from both Islington and Haringey and particularly Karen Sullivan, our Director of Planning and Development, whose intervention in establishing CCTV has saved many lives. I would just like to ask if Cllr Hull has any more words for those people who feel these are the wrong measures, even though they have negotiated for 15 years in consultation with the Police, Fire Brigade and other experts.

Response:

Thank you. I'd just urge local residents to put themselves in the shoes of the local mothers and fathers who have to open their door to a man or woman in uniform to be told that their son or daughter is dead. I urge local residents to read the research on this difficult subject which suggests that it making it harder to commit suicide at a given location can prevent someone from committing suicide at all. I am sure if local residents engage with this issue with their head and their heart then they will back the measures. It is the right course of action to take.

Question (d) from Councillor Turan to Councillor Burgess, Executive Member for Health & Social Care:

I am very honoured to be the Mental Health Champion for our beautiful Islington and would like the opportunity to thank Cllr Janet Burgess for her hard work in helping to make Islington a fairer place.

According to the recent Islington CCG report, Islington has a higher prevalence of Serious Mental Illness (SMI) which is 1.5% compared to London (1.1%) and England (0.9%). Islington also has higher rates of hospital admission for mental ill health. It is anticipated that levels of mental ill-health might increase over the coming years due to a challenging economic environment, which I believe are significantly due to the politics of austerity by the government. What is Islington council doing to improve the determinants of mental health?

Response:

Thank you for your question. You are right about the prevalence of poor mental health in Islington. The council has a range of measures to tackle the problem; from prevention and building up resilience, to support for people living with mental ill health. We know that housing is an important determinant of mental health and that is why the council's priority is to build more social housing and to improve services for those in social housing. We have a range of supported accommodation and other services for those with long term mental health needs that impact on their day to day living. The Income Maximisation Team help residents to access financial support and we also provide support to those in debt. The Islington Carers Hub provides advice, support and information to carers, including those who care for people with mental health needs. Violence, emotional and sexual abuse can have a significant impact on mental health, we provide dedicated support through a support and advocacy service, we commission the mental health recovery pathway which incorporates reablement, psychosocial services, day opportunities and a recovery café. We have three mental health day centres. We support residents across the health and care system through the social prescribing approach which relies on a link worker engaging with residents to facilitate access. Services such as Age UK, Help on Your Doorstep and SHINE also provide support. We know that poor mental health can start early on in life, so we have services for children and young people, including through Bright Start. We have commissioned a pilot involving two social prescribers working with a school, four or five GP surgeries and the Long Term Conditions service to understand how social prescribing can be used for that age group. We know that employment can be key to building resilience so we are working with employers to provide work experience and advice to secondary school children and we commission mental health working and employment support schemes to help those with mental health needs get back into work. We train staff to support people with mental health needs through our Make Every Contact Count programme. We commission mental health first aid training. Manor Gardens provides training for individuals who wish to become mental health champions. We will be developing a new strategy for mental health provision which is a key priority of our People

directorate. Cllr Turan, as our Mental Health Champion, you will be involved in supporting that.

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

Two years after the Grenfell Tower fire, are you confident that the council has resolved all outstanding issues of fire safety in council homes in the borough?

Response:

Thank you for your question. As a responsible landlord, we undertake regular Fire Risk Assessments of all our housing blocks. Following the tragic events at Grenfell Tower, we decided that we would undertake Fire Risk Assessments of all of our 126 blocks of six storeys or more every year, rather than every three years, as legally required. The Fire Risk Assessments for all of these 126 blocks are available on the Council's website. We have invested significant funds in the installation of wet rising mains to the two tallest housing blocks in the borough, upgrading communal and front entrance doors, installing emergency lighting and interlinked fire detection and warning systems, and a range of other fire safety work. The Hackitt review of building regulations, the Grenfell Inquiry and the Metropolitan Police investigation are all likely to recommend changes to the fire safety regime that councils and other landlords operate within and we continue to closely monitor developments in this area. We are also in regular contact with the Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government about their testing programmes. We continue to work hand in hand with the London Fire Brigade and are currently jointly trialling Premises Information Boxes with them in some of our most complex blocks. Resident safety is, and will continue to be, our top priority.

Supplementary question:

Thank you, that is very reassuring. I wanted to ask about fire doors. How many are still non-compliant in properties for which the council is responsible, and when do you expect them to be replaced?

Response:

Unfortunately, that's not information I have to hand. We met before to discuss fire doors and I'm happy to meet again to talk through this. We are working very closely with the Ministry for Housing, Communities and Local Government on this issue.

Question (g) from Councillor Mackmurdie to Councillor Ward, Executive Member for Housing and Development:

How is insourcing of all possible housing services progressing? What options are being pursued to speed this up?

As Councillor Mackmurdie was not present, a written response was sent, as follows:

It was great to see the report by Association for Public Service Excellence (APSE) published last month showing Islington Council has one of the biggest insourcing programmes in the country, with over £400m of services being brought back in-house since 2011 which include many of our housing services.

Following the insourcing of the repairs service in the summer of 2014, we have been actively considering where it is possible and prudent to pursue further insourcing. In summer 2015 we insourced the handyman scheme, which undertakes minor works for those in receipt of care packages, carers and their families in Council-owned, housing association-owned and private homes across the borough. In 2017 we insourced the allocation of sheltered housing from Circle 33 into our Housing Needs team. We took the drainage function in-house in spring 2017, recruiting staff and procuring specialist equipment and vehicles in order to provide a better, more responsive service in this area. We are currently in the process of recruiting staff to undertake the cyclical testing of water temperatures in the Council's water tanks (mainly in communal roof spaces of housing blocks but also in community centres, caretaker lodges, etc.). This function is part of the Council's control mechanism against legionella.

We are proud that the vast majority of housing services are now delivered in-house, but continue to seek opportunities for further insourcing. We are currently considering whether it is possible to undertake some of our voids re-servicing work in-house, although we have to carefully balance capacity issues in this area so as not to adversely affect either day-to-day repairs performance or our voids turnaround times.

Our largest insourcing project work currently underway is to prepare for the insourcing of the PFI2 contract, subject to a formal appraisal of its options for delivery of services in the future and demonstrating that bringing the homes back under council-management will provide good services and value for money for residents, will take place in the summer of 2022. This will involve taking on the management and maintenance of over 4,000 street properties and represents a significant increase in the scope of our direct services.

The council is also engaged in buying back ex right to buy properties from private owners to directly manage as much needed temporary accommodation. Thank you for the question.

62 ISLINGTON ARMED FORCES COMMUNITY COVENANT - ANNUAL UPDATE

Councillor Poole moved the recommendations in the report. Councillor Burgess seconded. Councillor Russell contributed to the debate.

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

RESOLVED:

That the activity over the past year to celebrate and support Armed Forces personnel, veterans, and their families be noted.

**63 ISLINGTON LOCAL PLAN REVIEW - APPROVAL OF REGULATION 19
PROPOSED SUBMISSION DRAFT DOCUMENTS FOR PUBLIC CONSULTATION
AND SUBSEQUENT SUBMISSION TO THE SECRETARY OF STATE**

Councillor Ward moved the recommendations in the report. Councillor Shaikh seconded. Councillor Russell moved her amendment. Councillor Ward exercised his right of reply.

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

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

RESOLVED:

- (a) That the summary of consultation responses (at Appendix 4) received during public consultation undertaken between November 2018 and January 2019, and the comments on how these responses have been taken into account be noted. That the Corporate Director of Environment and Regeneration be authorised, in consultation with the Executive Member for Housing and Development, to undertake any significant changes to these documents and that officers in the Planning Service be authorised to make minor changes be agreed. The consultation statement will be published on the Council's website alongside the Local Plan documents at Appendix 1, 2 and 3.
- (b) That the draft Integrated Impact Assessment (IIA) (at Appendix 5) be noted. The IIA assesses sustainability and equalities impacts of the draft plan, and will be submitted alongside the draft Plan. That the Residents Impact Assessment has also been produced (at Appendix 6) which links to the IIA information be noted. That the Corporate Director of Environment and Regeneration be authorised, in consultation with the Executive Member for Housing and Development to undertake any significant changes to these documents and that officers in the Planning Service be authorised to make minor changes be agreed. The IIA will be published on the Council's website alongside the Local Plan documents at Appendix 1, 2 and 3.
- (c) That the Local Plan proposed submission draft documents (at Appendix 1, 2 and 3) be approved for six weeks formal statutory consultation (Regulation 19 stage) starting in September 2019, and subsequent submission to the Planning Inspectorate for Independent Examination.

- (d) That the Corporate Director of Environment and Regeneration, in consultation with the Executive Member for Housing and Development, be authorised to approve any further changes to the draft Local Plan ahead of public consultation in September 2019.
- (e) That Corporate Director of Environment and Regeneration, in consultation with the Executive Member for Housing and Development, be authorised to approve appropriate changes to the Local Plan during Independent Examination, in response to requests from the Planning Inspector and/or any emerging evidence, guidance or legal advice and/or in response to the new London Plan, which is currently in the final stages of preparation.

64 CONSTITUTION UPDATE

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

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

RESOLVED:

- (a) That the amendments to the Constitution be approved, as set out at Appendix 1 to the report submitted.
- (b) That the Members' Allowances Scheme for 2019/20 be adopted.
- (c) That the Director of Law and Governance be authorised to make any consequential amendments to the Constitution considered necessary.

65 CHIEF WHIP'S REPORT

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

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

RESOLVED:

- (a) That Cllr Gill be appointed to the board of Camden and Islington NHS Foundation Trust for a 3 year term or until a successor is appointed.
- (b) That Cllrs Kay and Khurana be appointed to the board of the Cripplegate Foundation from 14 September 2019 for a 5 year term or until successors are appointed.

66 NOTICES OF MOTION

Motion 2 – Protecting Local Welfare Assistance

Councillor Hull moved the motion. Councillor Picknell seconded. Councillor Russell contributed to the debate.

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

RESOLVED:

- (a) To maintain a Local Welfare Assistance Scheme (as part of its Resident Support Scheme) to support families and young people in crisis.
- (b) To continue to work across all council departments and with voluntary and community groups through the Islington Debt Coalition to support the borough's residents to avoid and deal with financial crisis.
- (c) To make further representations to central government for a new funding allocation for councils to provide Local Welfare Assistance Schemes (LWAS) to be made available at the next comprehensive spending review and for it to be protected in real terms over the following years.

The meeting closed at 10.25pm

MAYOR