



COUNCIL MEETING – 8 JULY 2021

NOTICES OF MOTION

Motion 1: Making Islington a Borough of Sanctuary

Moved by Cllr Santiago Bell-Bradford

Seconded by Cllr Valerie Bossman-Quarshie

This Council notes:

- The Conservative government's "Hostile Environment" policies which deliberately make it harder for refugees, asylum seekers, and those who cannot prove their right to remain in the UK.
- The Government's cruel treatment of the Windrush Generation which has forced many Islington residents, including several who were born in the UK, to go through unnecessary amounts of distress, with some being deported.
- That the Council has supported 137 asylum and migrant households since the start of the pandemic in March 2020, who have No Recourse to Public Funds due to their immigration status. The Council receives no funding from Central Government to support these households.
- The Council has consistently highlighted to the government the impact of underfunding the immigration system. This underfunding results in delayed decision making on applications, unjustifiably high and unreasonable fees for immigration applications and the harsh reality of being excluded from fully participating in society for those who are granted leave to remain in the UK but who have No Recourse to Public Funds.
- The further difficulties the pandemic has brought for refugees and migrants, including insecure work, lack of access to decent housing and digital exclusion.
- That in December 2020, Islington Council refused to co-operate with the Conservative Government's policy to make sleeping rough grounds for deportation.

This Council further notes:

- That Islington should celebrates our borough's rich diversity and welcomes everybody, regardless of their background. The Council recognises the contribution of refugees, migrants and those seeking sanctuary to the Borough of Islington. We are committed to welcoming and including them in all of our activities and actively seek ways in which we can support them.

- That, throughout the pandemic, Islington Council's support services, such as the We Are Islington helpline, have been open to anyone who has needed them, no matter their immigration status.
- The Council's recent celebrations of Refugee Week 2021 in which we publicly shared and celebrated the contribution of refugees and migrants in Islington.
- That the Council has worked with local partners to bridge the digital divide during the pandemic, distributing more than 6,000 laptops to families to support with remote learning and helping with access to online services.
- That the Council is committed to our refugee and migrant communities. We support the initiative to make Islington a recognised 'Borough of Sanctuary,' welcoming those fleeing violence and persecution and offering them safety.

This Council resolves to:

- Join a network of cities and towns which promote the inclusion and welfare of people who are fleeing violence and persecution in their own countries and become a recognised "Borough of Sanctuary"
- Work with community groups to harness public support to help and support refugees, migrants and asylum seekers in Islington.
- Continue to celebrate the contribution of refugee and migrant communities to Islington.
- Continue to work with organisations in the borough who support refugees, asylum seekers and migrants in the borough.
- Challenge anti-refugee and anti-migrant attitudes wherever they are found.
- Continue to lobby the government to reform the No Recourse to Public Funds condition so that people are no longer blocked from fully participating in society for years while they wait for their status to be resolved. We will continue to put pressure on Central Government to put in place a fully-functional Windrush Compensation Scheme.
- Work with local businesses and community partners to further tackle the digital divide, provide affordable access to online services and look at ways to donate IT devices locally to those in need, rather than scrapping them.

Motion 2: Keeping the NHS in public hands

Moved by Cllr Nurullah Turan

Seconded by Cllr Anjna Khurana

This Council notes:

- That local people have relied on the NHS throughout the pandemic, treating unwell patients, looking after the most vulnerable and maintaining vital services
- The heroism of the doctors, nurses and all other NHS staff who have been on the frontline against the virus
- The backdoor selling-off and privatisation of the NHS and other public services by the Conservative Government since 2010, as well as Government austerity which has stripped the NHS of funding and many vital services
- The success of the NHS vaccine roll-out which has seen thousands of people in Islington receive a Covid-19 vaccination and preventing many from serious illness
- The failure of the £37 billion privatised Test, Track and Trace system which, in December 2020, the National Audit Office found had “not met a target to provide results within 24 hours for tests carried out in person in the community” and in October last year, only 60% of contacts of those who had tested positive were being traced
- How the difference between the results of the NHS vaccine roll-out and the Serco Test, Track and Trace service shows the substantial benefit of publically-run and publically-owned public services rather
- That, since 2010, Islington Council has brought over £380m of services back in-house including housing repairs, waste and recycling and temporary accommodation, providing better services for local people, better value for money for the Council and better pay and conditions for workers
- How Government contracts for Covid-19 services have often been given to friends of Government ministers and advisors, without due process, including the contract given to Public First for services which the High Court ruled unlawful
- Concerns from local people and GP member organisations about Government plans to pool patient medical records onto a database and share them with academic and commercial third parties
- That, in 1946, the Labour Government founded the NHS through the National Health Service Act

This Council further notes:

- The takeover of AT Medics by Operose, a subsidiary of US-based health insurance company Centene, which has meant the takeover of 49 GP surgeries, including Mitchison Road Surgery and Hanley Road Primary Care Centre in Islington

- The concern held by many local people about the creeping privatisation of local NHS services and what this could mean for their patient care and privacy of patient records
- Letters from Cllr Nurullah Turan and former Council Leader Richard Watts to the Secretary of State for Health to oppose the Centene takeover and the lack of response so far
- Early Day Motion 1628, tabled in the House of Commons by Apsana Begum MP, expressing alarm at the takeover by Operose and calling for “the NHS to be returned to a publicly funded, publicly provided, comprehensive health care service, available to all that is free at the point of delivery”
- Central Government’s decision to delay the deadline to opt-out of pooling of medical records until 1st September

This Council resolves to:

- Continue campaigning to keep the NHS in public hands and to stop the backdoor privatisation of NHS services, because public services are always best run in public hands
- Work with local MPs and the local CCG to stop any further Conservative Government selling off of local NHS services following Operose’s takeover of 49 GP surgeries
- Continue supporting our local NHS services to roll-out the Covid-19 vaccine to local people and keep Islington safe
- Work with North Central London CCG to inform local people of the pooling of patient medical records and ensure patients are aware of how they can opt-out
- Continue seeking to bring local services back in-house where possible, such as housing repairs, including Partners for Improvement
- Write to the Secretary of State for Health again, to set out local people’s concerns regarding the Centene takeover of AT Medics and to call for local NHS services to be run for the benefit of the public, not for profit.

Motion 3: Making Islington homes safe and secure

Moved by Cllr Toby North

Seconded by Cllr Jason Jackson

This Council notes:

- The tragic Grenfell Tower fire in 2017 which killed 72 people and left many others injured and homeless
- The role which highly flammable 'Aluminium Composite Material' (ACM) cladding played in the spread of the fire at Grenfell and the concerns which were raised at the Grenfell Inquiry about the way external wall systems were designed, tested and sold
- The Government has been slow to force building owners to take remedial action on unsafe cladding and other fire safety hazards and has not provided sufficient compensation funds to cover all situations where remediation is required
- The Royal Institution of Chartered Surveyors (RICS) and the UK Council of Mortgage Lenders agreed the industry External Wall System fire review and certification process resulting in what is known as an EWS1 form
- Central Government has failed to provide the necessary support for leaseholders to get the form completed, as well as a national shortage of independent professionals that are both suitably technically qualified and have a suitable level of professional indemnity insurance, only around 300 nationwide
- Lenders are not consistently applying the RICS guidance on the use of, or outcome of EWS1 forms.
- Subsequently, residents and leaseholders through no fault of their own are being left in potentially ruinous limbo unable to mortgage properties, re-mortgage and therefore unable to buy and sell. This is fundamentally holding up people's lives, costing Islington residents money they shouldn't have to pay and putting local people through unnecessary stress
- That while legislation has been passed, Central Government has failed to take responsibility for the cost of making necessary changes to existing buildings, nor has mandated freeholders or construction companies to cover the cost, leaving many Islington leaseholders with extortionate bills to make their homes safe
- The Conservative Government's piecemeal announcement in February 2021 for remedial work and funding which is estimated to cover only a third of the work needed
- The impact of the fire safety scandal on residents of the Packington Estate which, having been sold off by the previous Liberal Democrat Council and rebuilt, has been found to have issues with fire safety measures. This has left many residents uncertain whether they will be facing large costs for works, and with a waking watch across the estate for 24 hours a day.

This Council further notes:

- That Conservative MPs have voted against amendments in the House of Commons on five occasions, all of which would have protected leaseholders from the cost of remedial work on buildings
- That fourteen separate companies and individuals with links to construction companies using ACM cladding on buildings have donated nearly £4m to the Conservatives since 2006
- The hard work of Cllr Diarmaid Ward, Islington Council's Executive Member for Housing and Development, alongside local Islington Labour councillors, to stand up for leaseholders, including writing a letter to Grainger with Jeremy Corbyn MP to oppose the costs of remedial work at Tiltman Place being passed onto leaseholders and writing to Hyde Housing about the Packington Estate in April 2021
- The undue stress and anxiety this issue has caused local people across Islington through no fault of their own

This Council resolves to:

- Continue pressure on Central Government, including working with our local MPs, to provide the necessary funding to make every building in Islington safe from dangerous cladding and other fire safety risks, at no cost to leaseholders
- Adopt the 10 asks of the End Our Cladding Scandal campaign
 1. Urgent removal of all dangerous cladding
 2. Building Safety Fund must cover all buildings
 3. Government should provide money up front & recover from responsible parties
 4. Social Housing providers must have full & equal access to fund
 5. Building owners must be honest with fire safety defects
 6. Government should cover cost of interim safety measures
 7. Government should act as insurer & underwrite premiums
 8. Replace EWS
 9. Mental health support must be offered to affected residents
 10. Protect residents from historic & future costs
- Adopt the sensible recommendation of the Housing, Communities and Local Government Select Committee that the EWS1 process could be reformed to unlock the housing market whilst keeping residents safe
- To continue to support and advocate on behalf of residents who have been failed by this Tory government's failure to address the cladding and fire safety scandal.

Motion 4: Democratic participation and the coronavirus pandemic

Moved by Cllr Caroline Russell

This council notes:

- The *Local Authorities and Police and Crime Panels (Coronavirus) (Flexibility of Local Authority and Police and Crime Panel Meetings) (England and Wales) Regulations 2020* ("Regulations") were brought in on 4 April 2020 under powers granted by section 78 of the Coronavirus Act 2020 to allow local authorities to deal with the challenges of holding physical meetings during the coronavirus pandemic. The Regulations were stated to apply until 7 May 2021.
- The Regulations allowed for local authorities to hold meetings remotely, for example through digital conference software (e.g. Zoom) or telephone conference calls.
- Confirmation was provided by the Government to council leaders that the emergency legislation concerning remote meetings would only be in place until 6 May 2021.
- Hertfordshire County Council, the Association of Democratic Service Officers and Lawyers in Local Government brought an action asking the High Court to decide whether Schedule 12, Local Government Act 1972 should be interpreted as allowing for virtual meetings, as the legislation was passed at a time when virtual meetings could not have been envisaged.

This council further notes:

- The High Court on 23 April 2021 held that meetings cannot be held remotely under the Local Government Act 1972 and extending the Regulations would require further emergency legislation.
- The judgement highlighted the importance of being clear on attendance requirements at council meetings to ensure council decisions are validly taken, i.e. whether a meeting was quorate, or whether the majority vote had been achieved.
- The Court stated that local authority meetings must take place at a single, specified geographical location and that attending a meeting means 'physical presence at that location'.
- 4 May 2021, the High Court clarified the outstanding question of whether a meeting is either "open to the public" or "held in public" if the only form of access to the public is via a remote connection. It was held that given the importance given to "physical attendance" following the initial judgement for this matter, "open to public" or "held in public" means that councils will be required to allow people to attend in person at the meeting venue. However, it was noted that this does not prevent councils from broadcasting a meeting via webcam, and councils would still need to take into account Government guidance on Covid-19 safety measures, which could mean restricting the number of attendees.

This council agrees:

- Remote participation by elected councillors and members of the public during the pandemic made our meetings more inclusive.
- Council members and Islington residents have benefitted in convenience, from being able to dial in to meetings from home.
- In the midst of an ongoing pandemic, the availability of remote meetings has also helped ensure that essential council business continued whilst also prioritising the health and safety of attendees.
- All elected councillors should be able to contribute and play their part in Full Council meetings even if not accommodated in the chamber for Covid-19 safety reasons.

This council resolves:

- To ensure council meetings are inclusive, to write to Robert Jenrick MP Minister for Housing, Communities and Local Government to request a change in the law to enable councils to resume holding fully hybrid meetings.
- To continue to broadcast Full Council and Committee meetings.
- Until the law is updated, to make every effort to enable participation of elected councillors and members of the public in our meetings with a cross party agreement about formal decision making.

Motion 5: Climate and Ecological Emergency Bill

Moved by Cllr Caroline Russell

This Council notes:

- that we have cross party, declared a climate and ecological emergency, joined the UK100 alliance (<https://www.uk100.org/>) of councils and have published "Vision 2030: Building a Net Zero Carbon Islington by 2030", a biodiversity strategy and a transport strategy.

This Council also notes:

- that there is a Bill before Parliament—the Climate and Ecological Emergency Bill (published as the "Climate and Ecology Bill")—according to which the Government must develop an emergency strategy to limit global temperature increase to 1.5 degrees C above pre-industrial levels.

This Council further notes:

- the CEE Bill requires that the UK plays its fair and proper role in reducing greenhouse gas emissions consistent with limiting global temperature increase to 1.5 degrees C above pre-industrial temperatures; and
 - ensures that all the UK's consumption emissions are accounted for;
 - protects and restores biodiverse habitats along overseas supply chains;
 - restores and regenerates the UK's depleted soils, wildlife habitats and species populations to healthy and robust states, maximising their capacity to absorb CO2 and their resistance to climate heating;
 - sets up an independent Citizens' Assembly, representative of the UK's population, to engage with Parliament and Government and

This Council therefore resolves to:

- Support the Climate and Ecological Emergency Bill, through encouraging local MPs to support this bill in Parliament, and through writing to the CEE Bill Alliance,

Further, Council resolves to continue cross party work on climate with the UK100, and pledges to:

- assess our largest impacts on climate change, prioritise where action needs to be taken and measure and monitor progress towards targets.
- reduce our emissions at source and limit the use of carbon offsets as part of the global effort to avoid the worst impacts of climate change;
- Continue cross party work to ensure Carbon Neutrality by 2030, including through joining lobbying calls of the UK100 partnership of local government.