

Islington Together

2030 Plan

Foreword from Cllr Kaya Comer-Schwartz, Leader of Islington Council.....	2
Executive Summary – the Islington Promise	3
SECTION 1:.....	6
The case for change: understanding inequality in Islington.....	6
Key facts about life in Islington.....	6
Listening to our community.....	7
The Inequality Task Force.....	14
Inequality in Islington – a complex interaction between three key factors	15
SECTION 2:.....	17
Creating a more equal future: our 2030 missions	17
A more equal future for Islington.....	17
Five missions.....	18
SECTION 3:.....	32
Making it happen: changing the way we work	32
1. Putting communities at the heart of everything we do	32
2. Embracing innovation and change	33
3. Enabling dynamic leadership and governance.....	33
4. Using communication and storytelling to connect with our residents.....	34
5. Investing in a high performing workforce.....	35
6. Ensuring impact for local people.....	36
SECTION 4:.....	36
Getting involved.....	36
Appendices.....	38

Our ambition for 2030 is to create a more equal Islington where everyone is able to thrive.

Islington is a wonderfully diverse borough. There are more than 215,000 people who live here and every one of them has an equal right to thrive. However, we know too many of our people are in danger of being left behind. The world has become more fragile and uncertain. Poverty, mental illness, anxiety about the future, lack of access to good jobs, poor air quality and housing conditions, prejudice, racism and injustice are all factors which hold too many people back, limiting their opportunities, choices and their autonomy to shape their lives in the way they want.

In 2010 we set up our pioneering Fairness Commission to look into how to make the borough a fairer place. A decade on, we have made good progress. We were the first Local Authority to gain accreditation as a London Living Wage employer. We've built 800 new genuinely affordable homes in recent years, including award winning projects like the Redbrick Estate. We've developed initiatives to target health inequalities such as Parks for Health, which looks at how our communities spend more time enjoying our parks and green spaces to improve health and wellbeing.

However, we recognise that the challenges we face continue to change. In the last few years we have seen the rise of the 'gig economy', where local people rely on work which is often precarious with short term or zero hour contracts. We know more working families in Islington are forced to depend on food banks, we have an aging population and an exponentially rising demand on social care, and of course all this against the backdrop of a decade of austerity, Brexit, the Covid-19 pandemic and now a cost-of-living crisis. These continuing challenges for our communities have shone a light on the scale and complexity of the challenge for both local people and public services. As we enter a new, post-pandemic chapter in Islington – with a new Labour administration resolutely focused on tackling inequality – we know that we need to be bolder and go further than ever before.

We will be relentless in our drive to create a more equal Islington where everyone has the power to live their lives on their own terms. To do this, we will need to be bolder and more innovative than ever before. For example, we will become a Child Friendly Place so that children and young people growing up in Islington feel safe and nurtured, and we will create opportunities through our Apprenticeship Academy to equip the next generation with the skills they need to thrive. We will continue to build more homes, invest in and improve our current housing stock through the Thriving Neighbourhoods programme, and work with our communities through our Fairer Together approach so that everyone has the help they need when they need it. And we will continue to drive forward our Net Zero Carbon programme to protect our future generations so that everyone can live well and in good health in our wonderful borough for years to come.

These are just some of the things we have already set in train to achieve our ambitions. **If we have learnt anything from the last few years, it's that we don't know exactly what's coming, but whatever happens we are determined to be on the side of our residents working together to build a future of which we can all be proud.**

Executive Summary – the Islington Promise

Inequality in Islington is not new. While we have made progress in the past decade, Brexit, the pandemic, the current cost of living crisis and other national and local challenges mean our communities are facing new hardships. We are living in an increasingly uncertain world and far too many in our communities are not only struggling to put food on the table today but are dealing with the intense stress and anxiety about what tomorrow will bring.

These are tough times, but we promise, whatever happens, we will be on your side.

In order to understand what life is like for people who live here, we need to invest time in talking to our diverse communities, listening to their hopes and fears and their ideas for change. We hear parents telling us are worried about their children growing up and feeling safe in their neighbourhoods, and young people who are anxious about being able to afford to buy or even rent a home in the borough where they have grown up. For a borough so rich in culture and enterprise, far too many local people are locked out of the opportunity to benefit from what is on their doorstep because of financial and other barriers.

We are determined to confront these challenges together. We will continue to listen, to fight your corner on the national stage, but also work side by side with you to take meaningful action to create a more equal future together. We know we will only succeed if we work together to pool our collective resources – our creativity, our relationships, our connections – to become more than the sum of our parts.

This plan sets out a bold vision for working together with our diverse communities to create a more equal future for our borough by 2030 and the five key missions we have set ourselves in order to achieve this. We want Islington to be a place where people know their children will get the very best start in life, where people can access help and support when they need it and where wealth is created and enjoyed locally. A place where people can live sustainable, happy and healthy lives.

We have set ourselves five missions in order to create a more equal future for Islington in 2030:

- **Child-friendly Islington:** By 2030, Islington is a place where all children and young people feel safe in their community, belong to a place, lead change and are able to thrive which leads to fulfilling lives.
- **Fairer Together:** By 2030, everyone in Islington who needs extra help and support can access the right support for them at the right time and in the right place.
- **A Safe Place to Call Home:** By 2030, everyone in Islington has a safe, decent and genuinely affordable place to call home.
- **Community Wealth Building:** By 2030, there is a sustainable, inclusive, and locally-rooted economy in Islington, where wealth is shared fairly and residents and businesses feel they have a stake in their community
- **Greener, Healthier Islington:** By 2030, communities in Islington can access, and enjoy London's greenest, cleanest and healthiest neighbourhoods and are able to live healthy, fulfilling and independent lives.

For each of these missions, we will keep challenging ourselves to do better with and for our residents. For example, we've launched the Thriving Neighbourhoods programme, investing £10m to ensure everyone has a safe place to call home. Through Fairer Together, we will ensure anyone who needs extra help has access to a new Access Islington Hub in their local area offering support on money, work, food, family, safety, housing and wellbeing. And our Community Wealth Building programme is providing affordable workspaces for local businesses such as SPACE4 in Finsbury Park, which since opening in 2019 has had 46 regular workspace users. To deliver on our Net Zero Carbon ambitions, we have established Liveable Neighbourhoods and through the Greening Together programme will deliver up to 1.5 hectares of new green spaces by 2030.

Achieving our shared ambition for a more equal future is not just about what we do, but how we do it. We can only bring about the change we all care so deeply about through a collective endeavour with local businesses, other public services, residents and community organisations. Our communities tell us that they want to be much more involved in identifying and addressing local issues. We know they are the experts on their lives and the challenges they are facing and they need to be in the driving seat in terms of coming up with the solutions that will make the biggest difference. **It is only by working together that we can create a more equal future in Islington.**

Our Islington Promise sets out what local people can expect from us, and also what we are asking from them. No one knows exactly what the future holds, but we can promise that we will confront it together.

The Islington Promise

Creating a more equal Islington is a collective endeavour. We promise to:

- **Relentlessly tackle inequality** by enshrining this value in everything we do – from waste collection to social work to community events
- **Always be on your side** by putting our residents first, listening and working together to make a tangible difference to lives and livelihoods in Islington
- **Be bolder and more innovative** by testing new service models that help to break down barriers and create new opportunities beyond what has always been done
- **Provide accessible help and support** which works for all – and where it doesn't, we will make changes so that no one ever faces barriers in accessing what they need
- **Invest in the local economy** by supporting local businesses to flourish and brokering jobs and opportunities for the good of local people

In return, we ask that you:

- **Get involved** by participating and playing an active role in your community, whatever that means to you
- **Speak up** by challenging inequality in your community and networks
- **Be part of the solution** by helping us design and shape local schemes and projects, telling us when we get it right and, importantly, how we might improve

- **Invest in Islington** by shopping and spending locally to support small businesses
- **Be proud of our borough** by helping us look after this borough we all call home – keeping our streets clean and reporting problems where you see them

SECTION 1:

The case for change: understanding inequality in Islington

Key facts about life in Islington

Inequality is a defining feature of life in Islington. For many people in Islington, differences in access to wealth and opportunity mean that they often feel as if they lead parallel lives to those around them, even those who live on the same street. We know that not only is this a moral failing, but that this disparity has very real impact on the health, wellbeing and prosperity of our residents and our borough.

- The population of Islington is estimated to be 216,767 in 2022. This is an increase of approximately 19% (39,189 people) since 2011.
- It is estimated that the population of Islington will grow by 2.7% (6,600 people) between 2022 and 2032. The biggest population increases are expected in those over 65 years.
- 33% of Islington's residents are from a Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic group.
- Islington is the most densely populated local authority area in England and Wales, with 16,699 people per square km. This is almost triple the London average and more than 38 times the national average.
- Islington is the third smallest borough in London covering 15 km squared.
- Only 13% of the borough's land is green space, the second lowest proportion of any local authority in the country.
- Islington has moved from the 24th most deprived local authority in England in 2015 to the 53rd most deprived in 2019 (out of 317 local authorities). Islington is now the 6th most deprived local authority in London (it was 5th in 2015).
- Socially rented properties make up 35% of the borough – 25,400 rented by the Council and 16,500 by housing associations.
- The pattern of deprivation differs to other London boroughs, with affluent areas being immediately next to deprived areas. This is displayed below in the map of social housing estates which are scattered throughout the borough.
- Men living in the most deprived areas in the borough are expected to live 9.8 years less than those who are the least deprived in Islington. This is higher compared to London (7.2 years).
- There is an 80% higher death rate from avoidable causes amongst the most deprived in Islington. Black communities are more likely to die prematurely of cardiovascular disease.
- 34% of adults aged 60 or over are living in income deprived households – more than double the average for England (14%) and 11% of Islington households experience fuel poverty.
- Young people as a group are more likely to live in deprivation than the rest of the population. 28% of children aged under 16 live in income deprived families – the highest percentage in London and 10th highest in England.
- On average, rent accounts for about 70% of gross earnings in Islington. Islington had had the highest proportion of working age population claiming sickness and disability benefits (approx. 9,800 people) in London in February 2020 – the main reason being mental ill health.

Nationally and globally, we are facing tough times – an economic downturn and a cost of living crisis which are likely to push many more of our residents into poverty. National research has shown that the cost of living crisis is likely to continue to drive inequality – as

the Runnymede Trust has revealed, people from Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic backgrounds are 2.2 times more likely to be in deep poverty than White people, and drilling down, Bangladeshi people are more than 3 times more likely.

The picture is stark, but we need to understand what we are up against. This is the moment when strong leadership is most important. We are committed to standing with our communities and using all of the power and resources at our disposal to help them through these challenging times.

Listening to our community

In September 2021 we published a refreshed strategic plan: “**Islington Together: For a More Equal Future**”, outlining our vision, key priorities and principles for the coming years. This launched an ambitious programme of community engagement, **Let’s Talk Islington**. The programme was all about using innovative approaches to seek thoughts and ideas from our diverse communities about what inequality means to them and how they want us to work together to build a more equal future for Islington.

Twelve years on from the pioneering Fairness Commission, our understanding of inequality is more nuanced, shaped by the racial, health, and gender inequalities that Covid-19 revealed in a stark light. Let’s Talk Islington embraced an **intersectional approach to inequality**: recognising that economic circumstances intersect with social or identity factors to produce different outcomes for different groups such as inequality of access to public services, inequality of health outcomes, and inequality of access to green space.

To make this approach as effective as possible, we wanted to hear from those who don’t usually engage with the council, building a broader base of engaged residents which improves our understanding of the borough and avoids ‘engagement fatigue’ from those people we may work with more often.

The range and depth of what we heard from people in Islington is extremely rich. Across the piece, the message has been loud and clear in several areas:

- Perceptions of inequality within and beyond Islington was widespread. Adults predominantly spoke about **disparities in income and wealth** affecting access to opportunities and services. Children and young people also mentioned differences in access, but their concept of inequality was much more **interpersonal**, giving examples of how people are treated differently.
- **Housing and safety were top priorities** according to feedback in our VCS workshops and in the open survey across gender, ethnic groups and disability status. Housing was a clear priority in the survey, whereas there was much more variation in VCS workshops. Residents highlighted the **interconnections** across priority areas and importance of joined up work.
- Students spoke about a **broad range of aspirations**. When asked about Islington in 10 years' time, adults most frequently wrote about a **greener and cleaner borough**, despite this being a lower priority for action.
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Residents also raised a **wide range of other issues** affecting their lives including their:

- Pride in Islington's **inclusiveness and diversity**, although some raised concerns about divisions and exclusion
- Concern that Islington is increasingly **unaffordable**
- Desire for **more meaningful dialogue, engagement and action** and **more responsive council services**.
- Concerns and aspirations related to health and wellbeing, employment and education.

Residents of all ages offered **ideas** on how to tackle inequality and improve the borough, including repurposing existing buildings, progressive taxation, civic education, easy read signage, community energy hubs, specific services and support, and more opportunities for people of different ages and backgrounds to interact.

We worked with community groups and participatory projects to get their feedback which provided us with themes and specific actions we could take (see appendix c for more information).

Snapshot of lived experience to be included:

Little Angel Theatre project with young people with SEND – video still and spotlight with a QR code / vanity URL link to film on YouTube

<https://rb.gy/npjbyx>

Storytelling with elders project – photo portrait and transcription snippet from one participant

Videovoice with LGBTQ+ community project – still from one of the films and quote from the filmmakers

Anthropology For Kids – summary and 2 x drawings from young participants

As part of the Let's Talk Islington engagement, we established an Inequality Taskforce to explore the question "**how should Islington Council and partners work with communities over the next decade to create a more equal borough?**". We convened the task force members (see appendix b) to draw on a diversity of expertise and perspectives when formulating our strategic plan. Half of the members were locally rooted (with specific Islington based knowledge and/or experience) and the other half from different national organisations with something to contribute in terms of expertise in social policy, public management and citizen participation.

For the full set of practical steps please see the report [here](#).

What you said	What we are already doing	What we are planning
<p>Perceptions of inequality within and beyond Islington was widespread. Adults predominantly spoke about disparities in income and wealth affecting opportunities and services. Students also mentioned differences in access.</p>	<p>We have declared a cost of living emergency and announced a £2.6million support scheme to help families and households in the borough who are likely to be hit the hardest. Earlier in 2022, we reduced the council tax bills of around 19,000 low-income working age households and quadrupled the size of our childcare bursary scheme.</p>	<p>In 2023, we will launch the Fairer Together Hubs, - 3 flagship sites across the borough which will be a local place for local people of all ages to access the support, information and connections they need to thrive in Islington. Local people will be able to access support and advice around 6 key areas: Money, work, food, housing, wellbeing and family. In addition, our new family hubs will offer specific activities, services and advice for families with children.</p>
	<p>We've been a London Living Wage Employer since 2012. Nearly 300 businesses across Islington are accredited living wage employers and our aim is to double the number by 2024 to make Islington a Living Wage place</p>	<p>We are currently exploring the case to create an Apprenticeship Academy in Islington. The Academy will be about building an engine room to deliver the Council's target of creating 1000 new apprenticeships. It's about ensuring that residents, young and old, are able to take advantage of new pathways into secure jobs – such as in the green economy - as well as potentially opening-up a new income stream.</p>
	<p>11 by 11 is our commitment to offer 11 free outstanding cultural experiencing to all children and young people in Islington by year 11. We're continuing our programme for the next generation of young people in the borough.</p>	<p>Cultural and creative opportunities enable residents of all backgrounds to thrive. We will work with the cultural sector and community organisations to develop and launch an updated cultural strategy for Islington in 2023. This will include thinking more about how we can promote cultural activities in community spaces and make it as easy as possible for local people to find out what exciting, enriching and joyful activities are happening in the borough. We will build on the innovation of our creative engagement projects such as 'Anthropology by Children' and explore a wider rollout.</p>
	<p>We opened a new youth centre on the Andover</p>	

	<p>Estate in 2022 which will give young people aged 11 to 14 access to a broad range of activities and a hot meal, The Manor Gardens Welfare Trust run it, and it is staffed and supported by the community, for the community.</p>	
<p>Housing and safety were top priorities in VCS workshops and in the open survey across gender, ethnic groups and disability status. Housing was a clear priority in the survey, whereas there was much more variation in VCS workshops overall.</p>	<p>We are committed to the biggest new build programme in Islington for a generation. We have built or supported the delivery of over 800 new genuinely affordable homes for local people in the last few years and now we are building or supporting others to deliver over 1,900 genuinely affordable homes: 550 will be new council homes for rent by 2022.</p>	<p>New homes are being built across the borough - we are building around 40 each year now and plan to grow to around 150 each year through our ambitious programme. For example, the City of London Corporation will build 91 new affordable homes on its York Way Estate in the London Borough of Islington. For example, the City of London Corporation will build 91 new affordable homes on its York Way Estate in the London Borough of Islington. For example, the City of London Corporation will build 91 new affordable homes on its York Way Estate in the London Borough of Islington.</p>
	<p>We're growing the number of Safe Havens in our borough - adding to the network of 120 places from shops and restaurants to libraries, leisure centres and faith venues. These are safe spaces for anyone who is in danger, feels threatened or in need of help.</p>	<p>We're launching our Thriving Neighbourhoods programme which will give local people the opportunity to tell us what improvements they want to see on our estates, from revamping estate playgrounds to better recycling facilities or bike storage.</p>
	<p>The Islington Hate Crime Pledge has been created to allow individuals and organisations in the borough to support and participate in ongoing efforts to reduce hate crime in the area. The council also supports the independent Islington Hate Crime Forum.</p>	<p>We will continue to stand together against all forms of hate. This includes developing an online training package for all Islington residents to improve the identification of Hate Crime and to encourage the reporting of incidents. Every Islington Safe Haven will receive access to develop a network where intelligence can be shared with the council and police.</p>

		<p>We will also build on current joint reviews of Hate Crime incidents with police and the independent Hate Crime Forum to challenge the police positively and to ensure quality investigations are carried out to improve the outcomes for victims.</p>
	<p>In 2022 Islington Council launched a 5 year Violence Reduction Strategy to reduce the long-term scale and impact of violence – making Islington a safer, fairer borough for all</p>	<p>The Safer Islington Partnership will adopt a public health approach to tackling violence, delivering evidence-based interventions and engagement work with young people, adults, families and communities. Integral to our vision is our commitment to addressing the disproportionate impact of violence on certain groups – Black young men, women, and other affected adults – through delivering on our Violence Reduction Strategy Action Plan.</p>
<p>Students spoke about a broad range of aspirations. When asked about Islington in 10 years' time, adults most frequently wrote about a greener and cleaner borough, despite this being a lower priority for action.</p>	<p>The Net Zero Carbon Programme is the Council's flagship environmental programme in response to climate change, which aims to deliver a net zero carbon borough by 2030. This is set against a baseline of 610,000 tonnes of Carbon (2020). The programme includes a number of workstreams, for example looking at increasing use of renewable energy sources, improving transport infrastructure, retrofitting houses and the green economy.</p>	<p>Islington Greener Together launched in March 2022 and allows residents, businesses and community groups to help shape a more environmentally-friendly future, by bringing their green ideas to life. Having received 95 applications, 38 community projects are set to be delivered, subject to public engagement and detailed feasibility assessments, with the first expected in spring 2023.</p>
	<p>Our Parks for Health programme aims to ensure our communities spend more time enjoying our parks and green spaces - leading to improved health and wellbeing and reduced health inequalities.</p>	<p>We are working with Derwent and other partners to establish Moorfields Life Sciences Hub, a new economic sector in our borough, creating opportunities for the residents and businesses of Bunhill and beyond.</p>
<p>Pride in Islington's inclusiveness and diversity, although</p>	<p>The council is committed to designating a space in the community to residents from</p>	<p>We have received funding of £1.6 million to lead the Elevating Young Black Men</p>

some raised concerns about divisions and exclusion	African and Caribbean backgrounds through the creation of a Black Community & Cultural Centre . A site is currently being reviewed with a plan to launch in 2023.	and Mental Health Programme for the next 3 years. This is a pioneering programme designed to tackle mental health inequalities. The programme aims to improve personal mental health and wellbeing, aspirations, and life opportunities, while reducing exclusions, creating a better future for young Black boys and men in Islington.
	We're in the process of reviewing and refreshing our Challenging Inequality Programme to continue our work to tackle racism, inequity and injustice for 2023 onwards.	We're acting on the recommendations from our Let's Talk Videovoice project with LGBTQ+ residents to create gender neutral toilet facilities within council buildings
	Our annual programme of equality events provide a variety of opportunities for people of different ages and backgrounds to come together, celebrate, learn about and celebrate our histories and journeys.	
Concern that Islington is increasingly unaffordable	We have launched our pioneering strategy to create new workspaces that are genuinely accessible and affordable to local businesses and organisations. By providing workspaces across the borough of various sized, we have delivered over £1.24 million equivalent of social value output up to March 2022. We will continue to deliver more affordable workspaces to support entrepreneurs and small businesses.	We are seeing a crisis of food poverty which has now reached a tipping point for so many in our communities. In December 2022 the Council pledged to be a ' Right to Food ' borough and to support the Right to Food Campaign's five demands to Government urging that these be delivered nationally as a matter of urgency. These demands include government funding for community kitchens and calling for free school meals for every child. At a local level, we will stand alongside our communities in the face of the cost-of-living crisis and demonstrate leadership in tackling food insecurity by supporting the refreshed Islington Food Strategy 2023-28 , which is coordinated by the Islington Food Partnership.

	<p>We will continue to provide <u>free school meals to every child of primary school age</u>, until they reach secondary school. We will also continue to provide free school meals for children from families who have arrived in our borough but have no recourse to public funds.</p>	<p>The council and lead partner Octopus Community Network will work together to support the warm and welcoming spaces that will serve as sanctuary for those faced with crippling energy costs at home. The Warm Community Spaces initiative launched in mid-October 2022.</p>
<p>Desire for more meaningful dialogue, engagement and action and more responsive council services. Frustration from residents who do not feel like they are being heard, particularly those opposed to low traffic neighbourhoods</p>	<p><u>Local Wellbeing Networks</u> have come together throughout the borough to increase collaboration between services and to provide a platform for community voice. The networks consists of statutory service providers, charities, community groups and residents committed to taking a more active role in their local community.</p> <p>Through our Net Zero Carbon programme we have launched the <u>Greener Together fund</u>, where local people can apply for funding for local green initiatives and take action in ways that resonate most with local communities.</p>	<p>We will build on our learning from the Let's Talk Engagement programme to develop a Community Power Framework. This will set out our approach to continuing to engage in meaningful dialogue, listen to local people and explore what we can do together. The framework will be published in 2023 and include standards to support us to deliver high quality participation and engagement that empowers local people.</p>
<p>Concerns and aspirations related to health and wellbeing, employment and education, although these themes were raised less often</p>	<p>In October 2022 we launched the <u>Islington Anchor Institution Network</u> of major Islington employers and key organisations to reduce inequalities and help build a thriving local economy. Representatives signed up to a number of progressive pledges, including generating more opportunities and wealth for local people and businesses, and working towards shared net zero carbon objectives. Members include Angel Business Improvement District, Arsenal Football Club, Camden & Islington NHS Foundation Trust, Capital City College Group,</p>	<p>We are working with school staff, governors, unions and our community, to develop and implement our Education Plan. Working together we will ensure we are providing the best possible education for our young people in an inclusive and sustainable way.</p>

	Peabody Trust, Whittington Health NHS Trust and local universities.	
	Our new Bright Lives Coaching Service launched in 2022 to work with adults who need additional help to thrive, supporting them through the challenges they face and strengthen their resilience and independence.	We are reviewing the strategy for carers, people with dementia and people with autism to drive up the quality and services to these groups who may have complex needs.
	Our <u>Income Maximisation team</u> continue to provide support and advice to all Islington residents to make sure they are getting the correct money and navigate the benefits process. In 2021/22 we supported low-income households to access over £5m pa in additional benefits and are on track to achieve the same again in 2022/23.	We are developing a locality based mental health offer to ensure high quality, accessible mental health care for all. We will have a community mental health team of integrated social care and health professionals working in partnership with VCS organisations to support our communities.

The Inequality Task Force

As part of the Let's Talk Islington engagement, we established an Inequality Task Force to explore the question "**how should Islington Council and partners work with communities over the next decade to create a more equal borough?**". We convened the task force (see appendix b) to draw on a diversity of expertise and perspectives when formulating our strategic plan. While insight from the community gave us a rich understanding of *what* needs to change, the question of *how* we can create this change would remain unanswered without deep and critical thinking, given the complexity of the subject of inequality. We knew that if we continue to do the same things to tackle community issues we would get the same results, and so we brought together the task force to help us consider how we can work very differently to produce different ones.

The taskforce discussions started by exploring why inequality is so hard to tackle and what the biggest barriers are to tackling it. They then went on to explore what the most impactful way may be to tackle inequality based on these difficulties and challenges. Importantly, the taskforce highlighted that the responsibility for tackling inequality does not lie with one individual or institution, and that our powers as a local authority are limited in certain areas. Therefore, the taskforce emphasised that there needs to be a collective commitment and a shared focus on how to tackle inequality in our borough working together with partners and communities invested in the future of the borough.

The taskforce also recommended that we take a broader understanding of inequality. While we know that wealth and income disparities are central to the reality of inequality in Islington – which we have heard clearly from our communities – it would be unwise to see the issue only through a financial lens. Instead, we should acknowledge the “vicious cycle of inequality” where income inequality interacts with different aspects of people’s lives to affect their experience of having access, opportunity and being able to live the life they want in the borough.

“This broader understanding makes clear that inequality goes well beyond a simple inability of the poorest to buy necessities – it is a situation that deeply and negatively affects the identity, well-being and dignity of a large portion of our fellow citizens and Islington residents.”

- Taskforce on Inequality in Islington, pg. 13

The task force highlighted that in order to truly break the cycle of inequality, there is a need to focus on growing the level of influence that people have over their own lives in Islington’s communities. This could be on an individual level, for example about their family circumstances or job prospects, or it could be on a community level, about decisions made in their neighbourhood. To do this, the taskforce offered a set of practical steps which suggest that we need to:

- Continue to **hold a dialogue** with relevant communities in **locality-based areas**.
- Draw on our experiences from projects such as We Are Cally and **hold conversations that are open and honest** with communities to find solutions together and use deliberative techniques
- Invest in staff capacity to be able to do this effectively and make sure we have **the right skill sets** to initiative and develop these conversations.
- Ensure that we build in robust ways to **measure our impact and share learning** from the beginning, weaving in qualitative as well as quantitative methods to do so, so that **citizen voice continues to be at the heart of decision making**.

For the full set of practical steps please see the report [here](#).

Inequality in Islington – a complex interaction between three key factors

The data on stark disparities in outcomes that we shared above, the insights from our residents through Let’s Talk Islington and our conversations with the Inequality Task Force all highlight the way that income inequality interacts in complex ways with gender, race, sexual orientation, faith, disability and other factors, to prevent people from being able to realise their full potential.

Inequality in Islington is about power as well as money – it is about dignity, wellbeing and identity. It might be about being excluded from everyday activities such as leisure and cultural opportunities, not just due to money but also discrimination, a sense of shame and low self-esteem. It could mean hostility, being over policed and treated with a lack of dignity and respect. It might be not having control over where you live or who you live next to, or where your kids go to school.

Based on what we have learnt we have identified three ways in which inequality interconnects to affect the lives of our residents:

- 1) **Poverty and affordability.** The data is clear about high levels of poverty in our borough. Residents told us they were deeply concerned about affordability of life in Islington, including food, leisure opportunities, clothing for their children and most notably, housing.
- 2) **Quality of life.** Closely linked to this, inequality affects the conditions in which people live and work. Residents told us that their perception of their neighbourhood and particularly the feeling of being unsafe in their neighbourhood was a massive issue impacting on their quality of life. We heard about the importance of anti-social behaviour in disrupting a sense of wellbeing and exacerbating social isolation.
- 3) **Power and agency.** Fundamentally, this is about the way inequality limits the ability of some people in our community to exercise power and agency over their lives and to make the sorts of choices that many of us take for granted. Residents told us about how they felt dismissed by services and institutions, not listened to or treated with respect when they spoke up, overpoliced and underappreciated by those that were supposed to serve, care for and protect them.

Each of these elements of inequality interlink to form a complex cycle of inequality that is unique to each individual but with many common threads. The choices and opportunities afforded to you in life are profoundly shaped by identity, and the intersections between different aspects of identity such as your ethnicity, your class background or whether you are disabled or not, which is evidenced in the data. For example, the disproportionately high rates of school exclusions among Black boys has a hugely damaging impact on their chances for the future. Exclusions do not only damage their education outcomes, but often irreparably harm self-esteem and the view of what is possible in life. Another example comes from resident feedback, where disabled residents have explained how they are often shut out from even the most basic opportunities, like being able to access information, leisure activities or employment.

Side bar case study: [evidence from Healthwatch Islington](#)

There is a wealth of knowledge and expertise that exists within our local voluntary and community sector and communities. Alongside our Let's Talk Islington community engagement programme we opened a call for evidence to draw some of this into this process.

Some of the evidence Healthwatch Islington supports this focus on putting power in people's hands to be able to have influence over the things that matter:

"Residents have consistently told Healthwatch throughout the years that they want to look after their own health. A number of barriers make this harder; income, number of hours spent working/caring, lack of information and personal knowledge about what's on offer. Health promotion work needs to factor highly in the wider programmes of work within the borough, supporting residents and families to understand their health and how to best support good health outcomes. This needs to be contextualised for residents' financial and practical circumstances. Residents have consistently told us that health information workshops are helpful, where they can ask questions to healthcare professionals and others with lived experience, to help understand and manage their health and well-being."

SECTION 2:

Creating a more equal future: our 2030 missions

A more equal future for Islington

Our ambition for 2030 is to create a more equal future for Islington, where everyone is able to thrive.

We recognise the constraints within which we operate as a local authority – both national and global. Many of the factors that generate inequality in our borough lie outside of our control. However, **we still have huge potential to change lives.**

The key lesson we learned from the Inequality Task Force is that we can have greatest impact by working in partnership with our community to ensure that **everyone in Islington is able to make and influence decisions about their own lives, to chart their own course and thrive on their own terms.**

We want to create a 2030 where:

- all children and young people feel safe, belong, lead change and are able to thrive, leading to fulfilling lives.
- everyone who needs extra help can access the right support for them at the right time and in the right place.
- people are able to live healthy, sustainable and independent lives and enjoy London's greenest, cleanest and healthiest neighbourhoods.
- Islington is a safe, decent and genuinely affordable place to call home for all local people
- wealth is shared fairly and residents and businesses feel they have a stake in their community

This will require a clear and relentless focus on tackling inequality in everything we do.

In the words of our children and young people who submitted their own creative projects on their hopes for a future Islington...

"We are all different but we all matter and have rights. Unity is our friend." - Meryem & Kaia, Age 8

"If we have a fair community the world will be kind" – Sachie, Age 6

"Everyone is equal, I drew scales that move and everyone is balanced. There are houses and green spaces and schools. People who are equal and have access to opportunity." – Freya, Age 7

"A forest, a tree, a jungle because at school we have been learning about deforestation. This is important because the animals are losing their homes. I think everyone should have a home in Islington." – Mekai, Age 7

"Mine is about animals, not normal animals but rainbow animals. Everyone is important in their own way." – Daniel, Age 8

Our Challenging Inequality Programme launched in the aftermath of the global reckoning that followed the murder of George Floyd. In 2020 a spotlight was put on issues of inequality, racism and injustice which has led to a different type of dialogue, increased understanding and targeted action across the borough. Through this Islington Together 2030 plan, we want to mainstream this work so it permeates everything we do; all of our priority programmes will maintain a lens of challenging inequality as the heart of the change we want to see. However, at the same time, we also want to keep a specific programme of activity to ensure continued and long-term commitment to eliminating structural inequity and discrimination in Islington. As part of our 2030 plan, our Challenging Inequality Programme will continue to drive these specific actions.

Five missions

To achieve a more equal future, we have set ourselves five key missions:

- **Child-friendly Islington:** Islington is a place where all children and young people feel safe in their community, belong to a place, lead change and are able to thrive which leads to fulfilling lives.
- **Fairer Together:** Everyone in Islington who needs extra help and support can access the right support for them at the right time and in the right place.
- **A Safe Place to Call Home:** Islington is a safe, decent and genuinely affordable place to call home for local people.
- **Community Wealth Building:** There is a sustainable, inclusive, and locally-rooted economy in Islington, where wealth is shared fairly and residents and businesses feel they have a stake in their community
- **Greener, healthier Islington** Communities in Islington can access, and enjoy London's greenest, cleanest and healthiest neighbourhoods and are able to live healthy, fulfilling and independent lives.

Mission 1: Child-friendly Islington

Our 2030 commitment

We are determined to ensure that by 2030, Islington is a place where all children and young people are rooted in a community where they feel safe, can thrive and are able to be part of and lead change.

We, with partners, will put in place the building blocks for our children and families to build resilience. Our children will start well from conception, thrive by five, and develop and progress to adulthood well, to be life-ready by 21 within safe, healthy, nurturing and families. We will develop a child-friendly borough for our children to live and grow up in.

We will do this by working with partners and communities to design and deliver approaches that equip our children and families with the tools they need to grow. We will make sure the way we design and deliver services gives support to those who need it the most and in doing so, tackles inequality.

What will Islington look or feel like for residents?

- Children will feel safe in the community, will keep physically active and eat healthily which will all promote good mental health.
- Every child (including the most disadvantaged), whatever their background and ability, will have the same opportunities and ambitions beginning in early years to reach their educational potential in a good Islington school.
- All children and young people who attend our education settings will be well-equipped and empowered with the necessary learning and skills for life for their future in the world of work.
- Children, adolescents, and young people are kept safe across Islington through effective safeguarding, including preventative and violence reduction arrangements which respond to both familial and extra-familial harm. There will also be a focus on early identification and escalation of concerns.
- Young adults, particularly those we are corporate parents for and those with disabilities, transition well to and/or live healthy, independent, and fulfilled lives with strong networks.

What are we doing to get there?

1. Making Islington a Child Friendly Place to live and grow

We will change the way we approach place, by promoting play across our open and green spaces, investing in physical activity (cycling, scooting), and tackling obesity through healthy eating, all of which will contribute to good mental health. We will promote an alliance of leaders and partnerships to collaborate and invest in children starting and developing well, and to empower children, young people, and families to design the place they live in.

2. Putting children first with an inclusive and sustainable education system

We will drive educational excellence through inclusive and sustainable schools and settings that enable children to thrive, supporting early identification of need that triggers the right support. Our schools will encourage local activism, growing our future change makers in tackling climate change and investing in a greener future. We will develop a borough wide response with partners and businesses to employment and training for all young people, with a focus and commitment to our SEND and more vulnerable cohorts.

- **Supporting families through an enhanced Family Help offer**

We will further develop our Bright Start, early help and family help support offer. This will be underpinned by collective responsibility through our one Supporting Families vision, strategy and outcomes framework. Our partnership by default approach wraps the relevant services around the child and family and puts the family voice at the centre. This also allows us to flex to the needs of our diverse communities.

We better integrate the support around families with children aged 0 – 19 (25 for those with Special Educational Needs and Disabilities), and the use of social and physical community assets, through a family hub model to solve whole family issues, so children and young people are starting well, growing up well and progressing to adulthood well.

4. Supporting progression to adulthood

We, with our partners, will develop an integrated system that ensures the best experience through transition to adulthood, and empowers young people to become as independent, self-reliant, confident, and ready for life and the world of work as possible. Through this new

approach we will work with adolescents and support them to see the psychological and social changes they experience as opportunities for personal growth, and in doing so, minimise the risk of negative outcomes as they transition into adulthood. This includes our commitments to lifelong corporate parenting for our care-experienced young people.

Child friendly Islington: testing new approaches

Family Hubs and Start for Life

We will join up and enhance services delivered through family hubs, ensuring all parents and carers can access the support they need when they need it. We will move to a family hub model, improve the universal Start for Life offer and transform family help and support around families with children aged 0 – 19 (25 for those with Special Educational Needs and Disabilities).

Child Friendly place

Together with other organisations in Islington, we will put in place the characteristics and framework to create a child and youth friendly Islington where the voices, needs, priorities and the rights of children play an integral part in public policies and programmes, as well as being involved in the decision-making process.

Progression to Adulthood

We will develop an integrated system that ensures the best experience through transition to adulthood, and empowers young people to become as independent, self-reliant, confident, and ready for life and the world of work. We will embed lifelong corporate parenting and redesign integrated support for adolescents with multiple/complex needs.

Education Plan

We will implement our Education Plan to

1. Ensure all our pupils exam results are in the top 25% in London
2. Create a sense of belonging so that every pupil wants to attend school and does
3. Ensure we have a good local school place for all children
4. Work in partnership with schools and settings so that we make the best use of good practice and do more of it
5. Use our data to target support to children and young people who are not doing as well as they should
6. Ensure no child feels discriminated against in any school or setting
7. Increase the number of two-year olds in free early education
8. Reduce the number of suspensions and permanent exclusions from school
9. Ensure every young person has the option of going on to further education, an apprenticeship, or work when they leave school

10. Ensure we take full advantage of Islington's unique access to digital, cultural and music organisations

11. Ensure every child quickly gets any extra support they need

Mission 2: Fairer Together

Fairer Together is our approach to working with the community to tackle inequality through high quality early intervention and prevention.

Our 2030 commitment

We are determined to ensure that by 2030, everyone in Islington who needs extra help can access the right support for them at the right time and in the right place.

To achieve this goal, we will need to make a series of radical shifts in the way we work.

1. We will work in partnership with empowered communities to tackle issues that are important for them
2. Our community is able to access support that they feel meets their needs
3. Our practice uses relationships as the key driver to generate sustained positive change
4. Our approach is consistent and shared across the whole borough and is understood by all
5. We are committed to understanding the impact we have and to a system which is learning led and continually improving

In each instance, we are aware of positive examples of where these principles are being demonstrated in action. However, by 2030, we need to see greater consistency to make the Fairer Together way of working the rule not the exception. This is how we will achieve a step change in the way we work with communities to deliver help and support to Islington residents.

What will Islington look or feel like for residents?

- Families face issues together, with the support from their communities, access affordable, enriching activities and access support without judgment
- Help and support is accessible, culturally competent and anti-racist and tailored to the needs of our diverse communities
- People are in control of their own lives, set their own goals, have a single point of contact in the council who they know is available and cares about them, feel their experiences are validated and are able to live independently
- Communities – including the local community groups and organisations – are connected and mobilised around localities to deliver change in local areas, making the best use of shared spaces and assets such as community centres and libraries
- People of all ages and backgrounds access cultural and creative opportunities, build connections to local heritage, people and places and develop skills, knowledge and practices to thrive

What are we doing to get there?

1. Empowering strong and supportive communities

We will take action to create strong and nurturing communities and cultivate a sense of security and belonging. We will work with and support local voluntary and community groups and organisations. We will encourage local giving of time and resources, supporting people to help each other. We will support opportunities for communities to come together to celebrate culture and heritage, connect with local people and places and benefit from the joy of creativity.

We will put communities in the driving seat in terms of making change in their local area. We will explore new ways of engaging communities to identify local priorities, drawing on the learning from Let's Talk Islington and giving them tools and mechanisms to make decisions on how best to use local resources to respond to local need.

We will create new Access Islington Hubs at the heart of a network of places and spaces, including libraries, children's centres and parks and green spaces, where people can go to access help and support including enhancing our online and digital offer.

2. Delivering high quality early intervention and prevention services

We will continue to deliver and strengthen early intervention and prevention services for children, families, working age adults and older people ensuring a greater focus on reaching out and tailoring support to marginalised communities to close inequality gaps.

We will establish and grow a new Bright Lives Alliance. The alliance is a programme designed to change the work with our partners to transform the way we deliver community mental health and wellbeing services. The focus is on developing our early help offer for adults in the borough that need additional help and support, working closely with voluntary and community sector and community mental health partners.

3. Driving system change that supports more effective, joined up early intervention and prevention

We will use Fairer Together Locality Networks to bring services and practitioners together across the three localities, North, South and Central Islington, to create more joined up responses to residents in need. We will provide training and learning opportunities as well as multi-agency case consultation and advice to strengthen support and draw in specialist services as needed.

We will test new approaches to tailoring support to the needs of our diverse communities to ensure everyone is supported and empowered to create change in their lives and determine their own trajectories.

Fairer Together: testing new approaches

Access Islington Hubs

We will deliver three Access Islington Hubs, one per locality, as one stop shops for early intervention and prevention for people in Islington. Access Islington Hubs will be flagship sites for residents in Islington to access a multifaceted and diverse menu of advice and support services, including to raise any concerns about safety in their homes and neighbourhoods. The key dimensions of support to be available at and through the Access Islington Hubs are work; money; food; home; family; wellbeing; safety.

Access Islington Hubs will also offer a programme of learning and development for staff in each locality to support high quality early intervention and prevention practice and strong and supportive working relationships

Young Black Men and Mental Health

Our Young Black Men and Mental Health programme is a vital element of our Fairer Together early intervention and prevention strategy. It aims to transform the way the system works to achieve more equitable opportunities and better life chances for young Black boys and men living in Islington.

We have been successful in receiving investment funding of £1.6 million to lead a pioneering programme designed to tackle mental health inequalities which will help to create a better future for young Black boys and men and demonstrate Fairer Together in action. This three-year programme will see a much more holistic approach to addressing mental health issues among young Black boys and men in Islington, with the aims of improving personal mental health and wellbeing, aspirations, and life chances.

Mission 3: A safe place to call home

Our 2030 commitment

We are determined to ensure that by 2030, everyone in Islington has a safe, decent and genuinely affordable place to call home.

What will Islington look or feel for residents?

- Families will aspire to live in our estates and our homes on residential streets across the borough, feeling the care taken in their homes and neighbourhoods
- Our residents will have a sense of trust with their landlord, and know that we will support them to live well and thrive
- Our residents' voices are important, and we will engage with and be accountable to them in the way we manage their homes and estates
- Residents experiencing, or at risk of homelessness, will feel well cared for and supported throughout
- Residents affected by all forms of Violence Against Women and Girls receive excellent support that is trauma informed, connected to their experience and that helps them to feel heard and protected
- New Homes will be places to be proud of, net zero carbon, high quality, easy to maintain and providing a positive environment to live, learn and work within
- Communities will see the investment in their homes, maintaining a sense of pride in where they live
- Residents feel safer in their neighbourhoods, parks and town centre and appreciate that the root-causes of anti-social behaviour in public spaces are routinely and actively tackled and managed by landlords, the council and police. They are also empowered and confident to contribute to resolving ASB issues.

What are we doing to get there?

1. Building new homes and investing in the safety of our current stock

750 new council homes will be under construction by 2027. We will invest in our core infrastructure, renewing lifts and building elements. We will provide reassurance to residents in tall buildings that they meet expected standards. We will work with health, social care and other housing partners to make sure we take the right action to respond to damp and mould. We will invest in the 'golden thread' to manage risks through regular checks and investment in the safety of our homes, working closely with the London Fire Brigade to direct our work.

2. Ensuring trusted landlord services

We will build trusted professional relationships with households and sustain tenancies and income for investment by supporting tenants to maintain rent accounts and foster financial resilience. We will maintain high levels of satisfaction with our repairs service.

We will ensure effective estate management meaning residents can enjoy a clean and peaceful environment. We know that the appearance of the local environment positively impacts the quality of life within communities and on the wellbeing of residents and will be investing in amenities through our Thriving Neighbourhoods programme. Estate Champions will work on our estates as a single point of contact for residents where we need to work harder.

We will also adopt a clear tenants' charter affirming our commitment to stand up for private renters. We will work with private landlords and residents to maintain and improve standards.

3. Making our communities safer

We will work together with police and other partners to improve safety and provide early identification of crime and anti-social behaviour (ASB) hotspot locations. We will refresh our approach to ASB, communicating a clear definition and developing easier pathways for people to report incidents. We will develop a clear and integrated approach across agencies and will work together to address the behaviours which cause residents the most concern (including visible, street-based ASB and noise and nuisance). We will also work across the council to understand and address the root causes of ASB, including through early intervention and prevention.

We will continue to develop and deliver on our strategies on youth safety, violence reduction, violence against women and girls (VAWG), and hate crime. These strategies have been co-produced with service users to ensure they capture, reflect and respond to lived experience and therefore make meaningful change. Islington has a zero-tolerance approach to the mistreatment, abuse and violation of women and girls. We are building capacity in our specialist VAWG services and developed the Domestic Abuse Daily Safeguarding Meeting to increase support to survivors and their families and increase actions to rehabilitate and make perpetrators accountable for their behaviours.

We will work to prevent knife harm and (serious youth) violence affecting young people, which has dropped significantly in our borough but should not be happening at all. This is also applicable to the exploitation of our young people through harmful practices such as county lines and drug dealing and 'running'. 3,000 weapons have been handed in through our knife surrender bins, representing 3,000 positive choices.

Community Safety will continue to make our borough safer for all residents. Through our recent Safe Spaces consultation, we have learnt where people feel safe and unsafe in Islington and how this varies for different groups. We are now acting on the lessons from the consultation to create safer spaces for residents, as well as trebling the number of Safe Haven sites across the borough from 100 to 300.

4. Preventing rough sleeping

We will prevent rough sleeping wherever possible and, where it cannot be prevented, make sure it is a rare, brief and non-recurring experience. In practice this means that we want to see more effective support to prevent rough sleeping from happening in the first place, and a tailored offer of support where it does, so people can build an independent life off the streets. Through the “Built for Zero” project, we will collaborate with the national homelessness charity Crisis to work towards ending homelessness and rough sleeping in Islington.

We will use the Stacey Street service to support rough sleepers in the borough and continue acquisition of one bed properties for rough sleepers or people threatened with homelessness. We will develop a multi-skilled team within Community Safety to deliver estate and street-based outreach services to those rough sleeping in the borough.

A safe place to call home: testing new approaches

Tenants Charter

The Islington Council Tenants Charter is focused on strengthening the relationship between residents and Islington Council and embodies all the great work happening across Islington to create positive relationships with Customers. It also challenges Islington Council to go further – presenting an opportunity for us to take the lead in accountability and customer oversight.

By adopting this charter, Islington Council commits to:

- Stronger relationships – Islington Council will treat all residents with respect in all our interactions.
 - Delivering excellent customer services and experiences – We will be easy to deal with and resolve your enquiries and keep to our promises
 - Effective communication – Residents will receive clear, accessible, and timely information from Islington Council on the issues that matter to them
 - Listening to and truly understanding your priorities – We will be prepared to change our services to meet your specific needs and take your feedback and suggestions for improvement seriously
 - Voice and influence – Views from residents will be sought and valued and this information will be used to inform decisions and working practices

Thriving Neighbourhoods

Thriving Neighbourhoods is a £10 million investment programme that allows local people to help shape the transformation of shared spaces on estates across the borough.

The programme will:

- Improve play areas/multi use games areas on estates, creating active and healthy environments for residents
- Provide storage solutions to overcome overcrowding/fire safety issues in communal areas
- Align with the Islington Greener Together Programme to improve the estate environment through landscaping and designing out crime
- Revitalise estate-based housing community centres, ensuring that they are attractive, well-managed spaces, valued by the local community
- Ensure residents feel safe in their local communities
- Empower residents to shape their areas and be involved in local decision making and improving the community, estate and area in which they live in
- Help reduce any disparities amongst our estates

- | |
|--|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Be inclusive and fair, enabling disabled residents and the whole community to contribute to improving the community where they live. |
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Mission 4: Community Wealth Building

Islington has a strong and dynamic economy, many parts of which continue to thrive. However, our economy does not work for everyone, too many local people experience poverty and disadvantage and too many local businesses struggle to overcome barriers to growth. Without action, Islington's gap between the haves and have nots will increase.

Community Wealth Building is a way of tackling economic inequality and creating an economy that works for everyone. It is about maximising the role of the Council as an economic agent (as well as other key local organisations), taking advantage of our collective employment and purchasing power, as well as the local physical asset base. Building economic resilience and shared prosperity through Community Wealth Building is key to the Council's objectives to tackle inequality and improve life chances.

Our 2030 commitment

We are determined to ensure that by 2030, there is a sustainable, inclusive, and locally-rooted economy in Islington, where wealth is fairly-shared and residents and businesses feel they have a stake in their community.

For us, this means a place where people are supported into, and progress in well-paid, secure jobs. A place where local businesses prosper, and where our purchasing spend and social and economic infrastructure across the borough support and enable us to deliver these ambitions.

What will Islington look or feel like for residents?

- More residents will be financially resilient and able to meet the cost of living
- More residents, particularly those who face the most disadvantage, will be in good jobs that pay a decent wage and have prospects to improve their economic wellbeing
- Islington will have a thriving, diverse and inclusive local economy, where people from all backgrounds are able to succeed in business, and where we support businesses to grow sustainably and operate safely
- Our residents and local businesses will have experienced a just transition to the green economy
- More council spend will be through local businesses, locking wealth into our local economy and delivering benefits for residents and communities through social value commitments
- Our buildings, schools and community assets will be modern, sustainable, safe and inclusive
- The Local Plan will have delivered key benefits around affordable housing, affordable workspaces, promoting an inclusive economy, and supporting delivery of Net Zero Carbon.

Community Wealth Building in practice: a case study

Encouraging innovation and enterprise in Islington

SPACE4 Tech Space in Fonthill Road is managed by Outlandish; a digital worker co-operative, owned by its members. It uses the money it makes to develop new projects for social change.

Specialising in technology that makes the world a fairer, better place, Outlandish produces web apps, data dashboards and monitoring tools that aid the discovery of new insights from complex data, to mass-impact campaigns and websites that promote causes and mobilise key audiences.

Outlandish and Founders and Coders adapted quickly to the challenge of COVID and lockdown, with many of their courses made available on line. This meant they've continued to achieve excellent social value outcomes.

In July 2020 SPACE4 reopened, with new health and safety measures in place to make everyone as safe and comfortable as possible. All measures were consulted and designed with members of the space. One of the developers who uses the space created a track and trace programme (some months before the government) so that they could keep people in the loop if anyone got symptoms.

With the space re-opened, members have returned in significant numbers. This has included a successful new partnership with Adult Community Learning (ACL), which offers digital and coding boot camps, funded by the GLA, to local residents.

INFOGRAPHIC

Social Value Output: £1,132,136.00

Regular Workspace Users: 46

Hours of expert business advice for local people: 932

Weeks of apprenticeship training: 74

What are we doing to get there?

Key to delivering our vision will be four programmes of work which will collectively contribute to tackling the cycle of inequality and improving outcomes for our residents, businesses and communities:

1. Promoting economic wellbeing

This is about empowering residents to build financial resilience, future proofed skills, and secure and retain good quality jobs. We will achieve this through key pieces of work such as a comprehensive package of support to help residents and businesses struggling with the rising cost of living. This will include immediate short-term support to get through the crisis, and longer-term support to improve economic wellbeing. We will continue data-led campaigns to maximise take up of key benefits and other financial support, and to identify and work with those households struggling with debt.

We will develop clear pathways into employment, including giving young people experience of the world of work, and actively promoting and creating apprenticeships and volunteering opportunities as a means of building the skills and confidence for work. We'll also work with our Anchor Institutions to increase job opportunities for local people and to improve diversity at all levels within our collective workforce. This will include providing targeted employment support through the Islington Working Partnership, as well as commissioning research on

barriers to work for specific groups. Through learning from this research, we will be able to develop and deliver effective support, which will help tackle the inequalities faced by different sections of our community.

We will further promote good and sustainable jobs; it's not only getting people into work but ensuring jobs are well paid, and people are supported to remain and progress in work. This includes a New Deal for Workers - working with local employers to promote London Living Wage, fair terms and conditions, and the benefits of trade union membership. We will also work to harness opportunities from the Net Zero Carbon agenda to deliver skills provision and jobs for local residents in the green economy.

2. Creating an inclusive economy

This is about strengthening the local economy by supporting the development of key sectors, providing active stewardship of local economic places, and championing local businesses. Key to achieving this will be maximising opportunities for local businesses and jobs in key sectors of our local economy, including using the collective purchasing power of our Anchor Institution Network to purchase more goods and services through the local economy.

We will champion and increase diversity in business, including supporting entrepreneurs and start-ups from under-represented groups and challenging inequality in business including in specific sectors. We will harness the opportunities that key local growth sectors such as the green economy, life sciences and technology provide for local businesses and jobs. Using our programme of Affordable Workspaces, we will build and nurture socially conscious entrepreneurs and businesses who believe in delivering social value and fair practice.

3. Progressive procurement

We will leverage our spending power to not only deliver high quality outcomes and value for money, but also to maximise social value delivery for local residents and businesses through council commissioning of goods and services and working with partners across our Anchor Institution Network.

We will build social value commitments into our contracts and ensure that they are delivered. At the same time, we will work with other anchor institutions to identify opportunities for joint procurement, and to identify how we can use our influence to shape the market and encourage more providers to be fair and ethical and to deliver social value. We will also support local businesses and voluntary and community sector organisations to successfully bid for council and anchor institution procurement opportunities.

4. Social and economic infrastructure

We will use Islington's asset base, planning powers and place-shaping influence to deliver genuinely affordable homes and workspaces and enhanced education and community facilities. This social and economic infrastructure provides key enablers for local wealth generation and the delivery of an inclusive economy, as well as supporting net zero carbon and community safety priorities.

We will adopt and implement Islington's new Local Plan which supports our community wealth building ambitions, and use of Article 4 Directions to protect businesses, jobs and high streets. We are committed to ongoing delivery of affordable council homes and affordable workspaces programmes. We will maximise social value, Section 106 and Community Infrastructure Levy contributions to deliver real benefits to local residents, businesses and communities. We will involve residents, local communities and businesses in thinking creatively and ambitiously about how assets can support local wealth generation and provide greater agency and capacity. Another key priority will be to use planning policy to ensure all development is connected and inclusive, creating buildings and spaces that are safe and easily navigated and that promote social cohesion and community safety.

Community Wealth Building: testing new approaches

Green Economy Action Plan

Through our action plan, we will ensure our residents and local businesses benefit from a just transition to a green economy. Being just is about delivering necessary skills, opportunities, funding and support so local people can navigate changing industries and take part in a transformed economy that works for them.

Apprenticeship Academy

Subject to business case, this project aims to build an engine room to deliver the Council's apprentice manifesto target. We will ensure that residents young and old are able to take advantage of new pathways into secure jobs (with a likely focus on the green economy), as well as potentially opening-up a new income stream.

Moorfields Life Sciences Hub

We will work with Derwent and other partners to establish a new economic sector in our borough, creating opportunities for the residents and businesses of Bunhill and beyond.

Islington Anchor Institution Network:

We have launched the Islington Anchor Institution Network to maximise opportunities and benefits for local residents and businesses by leveraging our collective employment and purchasing power and asset base.

Mission 5: Greener, healthier Islington

Our 2030 commitment

We are determined to ensure that by 2030, people in Islington can live healthy and independent lives and enjoy London's greenest, cleanest and healthiest neighbourhoods.

What will Islington look or feel like for residents?

- Islington's neighbourhoods and estates will look and feel greener, attractive, cleaner, people friendly and less dominated by busy roads. They will be inviting for residents and business to enjoy and take care of, having been created by communities for communities.
- Islington will be a proud low carbon, low waste, low energy borough created by a shared endeavour between the council, residents, community organisations, large and small businesses and borough partners.
- Healthy neighbourhoods will mean that more residents will be more physically active, more often, confident to walk and cycle, actively enjoy local parks and make use of local and accessible leisure facilities.
- People feel safe, connected and included when requesting advice and support from health and care services.
- Health and care services will be accessible and meet the needs of our diverse communities.
- Access to information and support both online and in person will be far more efficient and accessible than ever before

- Residents are passionate and proud about and actively participate in making Islington's neighbourhoods the greenest and most sustainable in London.
- Residents and organisations bring to life local public spaces with local events, children's activities and community celebrations.

The delivery plan

1. Delivering Net Zero Carbon by 2030

Tackling the climate emergency is critical to securing the health and sustainability of our communities and neighbourhoods. We are investing in a flagship Net Zero Carbon Programme in response to climate change which aims to deliver a net zero carbon borough by 2030. This set against a baseline of 610,000 tonnes of Carbon (2020).

As part of this programme, we are decarbonising all buildings including retrofitting all of the Council's housing stock and improving energy efficiency of the council's offices and facilities. We are also increasing capacity for solar energy on council buildings and housing stock to increase the use of renewable energy sources through heat and energy networks that can deliver zero carbon heat to communal buildings.

We will continue to develop People Friendly Neighbourhoods throughout the borough and embed these alongside further implementation of school streets and cycling infrastructure to promote an active and healthy borough. The council will support this with the reduction of emissions from the council fleet by reducing and moving to 100% of council electric vehicles by 2030.

We will also support businesses and partners to have access to green skills, services and products they need and support the local labour force to be skilled and resilient. A further aim is to use planning policies to support net zero carbon development which will be further strengthened by a Net Zero Carbon Supplementary Planning Guidance.

We have set ourselves the goal to reduce, reuse and recycle waste, with an ambition to achieve 40% resident and 75% business recycling by 2030 focusing on reducing food waste and improving recycling on our estates.

This also includes our Greening Together programme which will work alongside the People Friendly Neighbourhoods programme to deliver up to 1,000 or 1.5 hectares of new green spaces by 2030, initially as 3-year programme of resident and community led greening and gardening projects to support better climate resilience including sustainable drainage and air quality and boost tree cover biodiversity.

2. Integrating Health and Care to provide seamless support for those who need it

We will establish integrated teams that will work together, in local spaces, to support residents with longer term vulnerabilities - including social, emotional, learning disabilities, sensory impairments, physical and mental health - and their Carers in their community. At the same time, we will manage risk and promote independence within three agreed geographic areas in Islington.

We will develop and implement strategies, including for: Family Carers, People living with Dementia, Autism and Accommodation options for people with different levels of need. We will develop our strategies working with residents and partners to ensure we focus on the most important problems to solve and deliver the greatest impact for residents.

Greener, healthier Islington: testing new approaches

Parks for Health Programme

This programme aims to ensure our communities spend more time enjoying our parks and green spaces - leading to improved health and wellbeing and reduced health inequalities and that our parks are recognised as exemplar spaces for health and mental well-being. The objectives are to invest in our parks and workforce and working with VCS and Health partners and residents.

Assistive Technology

Within Adult Social Care we have been working closely with colleagues from across the council to review and transform the current telecare offer with the aim of:

- Enhancing the quality of life for people with care and support needs
- Delaying, reducing, or preventing the need for care and support and reducing hospital admissions through the provision of Assistive Technology.
- Ensuring residents have a positive experience of Assistive Technology
- Using Assistive Technology to help safeguard and protect adults from harm.

Since going live in January 2022, the Assistive Technology (AT) service has seen record numbers of activity. Between January 2022 – November 2022 we received a record number of referrals into the service (807), installed technology into 476 resident's homes, and supported 90 residents with a safe hospital discharge.

A key part of the new service is innovation and how we use innovative technologies. Over the past year we have worked with Brain in Hand who provide a self-management support system for people with mental health and learning disability needs and we will be introducing a new range of technology to support residents to lead independent lives, in their own home, whilst supporting our NHS colleagues with early discharge.

Shared Lives

Shared Lives is a service that offers residents who have care and support needs the opportunity to live in the community and can be an alternative to residential care. The scheme matches people, often with a learning disability, who need care and support, with an approved carer in the community who will share their home, family, and community life to provide ongoing support. Shared Lives has been operational in Islington for some time and is a well-established service. Over the last year we have worked hard to expand this service:.

- We have developed a targeted media campaign to tell people about the excellent work the scheme has delivered and types of support it provides.
- We implemented a digital platform that helps us attract more carers called Shared Lives Plus.

We have seen the number of new carers double over the last year, which allows us to support more people. We have also started using Shared Lives in more creative ways, as an alternative to day opportunities, working with residents aged 16+. We aim to expand the team so that we can start to support older residents and people with mental health needs.

SECTION 3:

Making it happen: changing the way we work

To deliver the missions we have set ourselves and achieve our ambition of a more equal future, we will need to make some fundamental shifts in the way we work as an organisation and a wider system. These shifts are:

1. Putting communities at the heart of everything we do
2. Embracing innovation and disrupting the status quo
3. Enabling dynamic leadership and governance
4. Using communication and storytelling to connect with our residents
5. Investing in a high performing workforce
6. Ensuring impact for local people

1. Putting communities at the heart of everything we do

Let's Talk Islington is only the start of a new dialogue. Following our extensive programme of engagement, we want to continue to put community voice at the heart of everything we do.

Regular, ongoing engagement is essential to keeping resident experiences at the forefront during decision making. Some will say that we already know what the issues are, and that there should be less talking and more action. To this we say that talking is not transactional or just about knowing "the answer" – it's about developing a deep understanding of experiences, the nuances of the situation and building trust and empathy between communities and the council. This is fundamental to be able to move forwards together.

As we adapt and deliver our programmes to reach our 2030 vision, we will need to keep up to date with changing views and emerging evidence to ensure our responses continue to make sense for all local people. That means offering a variety of opportunities to get involved which meet different interests and needs and having a presence across the borough as part of the community of people who live, work and study here.

We will publish a Community Power Framework later in 2023 which will ensure that our commitment to hearing from and working with communities is embedded consistently across our services. As part of this we will roll out a model of ongoing community conversations so that we continue to have a finger on the pulse of what people are thinking, feeling and worrying about in our borough. This model will be shaped by some core principles.

Our model will:

- be rooted in community and meet people where they are.
- be representative and inclusive of marginalised voices.
- include a diverse range of approaches to maximise reach.
- enable and empower residents to make their impact on the most important strategic issues and programmes
- link in to and amplify any existing mechanisms for citizen voice in Islington to make them as clear and easy to access for residents

In line with these principles, we will trial different engagement methods to find a model that works for Islington. This may include regular drop-ins to gather thoughts in community locations, getting involved through our new digital engagement platform or taking part in creative, participatory projects on key themes from different services.

2. Embracing innovation and change

The purpose of this strategy is ultimately to drive change across the organisation, and in turn the borough. Having a clear vision about where we're going is just one element, we will need to work differently to create the impact we want to see.

This means spotting and investing in opportunities to innovate, test and learn from new approaches in all we do to better meet resident needs, from how we encourage leadership and development to how we manage and support projects and share learning.

We will take a number of steps to trial and embed new ways of working to drive forward our missions and shape the conditions for local people to thrive. For example, in 2022 we kicked off the Islington Design Challenge which brought together community groups, residents and stakeholders to consider a "wicked issue" – in this instance, how to support adults who need help to thrive with early intervention in a community-based setting. Over the next year we will take emerging opportunities from across our priority areas through a series of workshops to design and test new approaches to creating a more equal Islington. Crucially, design and decision-making will take place working together with representatives from the council, statutory partners, thought leaders, community groups and residents as part of a community-powered approach.

We will use an Appreciative Inquiry method which involves thinking about what we do well in these areas, dreaming big about the change we want to see in the future and mapping out a blueprint to make that change happen. We'll be focused on learning from the evidence, directly bringing in insight from local people and stakeholders as well as drawing from national and international data and examples.

We believe that having the people with direct experience of the issues we are trying to address involved in designing solutions is, in itself an important part of creating more equal and just systems which empower local people. On top of that, working together with diverse stakeholders from across our community gives us the chance to ground new approaches in the lived experiences of the people who call the borough home. By embracing innovation and change we can maximise opportunities that come our way and create an organisation that can adapt to new contexts, to continue to ensure outcomes reached are what work best with and for local people.

3. Enabling dynamic leadership and governance

Through initiatives such as our Inequality Task Force we have seen the value of bringing together diverse voices to influence the ways we work, the ways we think and the decisions we make. We want to continue to have regular spaces for leaders in the borough to come together, reflect and share new ideas around strategic objectives.

Our focus will be on creating places outside of day-to-day activities to think about the big issues that affect people, services and organisations across the system. We want to bring leaders invested in Islington who rarely sit in the same room together to share expertise and innovation from their own areas, whether that's local business, school governors or trade unions. Through a set of leadership forums, we'll be able to reflect on the overall direction of the council as well as dig deep into emerging trends, cases of success and failure.

It'll not only be about challenge from different sectors but casting a wide net to connect with community leaders at different levels and nurture aspiring leaders who share our vision. This might be, for example, through supporting and engaging the borough's young leaders and student unions. Our leaderships forums should be as varied and dynamic as the borough we live in, moving beyond hierarchies to give a platform to fresh ideas and capacity building for the future.

While we create these new spaces to inspire thinking, we will not lose sight of our duty to monitor the progress of the work set out in this plan. Our refreshed leadership model will also include governance structures which allow us to closely review and evaluate our strategic programmes, outputs and outcomes. This will include:

Islington Together Leaders Group: a space for leaders across the borough (public sector partners, the local VCS, business leaders) to share new ideas and challenge each other on progress. This will support the Council to set the strategic direction and ensure we are staying on track and doing right by the citizens we all serve. This group meets quarterly and is chaired by the Leader of Islington Council.

Partnership governance: a set of strategic boards aligned to each our five missions to steer and track impact. These will meet at least quarterly and be co-chaired by senior officers of the Council as well as Executive Members of the Council to ensure both accountability and grip.

Community of practice: an open space with a rolling programme of activities to inspire thinking, explore new trends and encourage deliberation and learning across the Council and partners as well as residents. This will be an opportunity for leadership and development for colleagues at different levels while inputting into critical strategic plans.

4. Using communication and storytelling to connect with our residents

Our mission to create a more equal future for Islington and drive change will only be possible if we continue to modernise and open up the way we communicate with our residents, putting strategic communications and campaigning at the heart of what we do, and using these to create a movement for change.

That will mean telling a clearer story to our residents, businesses, staff and stakeholders through all of our channels, and investing in fewer, but more effective strategic campaigns that are driven by the priorities set out in this plan.

It will mean launching new channels and thinking more creatively about how we reach those we hear from less often – in the physical and digital spaces they use – rather than expecting them to come to us. It will mean thinking about how we can engage in a way that's creative, fun and accessible for residents with different interests, including linking into the specific culture, art and heritage opportunities each local area offers. It will mean investing in new citizen engagement techniques and public affairs tools to ensure that the authentic voices of

our residents are heard in the national and regional policy debate. It will mean changing the way our communications function works and recruiting more local and diverse voices, so that the stories we tell are authentically Islington and reflect residents' experiences. And it will mean better use of data, insight and evaluating where we have impact, so that we can put our limited resources in the places that best serve our residents.

Crucially, we must also open ourselves up, co-creating our campaigns and content with the people we are trying to reach, and the subject matter experts in the council and our partners. Systemic barriers, historic mistrust and a world of increasing populism, mean that the council will often not be the best message carrier to those who we most need to reach to tackle inequality. It will be essential to work with community groups and trusted community leaders to ensure sustainable messaging that lands.

We will publish a new Communications and Campaigns Plan later this year that will set out in detail the work we will do to accelerate this change, building on existing successes and responding directly to what residents told us through our Let's Talk Islington programme.

We will know if we are successful if – in a world where disinformation is easily spread and confidence in public institutions is decreasing – our residents feel informed about and involved in Council priorities and decisions, are satisfied with our services and trust us to work on their behalf.

5. Investing in a high performing workforce

We have a relentless focus on our residents – everything we do, everything we build, has to be of benefit to the communities we serve. Our staff feedback tells us that most people feel either a direct or indirect resident impact in the work they do. They feel supported within their respective teams and they feel they belong. They also believe there are lots of reasons to be proud in Islington and there is a palpable sense of a momentum building. A momentum driven by a drive, passion and dedication to making a difference to residents' lives.

Investing in a high performing workforce is essential if we are to deliver on our ambitions set out in this strategy. We recognise that in order to create a high performing culture across the Council it will require a significant shift in how we develop the organisation. As we empower our communities, we must also empower our staff. We must become more entrepreneurial and comfortable with the idea of change. We must also make sure that challenging inequality remains deep at the heart of our evolution as a workforce.

Our investment in creating a high performing workforce starts with our new approach to performance development for every one of our colleagues. A new approach which drives open and honest conversations about great performance and areas for improvement, allows staff to know exactly what great performance looks like in their role. It will also allow our colleagues to be rewarded and recognised for high performance in a fair and inclusive way. We must be transparent about our expectations so that everyone knows how important it is to do their job well, meet their objectives and live the council's values and ambitions to tackle inequality.

We will shortly be publishing our refreshed Workforce Strategy which will set out what we will do to make our ambitious plans a reality through enabling our current staff to fully utilise their potential and enriching our workforce by attracting new staff, especially from our own borough, who share our values and have the ability and motivation to achieve our vision.

We will know we are successful through monitoring workforce data, staff engagement and evaluation. We will also know we've achieved our ambitions by how our workforce talks about Islington as an employer, what it feels like to work here and most of all by the positive impact our workforce has had on our community.

6. Ensuring impact for local people

Driving change effectively is not only about understanding where we are going and how we will get there but where we are and what impact we have made. In order to achieve the goals we have set ourselves, we need to be more intentional, disciplined and sophisticated about measuring impact for residents.

While we want to know that our services are well run and operate effectively, we will focus on being transparent about the difference we have made. In doing so, we can enable local people to understand our ambitions and easily hold us to account. We can learn, adapt and stay focused on the things that really matter to the people who live here. Meaningful measures support us to answer this question and drive us forward our ambition to break the cycle of inequality.

A core element of our new approach will be to establish a new Wellbeing Index to help us measure the wellbeing of our borough. This is a tool which will bring together different social, economic and environmental data to provide a picture of what Islington is like as a place to live and work. This tool will support the organisation to assess long-term impact on what matters to us most, to see how different parts of people's lives are getting better or worse to continue to inform the response set out in this plan. It's about understanding someone's ability to do what they want to do and be who they want to be.

In line with the Inequality Task Force recommendations, we will take a plural approach to measurement and evaluation, drawing on the insight and lived experience of communities. This will include looking at how we incorporate citizen voice to strengthen the picture we paint of the borough, making sure that our data has depth and soul which reflects the full colour of experiences across our community.

Our new way of working recognises the importance of continuously testing and learning as we go to build on what's working, understand what's not and improve our innovations. We're not always going to get it right first time and taking an agile approach to reviewing progress will allow us to learn and shape what can be improved as early as possible.

We will report on the progress of this plan overall annually and build in consistent opportunities to work collaboratively and iteratively on our key programmes to drive change. We will continue to hold community conversations throughout the year to stay on the pulse with what local people are thinking and feeling, but we will also establish an annual Islington Together 2030 Conference. The conference will bring together local people and partners to collectively reflect on progress and plot out steps for the year ahead.

We will use this plan, alongside the wellbeing index as a guide.

SECTION 4:

Getting involved

At the heart of our plans set out in this document is community voice and participation. We have developed our commitments and missions from all that we have heard through Let's Talk Islington, but it is essential that local people continue to play a role in the delivery of this plan and continue to provide challenge and share experiences to steer its way.

There are a multitude of opportunities to get involved through many of our transformational programmes and we encourage you to come along to the annual Islington Together 2030 Conference, to discuss our progress and what's ahead – details of the first one will be available on our [webpage](#) in due course.

In the meantime, if you have any ideas or would like to get involved in any way, please get in touch with us by emailing engagement@islington.gov.uk.

This is a collective endeavour and everyone has something to contribute. Whatever happens, we promise we will be on your side, and together, we will create a more equal future for everyone who calls this borough home.

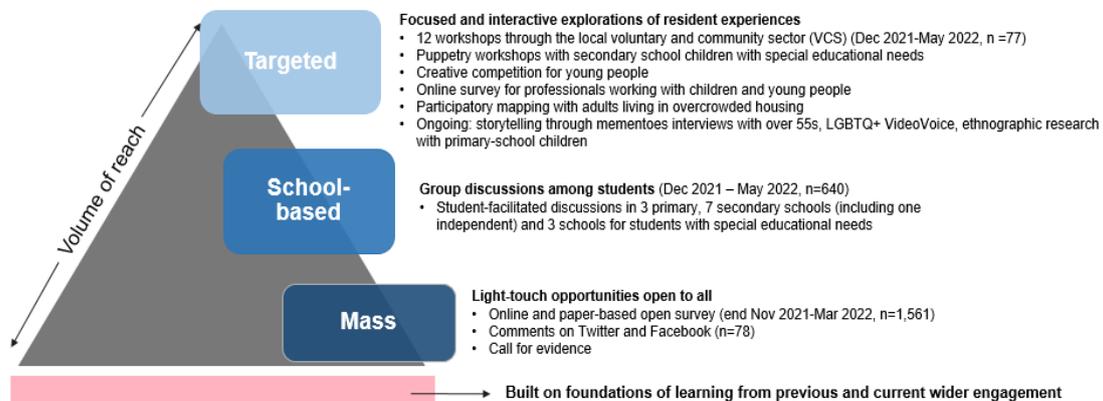
Appendix A – our engagement approach

We designed a tiered engagement strategy, aspiring for a mix of mass engagement (large-scale, light-touch methods to reach as many local people as possible), and targeted approaches to engage with different communities across socio-economic status, ethnicity, sexuality, gender, age, faith, and disability. We deliberately used different touchpoints for reaching out to hear from new voices through our local voluntary and community sector (VCS) organisations or through our existing champions and co-production networks.

Engagement pyramid and infographic of engagement numbers

Engagement and participation workstreams

This pyramid shows the breadth and depth of engagement between November 2021-August 2022. These activities aimed to provide a range of opportunities and formats for residents to share their perspectives and priorities. Our targeted engagement sought to better understand the experiences of residents who are more likely to be living in poverty (young people, older people), for whom we have less local evidence (LGBTQ+ residents, overcrowded tenants) and those with complex needs.



We went into a range of community spaces across the borough to carry out survey engagement – mosques, parks, playgrounds, markets, leisure centres, libraries, community centres, voluntary organisations, and outside tube stations. By going to spaces where the community gathers, but which aren't (or at least aren't obviously) run by the council, we were able to hear the views of people who may never or only rarely come into contact with the council. We also tried to make our engagement as inclusive as possible; for example, we created easy-read documents for our sessions with a learning disability advocacy charity and translated surveys into different widely spoken community languages such as Arabic, Somali and Turkish.

By having our staff carry-out this engagement ourselves (rather than commissioning a provider), we also provided opportunities for staff to build expertise in carrying out participation and engagement, including specialist engagement (e.g. for people with different types of disability). In the long-term, staff can therefore return to these spaces to keep building relationships and trust, both personally and on an institutional level.

We invested heavily in qualitative approaches that builds trust and provide for mutual exchange in the form of knowledge, skills or new experiences. These projects were:

- Map-making of the local community and walking tours with adults living in overcrowded housing

- Storytelling with over 55s accessing a community lunch-club in a deprived area of the borough
- Documentary film-making workshops – videovoice – with the LGBTQ+ community
- Puppetry with children from a school for children with special educational needs and disabilities
- ‘Anthropology By Children’ (ABC) – anthropology classes with year 6 school pupils in schools to teach ethnographic methods
- Research on “Being Black in Islington” with our diverse Black community
- Hotspot mapping on feelings of safety across the borough as part of our safer spaces campaign
- Qualitative research on unemployed Black and Minority Ethnic communities’ access to employment support

Takeaways from our engagement approach

What worked well...

- In traditional research (e.g. an interview), the researcher controls the questions and can have underlying assumptions which determines what is discussed. We wanted to give people with lived experience **more control over their stories** and give them to opportunity to share what they thought was important. We believe that by doing this you get **a more authentic picture** of people’s experiences.
- Using **creative methodologies** allowed people to **have fun and learn new skills** through the process of engagement – the engagement process itself can be an enriching and empowering experience.
- **Going into local community spaces, rather than asking people to come to the town hall or other council spaces** proved to be essential. Council officers spent time in over 25 locations such as libraries and leisure centres over a period of six months, and were able to hear from thousands of residents who otherwise may not have come forward.
- Our focus was on **taking the time to listen**. Rather than rigidly structured conversations, we created opportunities for people to share their thoughts through community workshops and the creative projects, **without there being a fixed agenda steering the conversation**.
- Collaborating with diverse council services and VCS organisations from across the borough was essential to our success in reaching thousands of people from a range of different communities. Using data to construct our tiered approach to engagement to then **work out early who the key VCS groups** were supported effective outreach. The process of working together with **different people internally also created a lot of momentum, excitement, and collaboration**.
- Including council officers as researchers provided a great opportunity for **staff who might not always have a day-to-day presence in the borough to get out and about**, to hear people’s stories first-hand, rather than through case studies or data. It was also beneficial **for residents to see council workers as part of the picture of communities**, building trust especially with those who have little contact with the council.

Even better if...

- You rarely do anything perfectly on the first try. There were some spaces, including businesses, that were scoped within our original plans but weren’t included in our community locations, as **we didn’t have the existing relationships needed to get them on board** early. In future, we should aim to look for, and start to build trust with, **less traditional places for engagement** in communities to get different kinds of people involved, such as barbershops and sports centres. This also means **reviewing our communications approach** to improve how we inform people where we are and what we’re doing.

- A common challenge is **finding the people whose voices need to be heard the most, but who have the least amount of time to get involved. This might be** because they are balancing caring responsibilities with work, juggling multiple jobs in poor conditions, or simply are consumed by the stress of paying bills or putting food on the table. While we developed our engagement approach to include innovative and creative research with and for people who are typically not included in these kinds of conversations, we could **do more to explore opportunities meaningful engage with these residents**, for example by exploring peer research.
- To make sure that this kind of community engagement becomes an integral part of council business, we need to **develop our workforce for the future**. We will support our staff – especially those who interact with residents every day – to **ensure we have the right skills so we can constantly listen and understand the lived experiences of our residents**. This should also include a consistent support offer for our staff in the event that conversations can be triggering or unsettling. We will develop our offer through our upcoming work to establish a council-wide engagement and participation framework.
- The local VCS have been an incredible source of knowledge, networks and support throughout Let's Talk Islington – from advising on targeted approaches, to providing space to facilitating conversations with service users – and we are extremely grateful. Nevertheless, we can continue to work **even more closely from the outset with residents and VCS organisations to plan engagement together**. In having a clear plan of collaboration from the beginning, we can ensure there is clear rationale for the work and that most importantly, feedback is then provided to all those involved about how their involvement has been used. To go even further, we will consider how we can **take a locality-based approach by working with grassroots organisations** to develop our understanding of very specific, local community issues.

Appendix B

Task Force Members

Councillor Nurullah Turan (Taskforce Chair)
Executive Member for Health and Social Care and Ward Councillor for Laycock Ward

Councillor Jilani Chowdhury
Ward Councillor for Barnsbury Ward

Dr Miatta Fahnbulleh
Chief Executive Officer of the New Economics Foundation, an organisation committed to transforming the economy so it works for people and the planet

Clenton Farquharson MBE
Chair of the Think Local, Act Personal Partnership Board, SCIE trustee, member of the Coalition for Personalised Care, and the Social Care Sector COVID-19 Stakeholder Group.

Sam Gurney
London, East and Southeast Regional Secretary for the Trades Union Congress (TUC) which brings together more than 5.5 million working people who are members of 48-member trade unions

Professor Donna Hall CBE
Chair of New Local, Chair of Bolton NHS Foundation Trust and Integrated Care System advisor to NHS England. Former Chief Executive of Wigan Council (2011-2019) where she developed 'The Wigan Deal'.

Councillor Gary Heather
Ward Councillor for Finsbury Park Ward

Annabelle Kapoor
Head of School at Drayton Park Primary School, located in Highbury which is one half of the Edventure Collaborative, a federation of two community schools in the borough

Navinder Kaur
Chief Executive of Voluntary Action Islington (VAI), which aims to lead and support a resilient local voluntary sector that actively collaborates to support residents and the community.

Dr Torange Khonsari
Researcher and Course Leader at London Metropolitan University in the field of Cultural and Civic Commons

Dr John McGrath
GP Registrar at Amwell Group Practice in Clerkenwell

Former Councillor Angela Picknell
Former Ward Councillor for St Mary's Ward

Dr Kelly Fagan Robinson

Leverhulme and Isaac Newton Trust ECR Fellow and Research Fellow and Postgraduate Tutor in the Department of Social Anthropology at Clare Hall, University of Cambridge

Dr Ben Smith

GP Partner at Killick Street Health Centre in Barnsbury, Chair of the Islington GP Federation

Neil Tester

Former Director of the Richmond Group of Charities, a coalition of leading health and social care organisations in the voluntary sector and Former Deputy Director of Healthwatch England

Appendix C – Highlights across participatory projects

The following are some of the themes that came from the participatory projects, which created space for residents to share their experiences in more depth and in more creative ways. There is a wealth of insight that has come through Let's Talk Islington, so please get in touch at engagement@islington.gov.uk if you'd like to know more.

Project	Themes
<p>Proud Islington</p> <p><i>London Metropolitan University and local filmmakers coordinated a project which trained nine LGBTQ+ people in documentary filmmaking techniques, as a medium to express their experience of being LGBTQ+ in Islington. This visual research methodology is called 'videovoice'. Participants wrote and recorded short films capturing what it is like to be LGBTQ+ in Islington, from the impact of homophobic attacks to an aspirational look at how Islington could be 'the gayest borough in the galaxy'.</i></p>	<p>Participants stressed that Islington should be a strong, loud voice for LGBTQ+ rights – an 'LGBTQ+ Champion Borough' – as expressed by the following key themes:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Community and Connection <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • More opportunities such as Videovoice to continue meaningful, open dialogue with LGBTQ+ communities – safe, welcoming and sober spaces for LGBTQ+ people to reflect, connect with each other, and share information about LGBTQ+ activities and services. 2. Labels and Definitions <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ensuring trans, non-binary, gender-fluid and gender-queer people are able to express their gender identity and be addressed by their gender preference in all council communications and administration. At a minimum, this would mean ensuring legal and preferred names are included on all forms and communications. • Ensuring LGBTQ+ people and lived experiences actively contribute towards decision-making. Ongoing educational programmes around diverse identities and use of pronouns. 3. Visibility <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Creating physical, central, social and safe spaces for LGBTQ+ people to connect and support each other. • Increasing the visibility of gender-neutral toilets. • Increasing the visibility of LGBTQ+ role models within the council.
<p>Celebrating Ageing in Islington</p> <p><i>London Metropolitan University researchers ran a project in collaboration with Hornsey Lane Estate Community Association, a community centre in a deprived area of the borough. Researchers worked with eleven older people (aged over 55) in a social lunch-club setting, to share stories of their</i></p>	<p>Trust and a desire for personal interaction were the overarching narratives which underpinned the older people's stories and reflections on interacting with Islington Council:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Community <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • For older people, their community is a sacred space in which they can find mutual support, belonging, and solace, to which they attach a strong sense of local identity. • Connecting with neighbours was also identified as important in creating a sense of shared local identity. Some participants expressed struggling to

<p><i>lives in Islington and experiences interacting with the council. Participants used a personal memento to share their story and had their personal portraits taken.</i></p>	<p>find connection as a result of constant turn-over of new neighbours</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Community spaces (such as local bookshops, hair salons, and parks) were highlighted as crucial hubs for the community, acting as intergenerational meeting points vital for retaining community memory and cohesion. • Community centres were praised for encouraging social cohesion and wellbeing, especially providing a social space for isolated older people. Older people, particularly those who lived alone, appreciated being included in community activities and being listened to in a non-judgmental way. These spaces could be enhanced with improved access to healthcare information and financial advice. • Maintaining existing spaces – there is a sense of some community spaces being left to decline. Although new centres are appreciated, older people are familiar and feel invested in existing spaces and do not want them to be neglected. Some older people felt that regeneration was not allocated fairly. • More intergenerational conversations – older people felt there was a real gap in communication between themselves and young people. Older people could become mentors for young people lacking support systems. <p>2. Interaction with the Council</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • There is an assumption from the council that people will be able to navigate online systems, but there is no ‘human’ help to do so for those who cannot. The older people generally felt it was difficult to access resources in an accessible and straightforward way. They wanted to speak with a ‘real person’, not a system. • This lack of personal interaction from the council has resulted in a feeling of ‘distance’ and lack of trust.
<p>Growing Up in Islington</p> <p><i>Ten pupils aged 11-16 from The Bridge Secondary School, a school providing support for children with particular special educational needs (SEN) and disabilities, worked with Little Angel Theatre to explore life in Islington through puppetry. Young people engaged in relaxed participatory conversations about their lives in Islington, which were</i></p>	<p>The young people spoke about a range of topics, many of which mirrored the themes which emerged from the main resident survey:</p> <p>Affordability of housing and the general cost of living rising in the borough – young people reflected on the high costs of rent and the increasing cosy of bills for energy and electricity</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Safety and anti-social behaviour • Environment—with positive statements about their surroundings, in particular parks

<p><i>recorded. Each young person then learned about the art of puppetry, creating their own puppet character and using it to narrate their recorded experiences in a short film.</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A desire for more services, such as youth clubs, especially for young people with SEN
<p>Being Black in Islington</p> <p><i>Islington Council commissioned The Ubele Initiative to engage with Black residents and hear, first-hand, the experiences of being Black in Islington. Ubele spoke to 126 participants comprised of: Black residents; Voluntary and Community Sector leaders; Islington Council staff; and Islington councillors. Data was gathered through a variety of methods; A survey (50 participants); Dialogue Interviews (9 participants); Convening Conversations (10 participants); Group Sessions (2 sessions with 45 participants); a Walking Tour of Islington (12 participants).</i></p>	<p>Five key themes emerged throughout the conversations with local Black people in Islington, with many themes again mirroring the broader resident survey:</p> <p>Belonging</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Many Black respondents reported that they did not feel a sense of belonging in Islington. There was a sense of exclusion and erasure of Black people. • There was a sense that gentrification had exacerbated the feeling that Black people no longer have a space to be in Islington. Some talked about going into other parts of London to be able to “be themselves”. • Some participants felt there was little understanding of different cultures in Islington, as well as assumptions about “the wants and likes of Black people”. • Black people also talked about the importance of connection and unity within the Black Community in Islington, as well as recognising and celebrating the difference that exists and the intersectionality of race with gender, sexuality and disability. <p>Experiences of racism</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Policing & Community Safety – the disproportionate use of Stop and Search; Black Young People not feeling safe on the streets; high number of Black boys in the Criminal Justice System - Young People & Education – low aspirations from of the system of Black Young People and high rate of school exclusion - Health and Mental Health – poor outcomes for Black People - Employment and lack of high-quality work and career progression - Poverty – across all indicators of poverty Black People are worse off e.g., in work poverty; cost of living <p>Housing and affordability</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Issues in relation to the cost of buying and maintaining a house in Islington and the poor standard of housing, as well as their perception that the council were not responsive. - Black people in Islington also expressed concern about the rising cost of living in relation to gas and electric bills. <p>Representation, Community Voice and Trust</p>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - There was a sense that Black People in Islington are not able to influence decisions and there is a lack of community power. - Some suggestions to remedy this situation further illustrate further issues: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Inclusion of Black CEOs and diversity workers in community programmes ▪ More Black People in higher positions ▪ More support and preparation to enable Black people to access higher employment roles - Respondents also talked to us about the lack of trust between the Black Community, the council and other public services. This often resulted in a sense of fatalism and apathy, “nothing changes so why bother” <p>Community Organising and Connections</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Community Organising and Connections are integral to building community power and representation ○ Respondents told us that there were a lack of Black-led organisations, or groups, that “take up issues for Black community members” ○ Ubele’s network map confirmed this, showing that there are a number of organisations operating in Islington but few that are Black Led. ○ The “lack of provision for Black and Caribbean Communities” was attributed to reasons including: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> i. The ability and capacity of the Black Community in Islington to come together, articulate its concerns and contribute to change and to generally have its voice heard is limited. This is because it is not supported by the necessary community infrastructure, including defined community spaces. ii. The idea that “Black communities [are] seen as too risky to invest in”
<p>Safer Spaces Islington</p> <p><i>Local people were invited to feedback on where and why they feel unsafe, and what they wanted to see improved to make Islington a safer space for all. A survey was posted to every household and residents could also respond using an online interactive</i></p>	<p>General Safety</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Overall, 34% of respondents said they felt either ‘very unsafe’ or ‘unsafe’ and 34% said they felt ‘very safe’ or ‘safe’ in Islington. • When asked about how safe the respondent felt in the area they lived or worked, a higher proportion (44%) said they felt either ‘very unsafe’ or ‘unsafe’ and a lower proportion reported feeling ‘very safe’ or ‘safe’.

map. There were 1,762 responses to the consultation, with 70% of responses being made online.

- Many respondents said they would avoid an area they feel unsafe in after dark and would avoid going there alone.

Gender

- Overall female respondents reported feeling more unsafe in Islington and in the area they lived or worked compared to male respondents.
- Being a woman was the most mentioned reason why someone might feel unsafe in their highlighted area.
- A higher proportion of female respondents would avoid highlighted areas after dark or if alone.

Age

- Harassment was the biggest concern from those under 25 (although based on few responses).
- Drug users/dealing were the biggest concerns for those aged between 25 and 64.
- Cycles/e-scooters on the pavement were the biggest concerns of those aged 65+.

Location

- Holloway recorded the highest proportion of residents who said they felt 'very unsafe' or 'unsafe' in the area they live or work, followed by Finsbury Park and Bunhill.
- Barnsbury recorded the highest proportion of residents who felt 'very safe' or 'safe' in the area they live or work. This is followed by Junction and Caledonian.
- Data showed that a respondent's feeling of safety in their local area has a significant impact on their feeling of safety in Islington as a whole.

Suggested improvements to improve safety

- More lighting
- Improved infrastructure
- Cleaner streets
- More support for rough sleepers
- Spaces for young people/Youth Clubs
- Street harassment campaign
- Support for rough sleepers
- Empowerment activities for women

For the full results, please explore our data pack [here](#). All these insights will be central to Council plans for years to come. The following sections will lay out how we plan to build on this learning to inform our 2030 Plan.