

COUNCIL MEETING – 2 MARCH 2023

QUESTIONS FROM MEMBERS OF THE PUBLIC

a **Sebastian Sandys to Cllr Ward, Executive Member for Finance, Planning and Performance:**

How many Islington council tax payers had the Single Person Discount to which they are entitled removed from their account in December after they failed to notice or respond to a single email sent in November that had no follow up. And might officers time be better used in future years by making short reminder telephone calls than by first removing the discount and issuing a new bill and then reinstating it and issuing a third bill once people notice.

b **Rebekah Kelly to Cllr Champion, Executive Member for Environment, Air Quality and Transport:**

As the new Liveable Neighbourhood schemes are rolled out across the borough, what is the plan for the existing 7 Low Traffic Neighbourhoods? Will they also benefit from investment to make them into Liveable Neighbourhoods?

c **William Bateman to Cllr Champion, Executive Member for Environment, Air Quality and Transport:**

Why have the council decided not to notify residents that their parking permits are due to expire? Notification one month before expiry by both email and by letter would be courteous and in line with caring for the community and the residents that live here.

d **John Ackers to Cllr Champion, Executive Member for Environment, Air Quality and Transport:**

Lambeth Council say in their critically received 2023 Kerbside Strategy policy 1.4 that '*Cycle parking spaces are always cheaper than all residential parking permits*'. Meanwhile Islington has the most expensive bikehangar spaces in London. Cyclists have been told that the council would 'invest in secure cycle storage with enough space to meet demand'. However there are 3000+ people on the waiting list for a space. When will the review of Islington bikehangar charges mentioned by officers in the most recent Environment and Regeneration Committee be complete?

e **Louisa Hillwood to Cllr Champion, Executive Member for Environment, Air Quality and Transport:**

Islington has taken impressive climate action since declaring a climate emergency in 2019. In December of 2020 the council agreed to serve only vegetarian food at catered meetings and events. This was a commendable landmark decision. However, two years have passed and the climate and ecological crises continue to become more critical. While the council has acknowledged the devastating impact that meat production has on the environment, it is yet to recognise the impact of dairy.

When compared to plant-based milk, dairy causes around three times as much greenhouse gas emissions; uses around ten times as much land; two to twenty times as much freshwater; and creates much higher levels of eutrophication. According to an Oxford University study, switching to a plant-based diet is the single most effective thing an individual can do to reduce their environmental impact. Not only do plant-based diets reduce emissions, they also require one quarter less fresh water, 76% less farmland, and reduce acidifying and eutrophying emissions which degrade land and water ecosystems.

Other councils such as Oxfordshire County, Cambridge City, Exeter, Faversham and Hythe have made commitments to serve fully plant-based food at catered meetings and events. In London, Lewisham has done the same. I'd like to see Islington take the next logical step by committing to serve only plant-based fare at catered meetings and events for which it is responsible. Not only will going fully plant-based reduce the council's own emissions, but it will help to normalise plant-based eating across the borough. By leading the way, the council has the opportunity to encourage wider plant-based dietary shifts, which scientific consensus shows is an essential and effective way to address the climate crisis.

Given the climate emergency and Islington Council's commitment to reducing emissions in line with the Vision 2030 strategy, will the council consider committing to serving fully plant-based fare at any future catered meetings and events?

f **Jonny Evans to Cllr Champion, Executive Member for Environment, Air Quality and Transport:**

At this time I believe that the matter of funding a new community space in Tollington Ward's only significant park in Wray Crescent is going to be discussed at the full council meeting on March 2. As we understand it, the original plan at this location faced significant local opposition, as a result of which the project as originally proposed foundered and is now up to full council for review.

Given a significant number of local people were opposed to the original plans on the grounds of lack of consultation, how does repeating such lack of consultation reflect LBI's constitutional commitments to ensuring the decisions it takes lead to improvements in quality of service, community representation, and increasing community engagement, given that the plans we believe may be proposed at this meeting haven't at this time been discussed with local people to any sincere extent.

I would respectfully ask that this project be put aside pending thorough consultation with the people of Tollington as to what they need from this precious green space, which is one of very few in Islington, a borough with less public park space than any other in the UK.

Having already encountered such resistance from the local community, why is LBI now raising this matter to achieve funding from a full council meeting without having first consulted with the local community concerning its revised plans?

g Lynne Friedli to Cllr Champion, Executive Member for Environment, Air Quality and Transport:

A report from Age UK London revealed that 81% of Londoners would be more likely to visit shops, cafes, and businesses if public toilet provision were better. Has the Council conducted a local population needs assessment on the level of public toilet provision that is required to meet the needs of Islington residents? If a needs assessment has not been undertaken, what plans are in place to conduct a needs assessment to ensure that public toilet provision in Islington is adequate?

h Simon Carruth to Cllr O'Halloran, Executive Member for Homes and Communities:

Does the Council believe that the proposed programme of major works for Charles Rowan House, Margery Street represents a responsible use of public funds and a fair and humane attitude towards leaseholders living in the estate, given that:

- The double-glazed replacement windows which account for about two-thirds of the contract cost work out at a cost of about £4,000 per window.
- As a result, the cost imposed on a leaseholder with a three-bedroom flat is estimated by the Council to be about £41,000.
- This is happening at a time of cost-of-living crisis when most leaseholders, like most of the general public, are experiencing a real-terms reduction in their income.
- There is a viable alternative way of providing the necessary improvement in insulation of the flats at a fraction of the cost – namely installing secondary glazing which can be done from inside the flats and does not require replacement of the window frames or cause any issues in respect of the listed building status of Charles Rowan House.
- Although it is often claimed that double glazing is significantly more efficient at reducing heat loss, good secondary glazing can reduce heat loss by up to 65%. It also provides excellent noise reduction and causes less condensation and damp problems than double glazing. It is recommended for historic and listed buildings because it does not change the external appearance of the building.
- Several of the leaseholders in the estate already have secondary glazing, so they will not experience any noticeable improvement in insulation in return for the vast cost imposed on them, yet the Council refuses to allow them to opt out of this wasteful scheme.

- Although there is standard protocol whereby leaseholders in Council buildings can apply for a Deed of Variation to take responsibility for their own windows, the Council will not allow applications in this case because they say the deadline has passed.

i Mike Sanderson to Cllr Champion, Executive Member for Environment, Air Quality and Transport:

In a response to Councillor Russell on the provision of public toilets in Islington, Councillor Champion said there are 'a number of toilets that are open to the public... which number 40 sites with a variety of facilities.' Will the Council provide a full list of locations and opening times for these facilities and make this information publicly available including in hard-copy format for residents without internet access?

j John McGeachy On behalf of Cornelius McAfee to Cllr Champion, Executive Member for Environment, Air Quality and Transport:

In a letter to the Islington Tribune, Councillor Turan and Councillor Khondoker pledged that the Council will replace all of Islington's automated toilets with accessible facilities as part of a more than £1million investment in provision in Islington. Residents who require more frequent toilet visits (in particular, older residents and/or those living with certain health conditions) have been forced to limit their time outside or forego leaving the house at all. With works on site initially scheduled for the first quarter of 2023, can the Council provide an update on whether work has started; if the new replacements be themselves automated; and clarify what timescale residents can expect for its delivery?

k Leonie Philip to Cllr Bell-Bradford, Executive Member for Inclusive Economy and Jobs:

It is welcome that the replacement of seven toilets in the Borough will include a planning maintenance contract which will be 3 years with an option of a 2-year extension. Does this contract include the employment of toilet attendants paid at a London Living Wage with good working conditions? Is improvement of public toilet provision viewed as an opportunity to offer good jobs in the Borough? These jobs should pay a decent living wage, decent pension scheme, training to improve their future prospects.