

## COUNCIL MEETING – 13 JULY 2023

### NOTICES OF MOTION

#### Motion 1: Divest from the Arms Trade

Moved by Cllr Benali Hamdache  
Seconded by Cllr Caroline Russell

#### **This Council notes that:**

- That the UK is one of the world's biggest arms traders, selling £86 billion of arms between 2010 and 2019<sup>1</sup>.
- That the Saudi Arabian military is the biggest purchaser of UK arms, despite being accused of war crimes in Yemen<sup>2</sup>.
- Sweden banned the sale of weapons to Saudi Arabia<sup>3</sup>, whilst this Conservative government has repeatedly failed to stop selling weapons to rule breaking regimes.
- The world's militaries combined, and the industries that provide their equipment, are estimated to create 6% of all global emissions<sup>4</sup>.
- That many countries are failing to be transparent about the carbon intensity of their militaries or to reduce their armed forces' emissions.
- The United Nations Paris Agreement, reaffirmed at the COP27, commits our governments to substantially reduce global greenhouse gas emissions to limit the global temperature increase in this century to 2 degrees Celsius while pursuing efforts to limit the increase even further to 1.5 degrees.
- Carbon budgets produced by the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change, United Nations and the International Energy Agency show that preventing two degrees of warming relies on not burning the vast majority of all proven fossil fuels.
- That over half a billion of council pension funds across the country have been invested in the arms trade<sup>5</sup>.

<sup>1</sup> <https://caat.org.uk/news/new-stats-show-uk-government-is-the-second-biggest-arms-dealer-in-the-world/>

<sup>2</sup> <https://www.washingtonpost.com/investigations/interactive/2022/saudi-war-crimes-yemen/>

<sup>3</sup> <https://www.theguardian.com/commentisfree/2015/mar/12/sweden-stopped-selling-arms-to-saudi-arabia>

<sup>4</sup> Scientists for Global Responsibility (SGR)

<sup>5</sup> <https://www.theguardian.com/uk-news/2019/jan/10/uk-councils-invest-566m-in-arms-firms-implicated-in-saudis-yemen-campaign>

**This Council further notes:**

- In September 2018 Islington Council made a commitment to divest its pension funds from fossil fuels<sup>6</sup>.
- That £1.1 million worth of council pension funds are currently invested in companies that derive revenue from weapons and defence.
- That our council has held investments in BAE Systems, Lockheed Martin and Boeing.
- That Islington Council has progressively reduced its exposure to these types of investments.
- That councils like Liverpool City Council and Inverclyde Council have backed motions calling on pension funds to divest from the arms trade.

**This Council resolves:**

- To call on our pension fund to divest from arms dealers through the development and adoption of responsible investment policies which:
  - Immediately freeze any new investment in the Top 100 Arms-producing and Military Services Companies<sup>7</sup>.
  - Explore possible divestment options for divesting from direct ownership and any commingled funds that include investments in firms that derive more than 20% of their revenue from arms or weapons, subject to proper investment advice.
  - Actively seek to invest in companies that will reduce greenhouse gas emissions and minimise climate risk.
- To promote divestment from the arms trade to relevant organisations, like the Local Government Association, the Greater London Authority and London Councils.

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<sup>6</sup> <https://www.islington.media/news/islington-council-s-pension-fund-is-coming-out-of-carbon>

<sup>7</sup> [https://sipri.org/sites/default/files/2021-12/fs\\_2112\\_top\\_100\\_2020.pdf](https://sipri.org/sites/default/files/2021-12/fs_2112_top_100_2020.pdf)

## **Motion 2: Anti-Strike Legislation**

Proposed by Cllr Phil Graham

Seconded by Cllr Ilkay Cinko-Oner

### **This Council notes:**

- Central Government is currently trying to bring in the most pernicious anti-strike legislation since the days of Margaret Thatcher with the Minimum Service Levels Bill.
- The bill will grant the government powers to set 'minimum service levels' for six key public services, including health, fire and rescue, education, transport, decommissioning of radioactive waste and spent fuel and border security.
- There is no detail on the limit to these 'service levels', as the power to set this is given to the government, who may introduce legislation that imposes the restrictions without agreement with unions who represent the workers affected.
- This draconian legislation raises concerns about forcing workers to attend work against their will. The bill would mean that employers would have to issue work notices, naming who has to work and what they must do. Workers could be sacked, and unions face huge damages if they fail to comply.
- For decades, the 1992 Trade Union and Labour Relations (Consolidation) Act has protected trade unions and employees if strikes are called, ensuring that employers can't penalise workers who take industrial action.
- If passed, this legislation could result in workers being sacked for taking strike action that has been agreed in a democratic ballot. The significant risk of dismissal for workers who take strike action to resolve their pay and working conditions does not address the issue of staff shortages across the public sector.
- The joint committee on human rights has said the government's proposed anti-strike laws are "not justified and need to be reconsidered". The committee also warned that the legislation would clash with requirements under article 11 of the European Convention on Human Rights (ECHR), which guarantees freedom of association for workers.

### **This Council further notes:**

- The wave of industrial action in the UK is a display of the frustration of 13 years of Central Government austerity, coupled with the current cost of living crisis, and the lack of commitment from the government to ensure wages fall in line with inflation, which currently stands at 10.1%.
- On the 1st of February this year, half a million workers stood together and took industrial action, the biggest co-ordinated strike action since 2011.
- All over the country, workers are securing improved wages and better working conditions as a result of the power of collective action.
- Islington Council's 'Join a Union' campaign in 2020 where the council became the first local authority to join forces with the TUC to promote a safe return to work by joining a union as the UK emerged from the COVID-19 pandemic.
- The motion proposed by Cllr Ozdemir at Council in June 2022 which resolved to: "Support the RMT union and all other trade unions taking action this year to

protect workers' pensions and conditions, oppose job cuts and call for a proper pay rise".

- The continued support and solidarity shown from our Labour Group councillors, standing on the picket lines with striking workers from across the public sector, including our teachers, nurses and junior doctors, paramedics, train workers, postal workers, and paediatricians.
- Our commitment to supporting trade unions, trade union membership, and promoting the benefits of unionisation within the Council and across the borough.

**This Council resolves:**

- To defend the right of workers to strike
- Islington Council as an employer will do everything possible within its powers to protect employees right to strike
- To write to the Government to oppose the changes that will restrict workers' right to strike
- To show our full solidarity with striking workers, standing on the picket lines
- To continue to support the TUC's campaign to protect the right to strike
- To continue to work collaboratively with our trade unions who represent our Council workers and encourage union membership to Islington residents.

### **Motion 3: Diverse Councils Declaration**

Moved by Cllr Valerie Bossman-Quarshie

Seconded by Cllr Sheila Chapman

#### **This Council notes:**

- Councillors represent their community, and it is important that they reflect the diversity within their communities, particularly those with protected characteristics (age, disability, gender reassignment, marriage and civil partnership, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief, sex, sexual orientation).
- The work of the Co-operative Party in developing a Declaration for councils aimed at increasing diversity in local government.
- A report by the Fawcett Society and Democratic Club showed that a staggering 95% of local councils are male dominated. This means that only 18 of 382 local councils have achieved at least parity in gender representation.
- The analysis by the Fawcett Society showed that just 36% of the UK's 19,212 councillors are women, which is a similar split to representation of women in the House of Commons, which currently stands at 35%.
- Islington Council are proud to have a diverse group of councillors with the Labour Group consisting of 53% women, with the majority of the Council Executive team being women.
- The Leader of the Council, Cllr Kaya Comer-Schwartz, was elected as Islington's first Black, Jewish woman council leader.
- The standing orders of Islington Labour Group notes that the Council Executive should reflect the diversity of the area represented by the authority as far as possible.

#### **This Council further notes:**

- In last year's local elections, most of Islington Labour candidates were women, for a second set of elections in a row.
- In May last year, Islington Labour also had 12% of candidates identifying as LGBTQ+, 20% identifying as having a disability and 47% identifying as coming from Black and Minority Ethnic backgrounds.
- In 2014, Labour's first openly trans councillor, Cllr Osh Gantly, was elected.
- Islington Council was the first Council in London to appoint a Women and Girls Champion.
- The council's open and welcoming culture to all, promoting the highest standards of behaviour and conduct. This is demonstrated through the various training provided for Members when they are first elected and throughout their term in office, as well as making meetings and the role accessible for all councillors, making adjustments where a need has been identified.
- It made a commitment to work towards the standards for member support and development as set out in the LGA Councillor Development Charter and are progressing through the year three process, in which we are currently in year one.

- The Members Allowance Scheme includes a carers allowance paid at London Living Wage, a Broadband Allowance, and a range of other allowances. This was benchmarked against a number of other London Councils.
- Former Islington Labour Councillor Alice Clarke-Perry led the campaign for Parental leave policy for councillors, setting out members' entitlement to maternity, paternity, shared parental and adoption leave.
- Our commitment to demonstrate a duty of care for councillors by:
  - Providing access to the Employee Assistance Programme, a counselling service available to all councillors
  - Having regard for the safety and wellbeing of councillors whenever they are performing their role as outlined in the advice and guidance developed specifically for councillors by Emergency Planning and Health & Safety.
  - Taking a zero tolerance approach to bullying and harassment of members including through social networks

**This Council resolves to:**

- Adopt The Co-Operative Party's Diverse Councils Declaration to increase diversity in our local government
- Provide a clear public commitment to improving diversity in democracy
- Set out a local Diverse Action Plan ahead of the next local elections, including:
  - Appoint Diversity Ambassadors for each political group on the council to work with each other and local party associations to encourage recruitment of candidates from under-represented groups.
  - Encourage and enable people from under-represented groups to stand for office through the provision of activities such as mentoring and shadowing programmes and information and learning events for people interested in standing as official candidates.
  - Proactive engagement and involvement with local community groups and partner organisations supporting and representing under-represented groups.
  - Encourage all members and candidates to complete a candidates' and councillors' survey distributed at election time.
- Provide flexibility in council business by
  - Regularly reviewing and staggering meeting times
  - Supporting remote attendance at meetings where it is lawful
  - Agreeing recess periods to support councillors with caring or work commitments
- Continue to encourage members to take up allowances and salaries to which they are entitled, particularly any reimbursement for costs of care, so that all members receive fair remuneration for their work and that the role of member is not limited to those who can afford it.
- Ensure that councillors from under-represented groups are represented whenever possible in high profile, high influence roles.

## **Motion 4: Upholding the right to protest**

Proposer: Cllr Caroline Russell

Seconder: Cllr Ernestas Jegorovas-Armstrong

### **This Council notes:**

- That the right to protest is a fundamental cornerstone of liberal democracy
- Under Article 11 of the European Convention on Human Rights, everyone has the right to freedom of peaceful assembly and to freedom of association with others
- In recent years, this Conservative Government has passed legislation which significantly restricts the right to peaceful protest
- In 2022 the Government passed the Police, Crime, Sentencing and Courts (PCSC) Act, which gives police the power to impose noise-based restrictions on protest; to impose restrictions on public assemblies; and created the offence of wilful obstruction of the highway
- In 2023 the Government passed the Public Order Act, which gives the police powers to criminalise locking-on & being equipped for locking-on; interfering with major transport works; interfering with key national infrastructure; and powers to carry out suspicion-less stop and search related to protests
- The Government has now successfully passed a statutory instrument to introduce a new definition of 'serious disruption', so that the police will be given the power to impose restrictions on protests if they think that it could result in "a hindrance that is more than minor to the carrying out of day-to-day activities"
- Numerous national and international figures have spoken out against this clamping down on protest, including five UN Special Rapporteurs, the Council of Europe Commissioner for Human Rights, the Director of Public Prosecutions, and former senior police advisors
- In March, the UK was downgraded in the Civicus Monitor, an annual global index of civic freedoms, as a result of the government's "increasingly authoritarian" drive to impose restrictive and punitive laws on public protests

### **This Council further notes:**

- On the day of the King's Coronation the Metropolitan Police arrested a number of anti-monarchy protesters on various grounds, later releasing them without charge and apologising for their arrests
- Just Stop Oil protestors were arrested while interspersed in a crowd of coronation attendees, were handcuffed before they were read their rights, and the reason given for the arrests changed three times over the course of the day; these protestors remain released under investigation, rather than being released without charge
- The Metropolitan Police arrested a documentary filmmaker and held him in a cell for hours, despite him showing his press credentials and explaining that he is a journalist

- The day before the coronation, Metropolitan Police also arrested members of Westminster City Council's Night Stars programme, who volunteer to improve vulnerable people's safety at night
- The right to protest is being restricted at a time when this Conservative Government is passing authoritarian laws against migration, failing to adequately tackle climate change, and failing in its responsibility to protect refugees and asylum seekers
- People resort to protest when they feel that their concerns are not being heard through more traditional means, such as by raising issues with and through their political representatives

**This Council resolves to:**

- Engage with the Camden and Islington Metropolitan Police Basic Command Unit to understand how they are upholding the right to peaceful protest
- Work with community and civil society campaign groups in Islington to support their right to protest
- Write to the Home Secretary in opposition to the Government's severe restriction of the right to protest