

COUNCIL MEETING – 13 JULY 2023

QUESTIONS FROM MEMBERS OF THE PUBLIC

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

The DfT has recently announced that they would no longer fund Low Traffic Neighbourhoods, and the Mayor of London has admitted that some of the schemes are not perfect and should be tweaked or removed.

Will Islington Council scale back their plans to create traffic filtering schemes on 70% of Islington's roads? And how will it be funded going forward?

b Richard Rieser to Cllr Khondoker, Executive Member for Equalities, Culture and Inclusion

In light of the recent survey of accessibility of pavements I carried out in Mildmay, can the Council inform us what they are doing to ensure the multiple barriers identified, especially for disabled people, are being addressed across the borough?

c Jonathan Ward to Cllr Champion, Executive Member for Environment, Air Quality and Transport:

In June 2019 the council declared a Climate Emergency. In November 2020 it published a Net Zero vision for 2030. Among other aims the plan was to phase out gas boilers in new-build homes. However, 4 years on, we can see the Climate Emergency not being taken seriously. The council is inexplicably building new homes on the Andover Estate that are heated with fossil fuel gas boilers.

Why will these new homes be heated by fossil fuels and when do they plan to retrofit them with low carbon heat pumps?

d Rose-Marie McDonald to Cllr O'Halloran, Executive Member for Homes and Communities

Peabody is now including a second staircase in two of the tower blocks that will be constructed on the Holloway Prison site, in response to new fire safety requirements following the Grenfell Tower fire.

What information do you have about the impact this will have on the social homes? How will this affect the size of the flats?

Will the new flats still meet the needs of the 15,438 households on the waiting list, especially the needs of overcrowded families?

e Tomas Fernandez Alfonso to Cllr Ward, Executive Member for Finance, Planning and Performance

We now know there will be changes to the Holloway plans to include a second staircase in two of the blocks. It's key that the community has the opportunity to fully scrutinise the new plans for the social housing and for the women's space - how will LBI/Peabody make sure this happens? What will the scope of the new planning application be? What aspects will and will not be considered. When will the consultation period open and when will it close?

f Aya Husni Bey to Cllr Champion, Executive Member for Environment, Air Quality and Transport:

In Islington Council's biodiversity action plan 2020 – 2025 you commit to: "Continually review use of pesticides and herbicides in public realm and housing and look to reduce where possible. Carry out trials for alternative chemical free weed removal options." In light of Lambeth Council going pesticide free what are the barriers to doing similar in Islington?

g Ben Pearson to Cllr Champion, Executive Member for Environment, Air Quality and Transport:

"We know that walking and cycling, powered e-bicycles and public transport are specifically defined as sustainable transport modes by Islington Council, but electric motorcycles and mopeds currently are not. Electric motorcycles and mopeds don't contribute to congestion. Their air quality impacts from brake and tyre wear, and climate change impacts from manufacture and energy use, are similar to that of e-bicycles, lower than large e-cargo cycles, and far less than any public transport mode. Given these facts, it seems clear that electric motorcycles and mopeds would fit any definition of sustainable transport. On what criteria has the Council excluded electric motorcycles and mopeds from their list of sustainable modes, and what evidence do they have to support this?"

h Rachel to Cllr Champion, Executive Member for Environment, Air Quality and Transport:

We are disappointed by the introduction, without prior consultation, of new parking charges for motorcycles in solo motorcycle bays where no charges had previously existed. Proper consultation is a vital part of Council decision making, in order to afford those affected fair opportunity to engage with the process, and to avoid unforeseen errors. For this reason, it is important that Councils make adequate efforts to advertise and reach out to groups likely to be affected. With this in mind:

Does the Council regret not contacting motorcyclists or representative groups before the decision on charging was made, or advertising the proposal in such a way that responses from motorcyclists could have been considered prior to the decision?

i Phil Edwards to Cllr Turan, Executive Member for Health and Social Care

Are councillors fully aware of reasons that Lambeth council removed GLL as managers of their sport and leisure facilities across their borough?

What are councillors' views on GLL's management of Sobell ice rink, given the restricted opening hours compared to other rinks, and their lack of marketing?

j Mahdis Farsi to Cllr Ward, Executive Member for Finance, Planning and Performance

In 2021 GLL received £50M of support from the UK Government and local councils, following £64M of support received in 2020. As at 31 Dec 2021, GLL had increased its accumulated cash balance to £33.4M. Despite this tremendous financial assistance, GLL does not appear to have managed these funds appropriately and have instead run the Sobell ice rink into the ground by not promoting or maintaining it, restricting the opening hours (even after the lifting of all covid restrictions but more importantly prior to the pandemic also) and simply not increasing the entrance fees. How comfortable are Islington councillors with the way GLL ran the ice rink given the Council's financial support to GLL over the last 3 years?

k **Ola Sendecker to Cllr Turan, Executive Member for Health and Social Care**

The annual carbon footprint of the rink was 125 tonnes, approximately the same as one return flight from London to Rome. This puts into perspective the real emitters of carbon, and carbon emissions are not a basis for the closure of this community sport infrastructure, which could be made more energy efficient. Given the rink could be run on renewable electricity, does the council consider the removal of a local community sport facility to be a fair decarbonisation strategy, particularly in the context of the continued proliferation of short haul flights?

l **Pietro Barbagallo to Cllr Turan, Executive Member for Health and Social Care**

Fifty years ago, Sir Michael Sobell made a donation to establish a sports centre, including the ice rink, for the common good, social-purpose and wellbeing of the Islington community. We would like to ask the council what they think Sir Michael Sobell would want for the future of the sports centre.

m **Madeleine Beasley to Cllr Turan, Executive Member for Health and Social Care**

Meetings have taken place between the council and other experienced and lucrative Ice Rink operators who have shown interest in running Sobell Ice rink the same way they currently and successfully run other Ice Rinks in the UK. They are confident that Sobell can operate viably. What are the outcomes of these meetings and when will the results be made public?

n **Charlie Nevile to Cllr Khondoker, Executive Member for Equalities, Culture and Inclusion**

The council's EQIA report states that 74% of Sobell ice rink users are female, 60% are non-white, and 68% are younger than 30. This is far greater than the equivalent proportions within the general Islington population, so removing the rink would disproportionately affect young women and ethnic minorities. How does the council justify this social discrimination of removing the rink, and what evidence is there that teenage girls would prefer the proposed soft play facility?

o **Lucy Facer to Cllr Champion, Executive Member for Environment, Air Quality and Transport:**

Upper Street is a main A road designed to carry higher volumes of traffic in and out of the city. It has red routes, limited parking and is mainly commercial.

Liverpool Road is a B road and classified by the Department of Transport as a minor road. In addition it has a cycle lane and residential parking.

It has 2600 residents living on or immediately adjacent to it, with a high proportion of vulnerable people who are more likely to suffer chronic illness due to high levels of air pollution: half are living in social housing, 17.6% are disabled, 1 in 5 are under 19 and 10% are 65 or over. There is also a large secondary school with a sports field directly facing the road.

Residents have long been highlighting the high level of traffic volumes and the number of unhappy residents was noticeable at the Barnsbury and Laycock liveable neighbourhood zoom call.

However, no action has been taken to address the traffic issues and residents continue to suffer from high levels of air pollution and dangerous junctions.

Pedestrians, cyclists and drivers report feeling that the road space is dangerous and in particular junctions where all three meet. Although it is a wide road there are lots of users contending for space making it a hostile environment but most of all for pedestrians.

The proposed Liveable Neighbourhood for Barnsbury and Laycock must address the issues of traffic on the road, greening and small interventions such as banning lorries are welcome but will only reduce traffic by 370 vehicles and will not address the issues.

With traffic levels on Liverpool Road North higher than the adjacent section of Upper Street and only 33% of residents owning cars, we ask the council's Liveable Neighbourhood proposals are robust and take bold action.

Will the designs re-prioritise road users, filter traffic, invest in vulnerable residents, pedestrians and active travel?

p **Eve Norridge to Cllr Champion, Executive Member for Environment, Air Quality and Transport:**

Given that other London Councils, for example Lambeth, have demonstrated that weeds in public spaces can be managed without the use of environmentally harmful pesticides such as glyphosate, why is Islington Council still spraying glyphosate in our streets, will the Council commit to ending this harmful practice and, if so by what date?

q **Caroline Royds to Cllr Champion, Executive Member for Environment, Air Quality and Transport:**

The NLWA has agreed to investigate the scope for Mixed Waste Sorting at its Edmonton site in order to maximise the recovery of recyclable materials before incineration. Could the Scrutiny Committee ask it report on progress, including any proposed actions?

r **Anne Bentham to Cllr Turan, Executive Member for Health and Social Care**

Regarding the closure of Sobell ice rink, given the internal emails showing that the outcome of the consultation has been pre-determined, when will the council be reopening a legitimate consultation?

s **Tamara Cizeika to Cllr Champion, Executive Member for Environment, Air Quality and Transport**

Islington has a canopy cover of 25% - significantly higher than the England average of 16% - but residents want us to go even further with more trees on our streets. They want trees planted more quickly and many would like to plant trees themselves, in empty tree pits. What is the Council doing to support residents with this please? And what can we tell residents who want to do it themselves?

t **Colin Keatley to Cllr Turan, Executive Member for Health and Social Care**

Many types of accommodation are unsuitable for people with long term needs. What opportunities are there for supporting people who do not want to live in residential, supported living or other formal care environments?

u **Buffy Sharpe to Cllr Bell-Bradford, Executive Member for Inclusive Economy and Jobs**

We know that there is a booming life sciences industry in London, with many hubs in the Islington area. While this is great for our borough and brings much-needed well-paid jobs, how will the Council make sure that the jobs and wealth this brings benefits all parts of the Islington community, including the most disadvantaged?