

LONDON BOROUGH OF ISLINGTON
COUNCIL MEETING - 28 SEPTEMBER 2023

MINUTES OF PROCEEDINGS

At the meeting of the Council held at Council Chamber, Town Hall, Upper Street, N1
2UD on 28 September 2023 at 7.30 pm.

Present:

Bell-Bradford	Hamdache	North
Bossmann-Quarshie	Hayes	Ogunro
Burgess	Heather	O'Halloran
Champion	Hyde	Pandor
Chapman	Ibrahim	Russell
Chowdhury	Jeapes	Shaikh
Clarke	Jegorovas-Armstrong	Staff
Comer-Schwartz	Kay	Turan
Convery	Khondoker	Ward
Craig	Khurana	Wayne
Croft	Mackmurdie	Weekes
Gallagher	McHugh	Williamson
Gilgunn	Nargund	Woolf
Gill	Nathan	Zammit
Graham	Ngongo	

The Mayor (Councillor Gary Heather) in the Chair

247 MINUTES

RESOLVED:

That the minutes of the previous meeting held on 13 July 2023 be agreed as a correct record and the Mayor be authorised to sign them.

248 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

No Declarations were received.

249 MAYORAL ANNOUNCEMENTS

(i) Apologies

From Cllr Poyser, Klute, Jackson, Cinko-Oner, Gallagher, Spall, O'Sullivan.

(ii) Order of business

The order of business was as per the Agenda.

(iii) Declaration of discussion items

No items were declared.

(iv) Mayor's announcements

The Mayor had attended numerous community festivals, celebrations, and events in the borough over recent months. They interacted with residents, celebrated achievements, and participated in various activities. Highlights of the Mayor's activities included joining Eid celebrations, attending football tournaments and sports awards, unveiling a plaque dedicated to Michael Collins, raising awareness about Bleed Control Kits, and working closely with Voluntary Action Islington to promote volunteering.

The Mayor had also supported students during A-level results day, attended award ceremonies recognising the efforts of council staff and carers, and engaged in various community events. These included the book launch of "Betwixt 2 Shores" by William Henry, about his life journey from Antigua to the UK and his experiences as a black man from the Windrush generation. The Mayor had also participated in walkabouts to promote civic pride in Nag's Head town centre, and had attended the Costermonger's Harvest Festival at Guildhall and St Mary-le-Bow Church with the London Pearly Kings and Queens.

The Mayor had invited Islington Young Mayor and Youth Council, who were in attendance this evening, to the Mayor's parlour in September to discuss their ideas for improving the borough from a young person's perspective.

The Mayor expressed their honour and enjoyment in serving as the Mayor of Islington during this time.

250 LEADER'S ANNOUNCEMENTS

The Leader was pleased to join the Mayor at Streets Fest and A Level results day recently, where they had seen the achievements and enthusiasm of young people.

The Leader expressed horror at the Prime Minister's recent announcement to weaken the government's climate emergency pledges, especially in the context of recent extreme weather events worldwide. The Leader highlighted incidents such as wildfires in Europe, a devastating American wildfire, flooding in Libya, and the UK September heatwave, emphasizing that the climate crisis was an urgent issue with immediate consequences. They criticized the Government for not taking sufficient action to combat climate change and noted the public health crisis in London due to poor air quality, which contributed to thousands of premature deaths and healthcare costs.

The Leader praised the council's actions, including the introduction of low-traffic neighbourhoods, school streets, and cycleways to promote walking and cycling. The

Leader noted the council's commitment to consult on and co-design Liveable Neighbourhoods, with the Mildmay Liveable Neighbourhood being the latest example. They emphasised that these initiatives not only benefited the environment but also saved lives, improved road safety, and supported local businesses.

The Leader concluded by reaffirming the Council's dedication to the well-being of its residents and their commitment to have taken radical actions to enhance the lives of the local community, in line with the Labour Group's manifesto vision of a fairer, greener, and safer Islington.

Response from the Leader of the Opposition

The Leader of the Opposition began their response by celebrating the achievements of the Council, including: the introduction of Low Traffic Neighbourhoods, that had allowed families and residents to safely cycle and walk around the borough; the new buildings at Highbury Fields, and in particular the new toilets; and the buying back of council homes to help residents, homeless people and refugees and ensuring everyone in Islington has a place to live.

The Leader of the Opposition disagreed with the decision to close Sobell Ice Rink, commenting that it was a service that had encouraged, particularly, young girls to get into sport and be active. The Leader of the Opposition noted that the planned replacement with a soft play centre doesn't offer this, and they wanted a facility that encouraged all to stay active. The Leader of the Opposition also commented on recycling rates falling to a new low of 27%. They wanted the council to look at new ways to encourage recycling and help save the planet.

251 PETITIONS

No petitions were received.

252 PETITION DEBATE: SAVE SOBELL ICE RINK

The Council debated the petition submitted to the previous meeting. It was noted this petition had received over 5000 signatures.

The Lead Petitioner introduced the petition and spoke for two minutes:

- The Petitioner expressed their disappointment and suggested that the consultation had not been fair.
- The Petitioner proposed that there was room for both the proposed Ninja Park and the ice rink in the Sobell Leisure Centre.
- The Petitioner suggested that the closure had disproportionate impact on minority groups and female sports and suggested that the council had not fully considered the impact of the decision.
- The Petitioner noted how long there has been an ice rink at the Sobell and commented on the potential loss of the rich and diverse history associated with Sobell Ice Rink.
- They concluded that closing Sobell Ice Rink was a significant loss for Islington's communities.

Councillor Turan moved the motion to debate the petition. Councillor Ngongo seconded. Councillor Jegorovas-Armstrong contributed to the debate. Councillor

Turan exercised their right to reply.

The following main points were made in the debate:

- In August 2022, Sobell Leisure Centre experienced major floods due to a Thames Water mains burst on Hornsey and Tollington Road, resulting in damage to the entire ground floor.
- After a thorough public consultation, the decision was made not to reinstate the Sobell ice rink.
- In May 2023, the Executive initiated a consultation to replace the lost facilities with a new offer aimed at increasing physical activity, especially among young people.
- The Council received a total of 1,003 responses during the six-week consultation period, with 54% of survey respondents reporting no impact if the ice rink was not reinstated.
- Alternative operators and usage models were explored, but none provided a viable solution for reinstating the ice rink.
- The Council mitigated the impact on most of the affected clubs, allocating them time at the Lee Valley regional facility. Plans were made to introduce holiday programmes for young people to access the regional facility through a sports development partner.
- The Council's new Islington Active Together Strategy aims to empower communities to be more physically active, with a focus on marginalised groups and individuals with long-term health conditions.
- Fun and enjoyable physical activities are seen as crucial in breaking down barriers, especially for children and young people.
- Anticipated usage levels for the new active zone are expected to rise significantly, benefiting a wider demographic of residents.
- For 13 years austerity has had a significant impact on the council budgets, and the ongoing cost of living crisis is threatening the budgets even further. The only way to tackle these issues is for central government to allocate more funding.
- The plan aims to provide young people with the best start in life, recognizing the importance of physical activity for various aspects of their well-being, including combating obesity, improving health, and enhancing mental health.
- Councillors emphasised the importance of physical activity, even in activities like soft play, for children's development, including coordination, fitness, and motor skills.
- A Green Party Councillor advised that they had proposed options for making the ice rink more efficient, such as heat recovery, to support a sustainable society.
- They raised concerns that the redevelopment plans not meeting the needs of residents, particularly young adults, and the loss of serious sports facilities.
- Targeted design sessions with local community groups representing minority ethnic communities, young women, low-income residents, and LGBTQ+ communities are planned to improve access and engagement.
- Plans involve better use of external space, including the car park, for multi-sports pitches and other uses with a specific focus on women and girls' participation.

- The financial impact of a £2.76 million deferred grant loss during the pandemic on leisure services is noted as a significant factor.

The motion to consider the petition was put to the vote and CARRIED.

RESOLVED:

That the petition be noted

253 QUESTIONS FROM THE YOUTH COUNCIL

Question (a) from Young Mayor Ameera Abdi to Cllr Ward, Executive Member for Finance, Planning and Performance:

During the last 12 months the cost-of-living crisis has been adversely impacting Islington's families. What specific support can the council provide to young people to minimise this impact?

Response:

Thank you Ameera for your question. Working with organisations across the borough, our Labour-run Council has acted over the last year to support local people through the Tory cost of living crisis.

In 2022/23 we supported 420 young people (aged 18-25) into paid work, and a further 58 in the first quarter of this year (April – June 2023). Next month the council is opening two Youth Employment Hubs in Caledonian ward and Finsbury Park, providing young people with access to one-to-one careers guidance, employability skills training, opportunities to meet employers and support to look and apply for apprenticeships and jobs. This is all part of the Labour-run Council's manifesto commitment to support 5000 people into work, and creating an inclusive economy, which keeps wealth in Islington and uses its reach to provide better services for local people.

In addition, our Labour-run Council is providing Free School Meals for all primary school children as we have done since 2009, saving families around £440 per child every year, and last year the Council quadrupled the size of the childcare bursary scheme from £40,000 to £160,000 – and we are protecting it for 2023/24.

Supplementary Question:

How will you help those in secondary school and under working age to combat the cost-of-living crisis?

Response:

I will be very happy to meet with you to talk about this in more detail.

Question (b) from Deputy Young Mayor Areeb Ahmed to Cllr Ngongo, Executive Member for Children, Young people and Families:

We recently meet the Police Commissioner Sir Mark Rowley at the community event held in the borough. How is the council working with the Police locally to improve

youth safety in the borough. Please provide examples to support our understanding of what is being done.

Response:

Thank you, Areeb, for your question. The Labour-run Council always works closely with the police to make our borough safer for local people, and especially our young people. We do this through regular meetings with the police where we discuss at-risk children, sometimes with other professionals such as social work. Another example of how this can be done is via the Safer Schools officers that exist in schools in the borough to ensure that children and young people are kept safe in and around school premises.

The Police and the Council also work together closely via a joint team called Islington Collaboration Action Network (I-CAN). This service supports children and young people who are at risk of exploitation. In our manifesto last year, Islington Labour committed to increasing our early intervention and prevention programmes, to identify at risk children, to mobilise support and prevent situations escalating.

Our Targeted Youth Support team works in the community to engage with young people and try to steer them away from crime. Our youth clubs give young people places to go and things to do, and we continue to protect these. There are more services offered by our partners in the borough, including Arsenal in the Community, Abianda and St Giles. I'm really proud that thanks for the work of our council, we have seen a 96% reduction in the number of Islington young people who committed a lower-level offence, were triaged and then diverted from the youth justice system.

Question (c) from YCllr Billy Diggin to Cllr Ngongo, Executive Member for Children, Young people and Families:

With the recent changes affecting Platform Youth Hub, what plans are in place to ensure Islington's young people continue to have access to a vibrant youth offer?

Response:

Thank you, Billy, for your important question. Islington's Labour-run Council is committed to making our borough the best possible place to grow up and we know that providing places to go and things to do is vital to that goal. As a Council, we are committed to ensuring that high-quality youth work and engaging activities are available across the borough. The changes at Platform will deliver a high-quality place for local young people to learn creative skills. It also gives us an opportunity to ensure that support for young people in the north of the borough is the best it can be. Having engaged with young people in the area, we have put together a programme of activities including:

- A closed session for ex-users of Platform from 22nd September on Fridays
- An open access youth session on Wednesdays and Fridays at Highbury Roundhouse from 27th September
- A current offer for children aged 11-14 at Andover youth space on Tuesdays, Wednesdays and Thursdays
- An Open access youth session age 11-18 at Elizabeth House on Mondays

- An open access youth session for young people 13+ at Whittington Park Community Association on Thursdays

We are also working on a new youth offer that will take place on the Elhorne estate on Tuesdays and Fridays. This is all in addition to the rich youth offer that we have across the borough and our wonderful youth spaces such as Lift, Soapbox and Rosebowl.

Our Council is passionate about making sure our young people have places to go and things to do, and I believe this new offer does that. Once again, thank you for your question.

Supplementary Question:

Do you believe the diminishing of Platform Youth Hub is because of the constant change of ownership?

Response:

I believe it took time for people to process the changes, but this gives a chance to benefit from new opportunity that the redesigned platform will bring. I think it's important to recognise that change has always been a part of the process.

Question (d) from Liberty Davies-Neil to Cllr Khondoker, Executive Member for Equalities, Culture and Inclusion.

Islington has always had a proud record of campaigning for human rights, how is the council showing solidarity for the women and girls facing challenges in some parts of the world?

Response:

Thank you for your question Liberty, The council does have a proud record of campaigning for human rights and equality and this is something that we continue to put at the forefront of our approach through our challenging inequality programme.

Whilst the council has very little power and influence on issues in other countries, we do stand in solidarity with women and girls facing challenges all around the world. We raise awareness of issues affecting women and girls through our challenging inequality events programme including through marking important events like International Women's Day and through council communications.

For those women and girls who come to Islington as Refugees seeking a better life, we do all we can to welcome them and ensure they have the support they need to live better lives free from the challenges they have left behind. Thank you for your question.

254 QUESTIONS FROM MEMBERS OF THE PUBLIC

Question (a) from Nick Collin to Cllr Champion, Executive Member for Environment, Air Quality and Transport

We have observed that the majority of Islington's tradespeople and small businesses, who rely, directly or indirectly, on cars and vans, have a serious concern that Low Traffic Neighbourhoods (LTNs) are bad for business. This is particularly as a result of longer journey times, congestion on boundary roads, limited parking and increased fines. Do you recognize this concern from the consultation carried out to date on the planned Barnsbury. Laycock Liveable Neighbourhood (LN), and how do you propose to address it?

Response:

Thank you for your question Nick. In our manifesto for the Local Elections last year, we committed to "co-design and consult on the introduction of Liveable Neighbourhoods across the borough" and our Transport Strategy, agreed in 2019 stated that we would create People Friendly Streets in local neighbourhoods where through traffic will be reduced to ensure that local neighbourhoods are more enjoyable places to live, and walk or cycle through. That is why we are delivering Liveable Neighbourhoods across the borough with current schemes in development in The Cally, Barnsbury and Laycock and Mildmay.

We want to make sure that we make Islington cleaner, greener and healthier, while also supporting local businesses to thrive. Our Council's Progressive Procurement Strategy means that we aim to use more of our council spending with local businesses and we work with local businesses in the design of our Liveable Neighbourhood schemes.

Many studies have shown that in the long term, where these schemes are implemented, business footfall increases as more people are walking and cycling, and popping into shops as they travel. For example, data from the Stoke Newington LTN in Hackney showed increased footfall and increased spending with local businesses along Church Street.

With regard to the impact on boundary roads, our own monitoring reports show that boundary road traffic volumes are minimally affected with an average of a 3% reduction across the borough. We have published extensive monitoring reports which are available to view on the council's website. We will continue to monitor traffic volumes as part of the development of future Liveable Neighbourhoods including Barnsbury and Laycock.

The development of schemes such as the Barnsbury and Laycock Liveable Neighbourhood include three phases of public engagement, we are currently within the second phase of this engagement and would welcome all comments and suggestions during this time from all residents and business. Engagement is currently open until Sunday, 22 October 2023.

Supplementary Question

Can you agree to meet with us face to face so we can explain in detail why we are so alarmed by the proposals? Can you also please explain how the new liveable neighbourhood relates to Council's stated aim of 'supporting local businesses to thrive'?

Response:

Yes, I am happy to meet with you and others. Many parts of Highbury have benefited from LTNs and liveable neighbourhoods already. We are now looking holistically at LTNs and liveable neighbourhoods rather than just small pockets as we were before. We have had to keep some routes open to vehicles, but we will be looking to improve these streets over time. This is a continuous process and will be adapting and improving overtime.

Question (b) from Pete Gilman to Cllr Ngongo, Executive Member for Children, Young People and Families

Islington's Labour council is to be congratulated for introducing free school meals for all primary school children. Would it be possible to extend this to secondary school children?

Response:

Thank you for your question Pete. We are proud that Islington's Labour-run council has been providing free school meals for all primary school children since 2009. This policy is particularly important for local families when we are experiencing a cost of living crisis like we are currently.

The Labour Mayor of London's announcement that he would be funding all primary school children in London to receive free school meals is very welcome. As this means some of the money we would usually spend on free school meals is being reimbursed, we are currently considering options for what we could fund additionally. Whether free school meals could be introduced from some or all year groups at secondary school is one of the considerations we are exploring.

However, this would be a significant cost both in terms of capital investment in secondary school catering facilities and in terms of funding for meals. It is not possible to make such a commitment at this stage, until there is clarity about the funding being available beyond summer 2024.

Supplementary Question:

Islington was congratulated for introducing free school meals for all primary school children despite the initial opposition to this, now other councils are following, please can you do the same to secondary school children and provide them with free school meals to stop our children going hungry?

Response:

We are pushing very hard to do this and improve the lives of children in the borough. We are constrained by the funding from central government. Please let's join together to lobby number 10 to do this and ensure our children are not going hungry.

Question (c) from Rebekah Kelly to Cllr Ngongo, Executive Member for Children, Young People and Families

The Mayor of London has recently pledged to fund school meals for primary school children in the whole of the city. Given that Islington Council already provides free school meals for primary school children. What will this budget now be used for?

Response:

Thank you for your question Rebekah. As I said in my previous answer, We are proud that Islington's Labour-run council has been providing free school meals for all primary school children since 2009 and welcome the news that the Labour Mayor of London is extending this offer to all of the capital.

Some of the funding is to be used to increase the school meal funding rate to primary schools as school meal prices are now significantly higher. The remainder of the money will be used to support families in financial hardship as a result of the cost-of-living crisis, and we are currently exploring a range of options on exactly how this will be achieved. Thank you again for your question.

Supplementary Question:

Children don't stop getting hungry in secondary school. Please can you extend the scheme to secondary schools even just for a year to help ease the pressures of the cost-of-living crisis. Also, it seems that school meals are decreasing in the quality, can this be investigated?

Response:

As previously stated, we will push for this but are restricted by budgets. We are happy to look into the quality and quantity of food provided but again we are restricted by funding from central government.

Question (d) from Ben Pearson to Cllr Champion, Executive Member for Environment, Air Quality and Transport

The council has accepted that the original roll out of motorcycle parking charges in February was not carried out correctly and has consequently agreed to cancel any parking fines which had not already been paid. However, the Council has refused to pay back the fines that have already been paid, despite accepting that they shouldn't have been given. Since the council has accepted that no fines should have been given at all in the first roll out will the council now agree to pay back all fines given?

Response:

Thank you for your question, Ben. The Council has confirmed in correspondence with campaign groups that all statutory requirements for the introduction of the £1 daily charge for motorcycles in the dedicated bays has been adhered to. The Council has never accepted that PCNs should not have been issued but committed to reviewing individual cases where necessary. Warning notices issued were for the first 2 weeks and a large amount of information distributed in regard to this change from the Council by SMS messaging, letters and information on the website, there is also adequate and complaint signage.

Supplementary Question:

The council cancelled fines for those that had been wrongly charged with motorcycle parking fines but won't refund those that had already paid. Please can you refund those that had been wrongly given?

Response:

Where people asked to us to review their fines we did, but we haven't repaid those that we haven't been asked to review.

Question (e) from Andrew Berry to Cllr Turan, Executive Member for Health and Care:

Can the council leader, confirm council policy, that all new council contracts will require the employer to have an occupational sick pay scheme and pay full sick pay to all staff (as and when needed) employed via such contracts and therefore working indirectly for LBI?

Response:

Thank you for your question, Andrew. We are currently out to procurement for our new Homecare contracts. The procurement strategy published in January 2023 clearly states an intention to move towards ensuring staff are paid Occupational Sick Pay (OSP) and we commit to reviewing this a year into the mobilisation of the contracts to assess whether it is viable and affordable. Alongside this the Procurement Strategy and tender documentation encourages potential providers to consider immediate implementation of OSP as part of their social value offer. A report will be provided once the procurement is completed as to whether any Providers have offered OSP as part of their social value offer.

Implementing OSP is not without challenge. Providers will have work across Boroughs, where a worker may work in a Borough that expects and pays for OSP and one that doesn't. This makes implementation exceptionally complex and could lead to non-compliance and therefore needs careful consideration.

Furthermore, it is estimated that implementing OSP at this stage would cost the Council £358k per year based unless it is capped at 5 days a year, which would cost the Council £254k.

As a Labour Council, we always want the best working conditions possible for staff working on behalf of the Council. As you'll be aware, Tory austerity has forced the council to make nearly £300 million of cuts to our budget since 2010, with more savings due next year. However, I will commit to look into whether this is possible at all in the coming months as we approach the procurement process.

Supplementary Question:

Do you accept that not paying full sick pay means people have to choose between staying home when unwell or putting food on the table? Going into work unwell can make others unwell and admitted to hospital, is that risk acceptable? Please reconsider.

Response:

Health care workers are very important to us; we are one of best councils when it comes to implementing the London living wage. We are seriously reconsidering and will be holding further meetings with various stakeholders to reconsider this however if we do find the funding it means it will have to come from another part of adult social care. This area is already overspending due to aging population, covid effects and many other reasons but we are looking into this.

Question (f) from Helen Strongman to Cllr Ward, Executive Member for Finance, Planning and Performance

We've been told by Peabody they will be paying £13m in community infrastructure levy related to the Holloway site. 50% of this will be allocated for strategic projects across the borough, 35% for local strategic projects, and 15% for 'local CiL' - other projects within the ward. Are these figures correct? Can they change?

We've also been told by Peabody that some of the local funds have already been earmarked. What decisions have been made about how these funds will be spent and how can the local community have a say? Please supply details in full.

Written Response:

the figure of £13 million is correct. However, the figure of £13 million does not include s106 funding and the Community Infrastructure Levy (known as CIL) payable to the Mayor of London. The percentage split that you have set out is also correct. This is how all CIL funds received by the council are allocated.

The 35% Local-Strategic CIL funds and 15% Local CIL funds are both allocated by Ward Councillors.

For the Holloway Prison site, we have made the decision that:

- 80% of the Local CIL and Local-Strategic CIL will be allocated by the Tufnell Park Ward Councillors; and
- 20% of the Local CIL and Local-Strategic CIL will be allocated by Holloway Ward Councillors.

This decision reflects the scale of the development and its likely impacts on the wider local area. In March 2022, the Executive decided to allocate up to £2.9 million of Strategic CIL to fund the fit-out costs of the Women's Building. However, this funding will only be paid if Peabody is unable to raise the funds for the fit-out costs itself. There are strict obligations in the s106 agreement appended to the planning consent. These obligations require Peabody to employ a fund raiser and do everything that it can to secure the fit out costs itself.

If this funding cannot be secured, the council will fund the fit-out costs from Strategic CIL. This decision will not therefore impact the CIL funding that is available for allocation by the Ward Councillors. This decision also reflects the fact that the Women's Building is intended to offer services to all women in the borough or even across a wider area.

Ward Councillors are asked to make decisions on how the local-strategic and local CIL generated from developments in their Wards is allocated. Potential projects that have been agreed via discussions with residents, businesses and community groups are set out in Ward Community Plans. These plans are available on our website.

Local people and organisations are therefore able to put forward their ideas about how CIL funds could be used. If you have suggestions, I'm sure your ward councillors would welcome your ideas on what this could be used for.

Thank you for your question Helen.

Question (g) from Fiona Bullman to Cllr Turan, Executive Member for Health and Care

Sports provision is a key component of helping young people in Islington achieve better futures. Research clearly shows the positive impact on school grades, physical health and mental health.

Sports is where children learn about teamwork, goalsetting and the pursuit of excellence in performance and other achievement-oriented behaviours—critical skills necessary for success in life. Interest in football is at an all-time high for girls, but there are limited opportunities to excel. One such opportunity is participation through schools and into the district system that operates across London and the England. District football allows children to represent Islington and compete with their peers in the other London boroughs. The Year 6 - Year 9 district boys teams regularly feature in the local paper.

Unfortunately, there is no funding available in Islington to run the existing Year 6 and Year 7 girls teams or to support the development of district football for girls in older age groups.

Last years, the first ever girls district team highlighted the enthusiasm and talent of Islington girls with over 50 girls attending trials and two trophies being won during a successful first season.

Just £2,500 per year will fund two teams, with training, training materials and match fees for a full season. Each team will give at least 15 girls an opportunity to play football at the highest local level and inspire further generations of girls to achieve. £83 per year for a girl to represent Islington across London and inspire other girls to engage in sports. Islington would like to at least keep the existing Year 6 and Year 7 girls district team going. Will the council financially support them?

Response:

Thank you for your question Fiona. Women and Girls football in Islington mirrors the rise and the growth in the National Game and we are very proud of its growth and achievements. We have been leading the way over the last decade in Women and Girls development programmes particularly at Whittington Park where we now have thriving women's leagues and Girl's development programmes that feed into Islington Borough Ladies women's programme that has over 7 teams. Islington is just about to launch its new sport and physical activity strategy in October to increase participation across our Borough and to support this relaunch and assist the sector to grow we are increasing the funding available this year to Sport Islington, which distributes grants across the Borough to aid this growth. We can share our funding page for you to apply. School funding normally sits outside Sport Islington's remit, however as this is outside of school time, we can assess this on its community benefit and would welcome your application as this is the pinnacle of a development programme.

Girl's football is also about to benefit from improvements taking place at Barnard Park and Bingfield Park as there will be more places to play and specific programmed hours for Women and Girls football allocated to their programmes at the outset to ensure long term growth.

If you could give your email address to me or one of the council officers outside the meeting, we can provide an application form and a link to the funding page for you to apply for funding for this.

As part of our strategy going forward, we will look at the long-term funding for girls district football in Islington so that we have a sustainable approach to future programmes going forward.

Supplementary Question:

Barriers still remain for girls' football; this must be resolved to give girls the same opportunity as boys. Will you agree to meet us to discuss this.

Response:

Yes, I am happy to meet with you, we want to keep the communication channels open and make sure this is fairer for girls.

The Mayor advised that the time for questions had expired and any remaining questions would receive a written response.

Question (h) from Jeremy Drew to Cllr Champion, Executive Member for Environment, Air Quality and Transport:

I support the Council's plan for 50 bays for Dockless bikes by 2024. But to provide bays close to where they are needed, the number needs to be much higher. Camden already has over 200 bays for Dockless bikes and plans to have 300 by 2025. Could you please explain why so few are planned.

Written Response:

Thank you for your question, Jeremy. The Council determined to make sure that the use of dockless e-bikes in Islington is as fair as possible for everyone who uses our roads and pavements.

Last year, nearly one-and-a-half million trips were taken on dockless bikes in the borough. This shows that the bikes are popular and research shows that they are being used by people who didn't previously cycle often.

But we also know that some users can leave them carelessly around the borough, blocking pavements and making it more difficult for people who use wheelchairs and pushchairs to get around. That's why, over the summer, we announced plans to introduce a network of new dockless bike parking spaces, to help ensure that the borough's pavements are more welcoming and easier to use.

To tackle this the council will shortly be launching a pilot scheme of a minimum of six bays with a further 50 to follow by summer 2024. This pilot scheme will allow us to assess how well the scheme works, with a view to roll-out bays across the borough, so that everyone is close to a parking space and people can only park their bike in them. Thank you again for your question Jeremy.

Question (i) from Naomi to Cllr Ward, Executive Member for Finance, Planning and Performance

Recent conversations with local residents and groups, as well as a poll, have shown that many believe that there is a need for services on the Holloway Park site that benefit everyone. The site will be home to over 3,000 new residents, who will have to share already stretched local amenities.

Peabody is proposing a large residents' lounge/space, measuring over 1,300 sqm. However, this will be a segregated space, exclusively for the use of the development's private residents.

This means that the residents of the 42% of the units that will be for social rent will be excluded from this space. What is the council's view on the proposed use of this space?

Written Response:

The development of the former Holloway Prison site includes 415 desperately needed new homes for social rent including 60 extra care homes.

It will also include a number of new community facilities to serve: the new residents of the development; local residents and the wider community. This includes a new Women's Building and over 10,000 square metres of greenspace and play space for children and young adults.

As noted in my previous answer, the development will also provide approximately £13 million in Community Infrastructure Levy payments. At least half of this sum will support the delivery of community infrastructure in the local area.

Under the terms of the section 106 agreement, Peabody must also agree a Community Engagement Plan with the council. This plan must set out how Peabody will promote the development of an inclusive community within the new development and promote its integration into the wider community of Tufnell Park and Holloway.

The s106 agreement requires a space of no less than 68 square metres within the residents' lounge to be made available for at least one day a week to all residents of the development and tenant/residents associations associated with the development free of charge. However, I agree with you that the lounge should be available to everyone who lives in the development. We pushed Peabody on this during the planning process and we will continue to urge them to make it available to all. Thank you for your question, Naomi.

255 QUESTIONS FROM MEMBERS OF THE COUNCIL

Question (a) from Cllr Convery to Cllr Champion, Executive Member for Environment, Air Quality and Transport

The Council has signed Memoranda of Agreement with 3 hire e-bike operators since October 2021. Please will you set out the safety and conduct requirements of e-bike operators; and in total say how much financial contribution has been received by the Council from the 3 operators over the 2 financial years 2021-22 and 2022-23; and say how that funding has been allocated by the Council.

Response:

Thank you for your question, Paul. As you're aware, the Council determined to make sure that the use of dockless e-bikes in Islington is as fair as possible for everyone who uses our roads and pavements.

Last year, nearly one-and-a-half million trips were taken on dockless bikes in the borough. This shows that the bikes are popular and research shows that they are being used by people who didn't previously cycle often.

But we also know that some users can leave them carelessly around the borough, blocking pavements and making it more difficult for people who use wheelchairs and pushchairs to get around. That's why, over the summer, we announced plans to introduce a network of new dockless bike parking spaces, to help ensure that the borough's pavements are more welcoming and easier to use.

This means that we will introduce 50 spaces by the summer 2024, prioritising stations, shopping centres, and other busy areas, with a view to expanding on this in the future. Eventually the aim is to have a network across the borough, meaning that users can only park in designated bays.

With regard to the memorandum of understanding, the council is working very closely with the three hire bike operators to address concerns regarding the safety and conduct of the use of these hire bikes. This working relationship is particularly important because there is currently no legislation in place that gives clear powers to local authorities to licence and manage operators. The Department for Transport is planning to introduce new legislation that would allow local authorities to manage rental schemes (and enforce on issues such as parking), however we are still waiting for confirmation of the timetable for this legislation. Following a discussion at London Councils' Transport and Environment Committee, TfL and London boroughs will now also be exploring the design of one coordinated future scheme to manage dockless e-bikes (and e-scooters in boroughs that are part of the trial) in London, through a contract, to improve parking while increasing the quality and sustainability of services in London. In the meantime, the council is regulating its operators through Memorandum of Understandings which contain provisions that address safety and conduct requirements.

The Memorandum of Understandings commit our operators to specific safety specifications for all their bikes, including internal tracking devices, front and back lights, and company contact numbers clearly displayed. They also specify conduct requirements for the operators, including the removal of bikes if badly parked by the operator within a set timeframe and geo-fencing to create no parking zones where necessary. The council has worked with the operators to introduce no parking zones at a number of sensitive locations (e.g. alongside Central Library, immediately outside Highbury & Islington Station, at Highbury Corner public space, and immediately outside the entrances to Moorfields eye hospital, and the RNIB offices on Pentonville Road).

In total, the financial contribution that has been received by the council from the three operators over the two financial years 2021-22 and 2022-23 was £240,000 and this has been used to fund our work to create a Cleaner, Green and Healthier Islington.

Thank you again for your question Paul.

Supplementary Question:

Will you commit to publishing the memorandum of understanding (MoU) that outlines the relationship between the Council and the street bike operators, including their responsibilities and obligations, as well as specifying safety requirements and operational principles? Furthermore, could you provide transparency on how the £240,000 received from these bike operators over the last two years has been allocated or spent?

Response:

The £240,000 received from the bike operators for 2021-22 and 2022-23 is mostly directed toward staff working on the scheme, while the remainder is used in the Council's budget. As for the publication of the memorandum, I will try to get it published, but I cannot guarantee its immediate release, as I am unsure what will be allowed at this moment.

Question (b) from Cllr Convery to Cllr Champion, Executive Member for Environment, Air Quality and Transport

In the calendar years 2020, 2021 and 2022 (part year), an FOI released by the Council in November 2022 revealed that PCNs charges totalling £10,821,870 were triggered by vehicle infractions associated with Islington's Low Traffic Neighbourhoods. Please will you describe the projects, services and investments that have been funded using that additional income?

Response:

The council is committed to making our borough a cleaner, greener, healthier place and a key part of that is delivering Liveable Neighbourhoods across the borough with current schemes in development in The Cally, Barnsbury and Laycock and Mildmay.

In our manifesto for the Local Elections last year, we committed to "co-design and consult on the introduction of Liveable Neighbourhoods across the borough" and our Transport Strategy, agreed in 2019 stated that we would create People Friendly Streets in local neighbourhoods where through traffic will be reduced to ensure that local neighbourhoods are more enjoyable places to live, and walk or cycle through.

Our range of people-friendly streets so far have reduced traffic both within and around the schemes, as well increasing the amount of people walking and cycling.

In an ideal world, we would make no money from these schemes as people wouldn't drive through the filters and traffic would be reduced. By law, the Council must ensure any money received from fines are re-invested in transport and environment-related projects, including highways investment, roads and footways, highways maintenance, environmental improvements, concessionary fares, and transport for pupils with special education needs. The money received from these schemes so far has supported our work to make Islington cleaner, greener, healthier place, improving our roads and pavements at the same time.

Supplementary Question:

Could you commit to providing a detailed breakdown of how the money allocated to the "highways, transport, and environmental improvement" category, which has seen a substantial increase from £4 million to £16 million, is being spent? Would you consider publishing this breakdown as an appendix to the next annual parking report to enhance transparency and inform the public about the utilisation of these funds?

Response:

I will speak to Cllr Ward about this and what you are asking us to do.

Question (c) from Cllr Burgess to Cllr Turan, Executive Member for Health and Social Care.

Good social care depends on full staffing and continuity. Carers and service users often tell me about the importance of having the same carer or being able to speak to the same person. Could you tell me what Islington is doing about recruitment and retention in Social Care, and if you are concerned about staffing levels?

Response:

Thank you for your question Janet. Islington Council have always recognised the importance and value of social care workers and therefore having a well-trained and supported workforce is vital. Whilst recruitment and retention is a challenge locally and nationally, there are no specific provider concerns currently around vacancies. Our Health and Social Care Academy is well established, and creatively seeks to support the sector in growing a skilled, local workforce. The academy takes a proactive, coordinated, approach to address the needs and trends of residents and employers in Islington. Our local health and social care employment coaching, joint recruitment and careers events, community outreach and local training programmes are organised as a coherent local offer to recruit and retain local people. The academy has a current objective of recruiting 50 local people into the sector through iWork, the Council's employment support service. The annual job fair supports local providers to meet local people and match them to roles. iWork are also supporting potential applicants with literacy and numeracy skills, this gives local people more job opportunities as well as ensuring the sector attracts a diverse range of applicants that reflect our local population.

We know that good quality training and support enhances retention. The Council offer access to safeguarding training, 'lunch and learn' sessions and training at provider forums for staff support. The Nurses Group Supervision and Development Group, and the Care Home Managers group is also a forum where staff can gain peer to peer support and learning. Provider forums have guest speakers on a range of issues to support continuous learning in the sector.

We know that working conditions are also important for retention of staff, that's why we are working towards fully implementing the Ethical Care Charter, and all new contracts have LLW as a requirement. As we embed the homecare contracts, we will work with our providers to implement the Ethical Care Charter and other social value elements of the contracts to further strengthen the offer for the workforce. Thank you again for your question.

Supplementary Question:

It's great news that you're actively promoting local job applications with the London living wage and other benefits. It's vital for the community. Do you agree?

Response:

Yes, I agree, I would also like to add social care workers often face high levels of burnout, making it crucial to prioritise their well-being and provide support. The approach taken in the role emphasizes active listening to staff, regular supervision that focuses on their well-being, access to clinical support, and manageable casework. The investment in staff support is essential for staff retention, given the significant time and cost required for training. Additionally, the challenges posed by the cost of living in areas like Islington are acknowledged, and the commitment is to continue working with staff to be an attractive employer despite these challenges.

Question (d) from Cllr Jeapes to Cllr Champion, Executive Member for Environment, Air Quality and Transport

Thames Water has been foisted with a £2bn debt burden since the private equity venture capitalists outfit Macquarie, with offices in Islington, acquired Thames Water in 2006.

In this acquisition, £2.8bn of the borrowed amount was used to fund the purchase of Thames Water so incurring the debt repayments.

Despite saddling Thames Water with this considerable debt, Macquarie bank have taken between 15.5% and 19% a year from Thames Water for the benefit of Macquarie and the shareholders.

From [thisismoney.co.uk](https://www.thisismoney.co.uk) July 2023, "Macquarie did spend £11 billion, ladled on to customer bills, starting to modernise Victorian pipes. But under its ownership £2.7 billion was removed in dividends and a further £2 billion in loans. The pension fund deficit soared, and the debt pile swelled from £3.4 billion on acquisition to £10.8 billion when it sold its final stake a decade later."

Due to the perilous financial predicament that Thames Water now finds itself in, there are suggestions that we - Thames Water customers - will be expected to finance the shortfall with increased bills for our water use. This is a totally unacceptable suggestion particularly as the debts incurred were by this private equity outfit for their own and their shareholder's benefit.

Also, the scandalous activity of Macquarie should have been closely scrutinised by Ofwat, as this activity constitutes a transfer of undue risk to customers, as has now become apparent.

Macquarie have not performed according to their own corporate governance, they have not acted in the interests of London's community, "Macquarie's approach to corporate governance is to identify and realise opportunity for shareholders, clients, employees and communities." <https://www.macquarie.com/uk/en/about/company/corporate-governance.html>

Last year, this Council passed a motion calling for Thames Water to invest further in infrastructure to avoid disasters such as the flood that ruined the Sobell, and to call for the water industry to be brought back into public ownership.

Will Islington Council campaign along with other London Councils and the Mayor for London and call on the Government to thoroughly investigate the financial business

activities of Macquarie and write to Ofwat and the Government asking that water bills will not be increased to pay for the £10 billion Thames Water black hole?

Response:

Thank you, Clare, for your question. I think we are all aware that Thames Water has not been fit for purpose for some time.

As you say, last year, not long after the flood which caused such significant damage to the Sobell Leisure Centre, our council passed a motion calling for Thames Water to significantly increase its investment in infrastructure to avoid similar incidents taking place and to write to the Government calling for the water industry to be nationalised.

Sadly, since then, we have seen further leaks in Islington and across London, with no sign of nationalisation coming anytime soon. The financial situation Thames Water finds itself in is incredibly worrying and sadly indicative of the situation we see with many other utility companies.

As you say, it is unacceptable that the effects of Thames Water's private equity owners should lead to increased bills for local people in Islington. They didn't cause the debt Thames Water have and they shouldn't have to pay the penalty.

I would be more than happy to write to the Government, copying in Thames Water, setting out our opposition to bills being increased to pay for this debt and I will most certainly speak to my equivalent Executive Members in other councils across London to call for their support in this campaign and I would love for you to get involved too if you wish. Thank you again for your question.

Supplementary Question:

Could you please look into coordinating efforts with various local councils in London and other authorities, including members of the LGA, to campaign for a thorough investigation into the issues related to certain banks associated with privatised water companies like Thames Water and Southern Water? We want to ensure that ordinary people are not burdened with the financial consequences of these past actions and that a proper response is given from Ofwat and the government.

Response:

Yes, okay.

Question (e) from Cllr Staff to Cllr Khondoker, Executive Member for Equalities, Culture and Inclusion

Islington is proud to be a diverse and welcoming Borough especially for the most vulnerable and those in need of sanctuary. With this in mind can you provide an update on the progress we are making in becoming a fully accredited Borough of Sanctuary?

Response:

Thank you for your question, Heather. I'm proud that last year, our council passed a motion to become a Borough of Sanctuary. We are a council that welcomes refugees and migrants to make Islington their home and we celebrate this all year round.

The Council is making very good progress towards becoming an 'awarded member' of the City of Sanctuary Network, a rigorous accreditation process that will ensure the very best standards are achieved in support of refugees and migrants.

Sanctuary workshops with council staff, experts by experience and voluntary and community organisations have been completed from June to August 2023 to obtain feedback on priorities for Islington.

Research has been completed to evidence the array of work already undertaken by Islington to embed concepts of welcome safety and inclusion into council practice and engagement.

The next steps to complete accreditation are:

1. To agree and publish the Refugee and Migrant Strategy and 3-year plan, a pre-requisite to obtaining the 'Borough of Sanctuary' award.
2. To complete and submit the formal application to the City of Sanctuary Scheme for accreditation, with current achievements evidenced.

Oversight of the Refugee and Migrant Strategy and three-year plan will be provided by a Sanctuary Steering Group, which first convenes on 11th October 2023 with VCS, council and 'experts by experience' representation ensured. I also want to make sure you and your colleague as Migrants Champions, Cllr Ilkay Cinko-Oner, are fully involved with this process so I will be in touch with you to set this up shortly.

Finally, I would like to provide reassurance that the important work that makes Islington being a place of welcome and sanctuary for everyone never stops, even as formal accreditation for our work is sought. Even in the last few weeks, the council has been at the forefront of the response to homeless pressures caused by 7-day evictions for people awarded refugee status from Home Office asylum contingency hotels in Islington.

The insufficient eviction period – which should be as standard 56 days, not the Home Office target of 28 days, a target which the Home Office fails to honour- is making refugees and migrants destitute and homeless in Islington, after over 2 year's wait in hotel and dormitory style accommodation.

Supplementary Question

I would like to express my gratitude to Councillor Khondoker and the Council for their critical work in this area. Over the past week, we've witnessed distressing and factually incorrect remarks from the Home Secretary at the United Nations concerning migrants and refugees. It is deeply troubling that the government continues to demonize these vulnerable populations and is now targeting protected characteristics. Additionally, addressing the consequences of these policies falls upon local authorities, particularly in the context of homelessness reduction.

I appreciate the eloquence of Councillor Khondoker in highlighting the challenges in homelessness reduction, particularly for those facing issues obtaining biometric residence permits, accessing universal credit, and obtaining national insurance numbers. It is essential to dispel misconceptions, such as the belief that refugees or asylum seekers are preventing access to council housing, which is simply not true.

Can you confirm your commitment to applying continued pressure on the Home Secretary and the Department for Levelling Up to collaborate with local authorities

and cease the practice of blaming contractors and passing responsibility onto councils?

Response:

Thank you so much, Councillor Staff, for the passion and your effort and energy that you bring to the table and you pushing me so I can push the Council to continue to push the government. Thank you so much for being an active migrant's champion alongside your colleague on some of the important work that we're doing. The issues that we're having is many refugees and asylum seekers are becoming homeless.

I hear that officers in the housing department prepared well to help the 84 people already evicted and the further 45 who have been notified. With a potential 400 evictions expected, I have asked officers to provide an urgent brief of this work to ensure that the highest standards of response are in place. I will also be writing to the Secretary of State for the Home Department to raise my concerns for the treatment of refugees who should be better supported to start new lives in the UK. After all, we are an open borough and we welcome everyone here, wherever you're from. I am proud of the work we do in this area and thank you for your question, Heather.

Question (f) from Cllr Mackmurdie to Cllr Woolf, Executive Member for Community Safety:

Although knife crime and youth violence in Islington has decreased year on year since 2018, we have also had tragic murders of young people in our borough. These are a stain on our society and a blatant waste of life. In the last year, from the tragedy in Highbury to the recent murders in Elthorne and Tollington, I must say the Council response has been extremely focused on helping the victims' families and supporting the community. I would like to ask how we are supporting parents of such horrific crimes? Is there any knowledge that they can give us to prevent such tragedies happening again?

Response:

Thank you for your question, Ben. Keeping our borough safe is a top priority for this council, and while we have seen improvements in the number of violent crime incidents in recent years, one injury or death is one too many and we are always determined to do more. The recent tragic deaths have been devastating for many in our community and we have worked hard to offer all the reassurances we can. Only this week, the Council Leader and I met the family of a young man who was murdered in the borough last month, to offer our deep condolences and hear from them about their tragic loss.

Engaging and empowering parents and carers, included those who have been directly affected by knife harm and the terrible murders of young people is an integral part of our approach to keeping young people safe in Islington. Examples of this include our work with the Love and Loss group and our Parental Support Project.

Islington Council worked with Jennifer Appleton and others to set up the Love and Loss group in 2016, to support bereaved families who have experienced the loss of a young family member as the result of murder. Love and Loss provides a monthly peer support group, offering therapeutic activities and a warm and compassionate environment to families, held at the Arsenal Community Hub. The families who

attend the Love and Loss group are deeply passionate about sharing their own experiences to help others.

The council's Parental Support Project has trained 11 Parent Empowerment Champions many of whom have children who have direct experience of knife crime and are involved in co-designing and delivering free online workshops with professionals to parents and carers across Islington and Camden. The Parental Support Project won the Children's Services Category in the national LGC Awards in June this year. Nearly 900 parents and carers have attended the online training and webinars since 2021.

This work, as well as other things we do, allows us to offer the best possible support and care to those affected by this terrible incident, as well as giving us vital information we can learn from to try and stop similar incidents happening in future. Thank you for your question.

Supplementary Question:

I would like to start by saying I am deeply sorry and saddened by the murder in Croydon and my thoughts go out the family and community of Croydon. As for my question, can you confirm that the funding arranged through the Borough Investment Panel for the Parent Champions program has been approved and secured, allowing us to continue supporting the great work of the initiative?

Response:

In one word, yes, and massive thank you to you and your ward colleagues for the support that you've given for this important project.

The Mayor advised that the time for questions had expired and any remaining questions would receive a written response.

Question (g) from Cllr Weekes to Cllr Woolf, Executive Member for Community Safety:

How is the Council working to ensure a safer night-time economy?

Written Response:

Thank you for your question at Full Council. As I was unable to answer in the chamber due to time, please accept this written response.

As you know, Islington has a diverse and thriving night-time economy which employs hundreds of people and brings many more to our borough as visitors. But we also know that many people don't feel safe when out and about at night, especially women and girls, and we always want to do more to change that.

You will be aware, in your role as Chair of Licensing, that the council delivers a range of activity in the night-time economy, most of which is funded by the Late-Night Levy (LNL) adopted in 2014. For example, the Parkguard Night Safe Team is a 4-person mobile patrol, including one medic which patrols Thursday to Sunday nights between 10pm and 6am aiming to tackle any possible issue sbefore they occur, conduct welfare checks for anyone who could be in danger, support late night venues to stay safe and supporting the Police in their work to keep local people safe.

Furthermore, in 2019, the Council signed up to the Mayor of London's Women's Night Safety Charter. This aims to make London a city where all women feel confident and welcome at night, with guidance for businesses, charities and councils for better staff training and encouraging reporting of harassment. Our work in the night time economy focuses on keeping to our commitments and making it safer for women and girls.

We also fund two police licensing officers to manage and support police operational response to in the night time economy, including projects to tackle drink spiking, enforcing licensing decisions and preventing any escalation of incidents. We know there is always more to do and I would urge anyone who has concerns to get in touch.

Thank you again for your question and for all your hard work as Chair of Licensing.

Question (h) from Cllr Hamdache to Cllr Champion, Executive Member for Environment, Air Quality and Transport:

Can the Council explain why it's become one of the very few authorities in the country to charge for electric powered two-wheelers parking?

Written Response:

Thank you for your question Benali. It is fair to say that we are one of the authorities that has really started to look at how we can properly reflect the environmental impact of electric motor vehicles.

I am very pleased to say we were awarded the Inspiration Award at the British Parking Awards recently for our 7 band electric vehicle parking charges which reflects the difference impacts of the various Electric Vehicles, based on battery size. We understand that this is the first such scheme in Europe.

We do recognise that an e-powered two wheeler is less damaging to the environment than a comparable petrol PTW which is why we charge 50% of the cost of a petrol PTW.

Our transport strategy clearly prioritises active travel methods and public transport this is consistent with the Healthy Streets indicators.

Thank you again for your question and I hope all is well.

Question (i) from Cllr Zammit to Cllr Ward, Executive Member for Finance, Planning and Performance:

We all know that it is important that local people are able to easily contact the Council when they need to, especially if something has gone wrong and they need support. In the past, I have been contacted by residents who have found it difficult to contact the council, with sometimes long wait times on the phone and a sub-optimal online offer. Can you tell me what is being done to improve this and ensure when residents need to get in touch with the council, they can?

Written Response:

We all know that local people want to see their council deliver basic services to the best of our ability and be able to easily get hold of us when they need us.

The Resident Experience Programme has been set up to ensure residents are at the centre of the way we run our services. We have set out to create consistent, simple & inclusive services redesigned to deliver the best outcomes for residents however they choose to contact us. It has a focus getting it right first time for residents contacting us and is delivering a number of significant improvements to make it easier to people to contact the Council.

To improve face to face contact, we have redesigned the Access Islington Hub at 222 Upper Street to make it more functional and welcoming for our residents, and we are launching new Access Islington hubs in the North and South of the borough to make it easier for residents to access our services nearer to where they live.

To improve telephone contact, we simplified our call routing and the options residents are presented with when they contact us by phone. This means that residents are getting through to someone is trained to help them with their query.

This has significantly improved the quality of calls, reduced repeat calls and the need to transfer our residents to various other teams in the council to resolve a simple query, with a 16% reduction in total call volumes, and wait times falling from 6 minutes to 2.

We know that most people want to use online services to access support nowadays, so we are we are working across the organisation to update the content on our website, making the web pages easy to navigate and more simple to use. The Council also intends to implement a new website that will support the ongoing transformation of our online services. So, we've got a lot done, but there a lot more to do.

I want to thank you, and also Cllrs Praful Nargund, Anjna Khurana and Gulcin Ozdemir for all your interest and input in making our resident experience as positive as it can be! Thank you very much again for your question Cllr Zammit.

Question (j) from Cllr North to Cllr Ngongo, Executive Member for Children, Young People and Families

The Islington Boat Club is a unique and essential part of the St Peters and Canalside Community, especially for young people in the area, and has recently reopened thanks to funding secured from developers locally. This funding ensured that vital maintenance works could take place and that activities could begin happening again. Will the council commit to working with the new operators to ensure young people continue to enjoy what the Boat Club has to offer?

Written Response:

Thank you for your question, Toby. I agree that the Islington Boat Club is a unique and essential and not just for St Peters and Canalside Ward but for the whole borough. It is the only place in Islington where local people can learn water-based sports. The Club also provides access to nature for local children and young people and is used by local groups of all ages.

I am therefore very excited that following vital maintenance works the Islington Boat Club building is now ready to reopen to local residents.

The council has invested £175,000 to improve the building and make it safe. This funding was allocated by you and your colleagues in St Peter's and Canalside Ward.

The boat club staff, volunteers and board members are delighted with the works and are excited to further develop the activities that they offer to the local community. The council is committed to working with the Islington Boat Club to ensure young people continue to enjoy what the Boat Club has to offer, and to support them with this objective, we are currently in the process of granting a new lease to the club. Thank you again for your question Toby.

Question (k) from Cllr Chowdhury to Cllr O'Halloran, Executive Members for Homes and Communities:

The Thriving Neighbourhoods programme is a great initiative that allows local residents to suggest improvements in our local areas. It'll be great if you can update us with the number of improvement works that have occurred to date and how were residents able to feed into the process?

Written Response:

Thank you for your question Jilani. During the Budget process for 2022/23, we committed to a £10 million investment programme to improve the communal areas on our estates. The Thriving Neighbourhoods programme shows our commitment to creating, greener, safer and more pleasant areas for local people to live.

As part of the programme, we sought ideas from local people on where they would like to see investment in their area. We received thousands of suggestions and earlier this year, we announced plans to move ahead with 215 projects. To date we have completed 95 success projects, including upgraded play areas, improving the accessibility and security of our estates, installing cycle shelters and new recycling bins and improving landscaping of communal green spaces.

Our engagement with local people included face to face drop ins, social media activity, an online survey and working with TRAs and ward councillors.

The programme has been such a success that we are aiming to launch a second round of funding early next year and I am excited to hear from our community about what they would like to see us do. We are also engaging with our schools as we are a child friendly borough. Last week, we opened two play areas on the Holly Park estate the difference it makes. We are getting request for outdoor gyms on our estates which is fantastic to see as we know many communities do not have gym membership and to have it on your doorstep. Thank you again for your question Jilani.

Question (l) from Cllr Russell to Cllr Champion, Executive Member for Environment, Air Quality and Transport:

In light of Islington's recycling rates falling to 27% is it time for our borough to consider rolling out fortnightly residual waste collection with recycling collected weekly?

Written Response:

Thank you for your question Caroline. Increasing recycling rates in the borough is a key part of our work to tackle the climate emergency. As a densely populated borough, it is difficult to do this, but we are determined to improve the rates we are seeing so far. We are investing in new recycling facilities and food waste recycling for flats above shops to try and encourage more people to recycle.

I do think that the density of Islington, and our commitment to making sure that the pavements are accessible makes this quite problematic when it comes to fortnightly collections but I am aware that this is thought to be a way of increasing recycling rates, so it is right that we do look at this. Our Waste Reduction Plan, agreed earlier this year, committed us to 'Explore the feasibility of weekly collections of dry recycling and food waste with fortnightly collections of residual waste' by March 2025.

We will look at other boroughs experiences and I am in touch with my colleagues across London. We will continue to monitor this and then take a decision on our own collections in due course. Thank you again for your question.

Question (m) from Cllr Jegorovas-Armstrong to Cllr Ngongo, Executive Member for Children, Young People and Families

How many Youth Engagement & Diversion Officers (YEDOs) work in Islington's local policing teams?

Written Response:

Thank you for your question Ernestas. There are six Youth Engagement & Diversion Officers and one Sergeant in the team who sit in the team led by Neighbourhoods Superintendent Jack May-Robinson.

I can assure you that keeping young people safe is one of our top priorities as a council and we continue to do as much as we can to make that a reality. We have seen reductions in the number of violent crime incidents in the borough in recent years but one incident is one too many. Our Targeted Youth Support team works in the community to engage with young people and try to steer them away from crime. Our youth clubs give young people places to go and things to do, and we continue to protect these.

There are more services offered by our partners in the borough, including Arsenal in the Community, Abianda and St Giles. I'm really proud that thanks to the work of our council, we have seen a 96% reduction in the number of Islington young people who committed a lower-level offence. Many were triaged and then diverted from the youth justice system. Thank you again for your question Ernestas.

256 ADOPTION OF LOCAL PLAN

Councillor Ward moved the recommendations in the report. Councillor Hamdache contributed to the discussion. Councillor Ward exercised their right to reply.

The recommendations were put to the vote and **CARRIED**.

RESOLVED:

- a) It be noted that the Executive has recommended that Council adopts the new Local Plan;
- b) To adopt the new Local Plan (attached as Appendices 5-7 to the report) with the main modifications as set out in the Inspectors' report and appendices 1-4 to the report, as well as the Council's additional modifications as set out in appendix 10 to the report, and the new Policies Map attached as Appendix 8 to the report.
- c) That authority be delegated to the Corporate Director of Community Wealth Building, to prepare and publish an Adoption Statement in accordance with section 26 of the Town and Country Planning (Local Planning) (England) Regulations 2012, and all other necessary procedural requirements following adoption of the new Local Plan.
- d) That authority be delegated to the Corporate Direction of Community Wealth Building in consultation with the Executive Member of Finance, Planning and Performance to make any typographical amendments and other minor corrections to the new Local Plan documents as required prior to publication.
- e) It be noted that the current Local Plan, which consists of the Core Strategy (2011), Development Management Policies (2013), Site Allocations (2013) and Finsbury Local Plan (Bunhill and Clerkenwell Area Action Plan (2013), will be superseded in its entirety by the new Local Plan.
- f) It be noted that a consolidated version of the Integrated Impact Assessment which includes the Sustainability Appraisal and Equalities Impact Assessment has been created and updated to consider the Inspectors' final modifications and was attached at Appendix 9 to the report.

257 FLEXIBLE USE OF CAPITAL RECEIPTS STRATEGY

Councillor Ward moved the recommendations in the report.

The recommendations were put to the vote and **CARRIED**.

RESOLVED:

- a) That the Flexible Use of Capital Receipts strategy for 2023/24 be approved, and it be noted that approving the strategy does not commit the council to using it.
- b) That responsibility for the adoption of the Flexible Use of Capital Receipts strategy be delegated to the Section 151 Officer, if it is considered appropriate to do so at the end of the financial year in the context of the council's overall financial position.

258 COUNCIL APPOINTMENTS REPORT

The Mayor noted that a supplement to the report had been circulated.

Councillor Hyde moved the recommendations in the report. Councillor Comer-Schwartz contributed to the discussion.

The recommendations were put to the vote and **CARRIED**.

RESOLVED:

- a) That Victoria Lawson be appointed as the new Chief Executive of Islington Council;
- b) That Cllr Shaikh be appointed to the Finsbury Park Trust for a three year term until September 2026, or until a successor is appointed.
- c) That Cllr Khurana be appointed to the Fostering and Adoption Panel until the end of the municipal year, or until a successor is appointed.

259 NOTICES OF MOTION

Motion 1: A Metropolitan Police Service that Islington can trust.

Councillor Woolf moved the motion. Councillor Weekes seconded. Councillor Russell contributed to the discussion. Councillor Woolf exercised their right to reply.

The motion was put to the vote and **CARRIED**.

RESOLVED:

- i. To urge the Met to accept the Casey Report in full – including the finding that the force is institutionally racist, sexist and homophobic.
- ii. To ensure our local Borough Commander agrees to:
 - o A 10-point action plan— practical, tangible actions, developed with our community, and implemented swiftly, in response to Baroness Casey’s report
 - o A Public Charter—outlining your commitments to neighbourhood policing in Islington.
 - o A Memorandum of Understanding—between the local authority and the BCU to ensure effective communication and accountability
 - o Public participation in policing— with effective ward panels that are representative and responsive; with Independent Advisory Groups that are empowered and supported; active engagement and collaboration with refugees, migrants, young people, minoritized groups and the Global Majority
 - o Children as children—for there never to be a horrific incident in Islington like that experienced by Child Q and for a strong commitment to prevention and diversion
 - o The highest standards—only the very best officers in our borough; rigorous SLT review, monitoring and oversight for any officer under investigation;

the very best training for Islington's police officers, including that suggested through Valerie's Law

- Stability and visibility—with an end to the carousel system; an end to high abstraction rates; more PCSOs and School Safety Officers: the very best SNTs in London
 - A swift response—to all incidents in Islington
 - Thorough investigations—with an improvement in outcomes for all crimes, including our priority areas such as an increase in sanction and detection rates for DV, plus watertight cases brought swiftly to the CPS
 - Clear communication—with the Victim's Code at the heart of what the Police does
 - A trauma-informed approach—so safety, choice, collaboration, trustworthiness and empowerment guide your approach and interactions
 - A joined-up approach—across boroughs, teams and partnerships
 - An anti-racist, anti-misogynistic, anti-sexist, anti-homophobic and anti-ableist force—with a laser focus on equality and inclusivity; an end to disproportionality and adultification; an active commitment to stamp out all forms of hate, misogyny, prejudice and discrimination
 - Policing by consent—earning and maintaining trust and confidence in our community by being embedded in our community, listening to our community and understanding our experiences and needs
- iii. To ensure our BCU Commander is accountable for the actions taken in our Borough, including those of central specialist units.
- iv. To continue to listen to local people through our Safer Spaces conversations, learning from residents where they feel least safe and make improvements
- v. To continue to support the safety of young people as outlined in our Youth Safety Strategy, which includes listening to and responding to the voices of young people
- vi. To continue to prioritise the reduction of Violence Against Women and Girls as outlined in our VAWG Strategy, which includes putting survivors centre stage
- vii. To continue to work in partnership to deliver on our Violence Reduction Strategy
- viii. To continue using innovative strategies and responses to organised crime groups, such as our I-CAN service
- ix. To work with our local BCU and partners across London to make tackling child exploitation a priority, with a view to tackling drug-related crime and serious violence
- x. To call on the Prime Minister to make child exploitation and serious violence a national priority.

Motions 2: Age Friendly Islington

A minor alteration to the proposed amendment was formally noted.

Councillor Burgess moved the motion. Councillor Ogunro seconded.

Councillors Hamdache and Gilgunn contributed to the discussion. Councillor Burgess exercised their right to reply.

The motion was put to the vote and **CARRIED**.

RESOLVED:

- i. To join the UK Network of Age-friendly communities, recognising ourselves as an age-friendly borough, where Islington is a welcoming place to grow old in.
- ii. To retain the Older Person's Council Tax discount first introduced by Islington in 2010.
- iii. To write to the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions for better regulation of private pensions.
- iv. To work with local businesses to encourage them to accept cash transactions, recognising the freedom, independence, and social inclusion that this provides older people in the borough.
- v. To continue working with our VCS community and other stakeholders to work on reducing digital exclusion in Islington.

Motion 3: Boycott the Anti-Boycott Bill

Councillor Hamdache moved the motion. Councillor Jegorovas-Armstrong seconded.

Councillor Bell-Bradford moved an amendment to the motion.

Councillor Convery contributed to the discussion. Councillor Hamdache exercised their right of reply.

The amendment was put to a vote and **CARRIED**. The amended motion was put to the vote and **CARRIED**.

RESOLVED:

- i. To write to the Prime Minister to share, and ask him to consider, the legal opinion published by the Labour Party on the rights of councils to boycott oppressive

regimes and illegal practices, emphasising the need for councils to make their own decisions on procurement and investment matters.

- ii. To continue to ensure that our own ethical procurement strategy doesn't include procuring goods and services produced by oppressive regimes.

Motion 4: Islington Child Friendly Community

Councillor Jegorovas-Armstrong moved the motion. Councillor Hamdache seconded.

Councillor Ngongo moved an amendment to the motion. Councillor Jegorovas-Armstrong exercised their right of reply.

The amendment was put to a vote and **CARRIED**. The amended motion was put to the vote and **CARRIED**.

RESOLVED:

- i. To adopt the principles of the UNICEF Child Friendly Community programme in putting together our own Child-Friendly Islington strategy, to put the rights of children and young people at the centre of decision-making; amplify the voices of children and young people; and support them to access more opportunities.
- ii. To genuinely engage with children and young people through the creation of our Child-Friendly Islington strategy, to ensure that their voices are central to the development of the programme.
- iii. To use our Child-Friendly Islington programme to improve the conditions in which children and young people develop in Islington so that they are safer, healthier and happier. To do this by focusing on good quality housing, education, cultural and sporting activities, access to green space and play areas, and encouraging active travel.
- iv. To continue to demonstrate our commitment to the borough's children through the budget process by prioritising frontline services, investing in activities for young people and protecting the things that matter most to local young people.
- v. To ensure relevant council officers, such as social workers and housing officers, are aware and mindful of the need to put children's rights into practice and make sure the borough's children are considered in all decisions taken.
- vi. To work with local partners, such as the police and community organisations, to raise awareness of children's rights across the borough and put these into practice across the entire scope of services.

The meeting closed at 10.25 pm

MAYOR