

COUNCIL MEETING – 12 DECEMBER 2024

QUESTIONS FROM MEMBERS OF THE COUNCIL

a Cllr Nathan to Cllr Ward, Executive Member for Finance and Performance

According to the 2023 State of Equalities in Islington report, over a third of people aged 65 and over in our borough live in income-deprived households. In 2017, Labour’s analysis warned that plans to means-test winter fuel payments would represent the “single biggest attack on pensioners in a generation,” potentially leading to up to 4,000 excess winter deaths. Given the government’s proposed cuts, does Cllr Ward share my concern that this policy change will disproportionately impact our vulnerable older residents, placing them at greater risk during the colder months?

b Cllr Graham to Cllr Ward, Executive Member for Finance and Performance

Up until recently I was part of this labour administration which regularly and rightly berated the tory party for cutting funds to local authorities. The current Labour government, despite also calling for proper funding for local authorities, is unlikely to redress the balance and allow us ,as a council ,to keep the services we currently have and maybe even increase the good we do for our residents. Will this labour administration be putting as much pressure on this government as you did on the Tories to increase funding for local authorities? Or are we to expect no help on this issue leading to even more brutal cuts to services in Islington?

c Cllr Heather to Cllr Weekes, Executive Member for Community Safety

At the police’s Clear, Hold Build (CHB) meeting in Islington back in January, a strategy was advanced as a means to address both the drug problems locally and the criminal networks that drive drug crime. A key part of CHB is to gain the trust and support of local people to report drug crime so that the police can use this intelligence to tackle the criminals perpetuating it. However, a recent public petition indicates that residents in Tollington and Finsbury Park wards want police action on drug crime as they feel unsafe and ignored by the authorities. Given that under CHB the police need the local community to provide them with intelligence to help them tackle drug crime, when can we expect the police to engage with the local community to do this and reassure the public that they are in the process of acting upon their concerns?

d Cllr Clarke to Cllr Weekes, Executive Member for Community Safety

Is the council aware of The Housing Health and Safety Rating System introduced in the Housing Act 2004 which states that noise in a property can affect mental and physical health. It goes on to say that "intolerable" noise can be loud, continuous or apparently unnecessary noises which seem to go on indefinitely" and "seemingly inconsiderate noises, especially at night".

Is the council aware that reported noise does not necessarily need to meet the statutory noise threshold of 30dbs to have an adverse effect on the resident and require intervention?

e Cllr Jegorovas-Armstrong to Cllr Ward, Executive Member for Finance and Performance

Will Islington Council consider four-day working week for council staff to address the issues of rising use of agency and retention & recruitment?

f Cllr Ozdemir to Cllr Williamson, Executive Member for Health & Social Care

Last month, the active play zone at Sobell was launched; it was great to see so many children and families attend, and the feedback has been overwhelmingly positive. Can the Executive member please provide visitor numbers since the opening of the active play zone, including any trends or patterns observed?

g Cllr Hayes to Cllr Ward, Executive Member for Finance and Performance

The Chancellor's Autumn Budget announced the Household Support Fund will be extended until April 2025, with £1bn invested to help those facing financial hardship. This is much welcome news, especially in the winter months where bills skyrocket and residents make decisions between heating their homes and feeding their household. How will the extra funding for the Household Support Fund support local people in the short term and long term?

h Cllr Jackson to Cllr Chapman, Executive Member for Equalities, Communities and Inclusion

I was delighted to attend the opening of the Black Cultural Centre last month, which aims to be a safe space for residents from Black African and Caribbean heritage to come together. Looking forward, what are the key objectives and planned initiatives for the Black Cultural Centre, particularly after the first year, and how will it contribute to the celebration and preservation of Black history and culture in the community?

i Cllr O'Sullivan to Cllr Woolf, Executive Member for Homes and Neighbourhoods

After decades of Tory inaction to resolve the limitations of Right to Buy, I was delighted to hear the Chancellor confirm the protection of existing social housing stock by reducing Right to Buy discounts to their pre-2012 regional levels. I was also pleased to hear that councils in England will be able to keep all the receipts generated by Right to Buy sales. Given we have one of the biggest buy-back schemes in the country, can the Exec member explain how these policy

changes will impact our buy-backs programme?

j Cllr Hamdache to Cllr Champion, Executive Member for Environment, Air Quality and Transport

The Edmonton Incinerator is running 2 years late and half a billion pounds over budget. What implications does that have for the Council's waste management strategy and what feedback has the Council given to the NWLA's ongoing woes?

k Cllr North to Cllr Safi-Ngongo, Executive Member for Children, Young People and Families

The UK Labour government has provided a £1 billion uplift to special educational needs and disability (SEND) and Alternative Provision funding, the second biggest year-on-year increase. How will this funding support local efforts in Islington, and what specific challenges does the borough face in ensuring these resources effectively meet the needs of our diverse student population?

l Cllr North to Cllr Woolf, Executive Member for Homes and Neighbourhoods

Our Labour government has committed to bringing forward legislation to end the feudal system of leasehold and tackle unregulated and unaffordable ground rent charges on homes. Do you agree that Islington leaseholders who have bought properties sold through the council's new build programme should not have to pay ground rents above a peppercorn level?