

**LONDON BOROUGH OF ISLINGTON**  
**COUNCIL MEETING - 26 MARCH 2015**

**MINUTES OF PROCEEDINGS**

At the meeting of the Council held at Council Chamber, Town Hall, Upper Street, N1 2UD on 26 March 2015 at 7.30 pm.

**Councillors Present:**

Debono	O'Sullivan	Kay
Greening	A Perry	Ngongo
Andrews	R Perry	Nicholls
Burgess	Comer-Schwartz	O'Halloran
Caluori	Smith	Parker
Chowdhury	Spall	Picknell
Convery	Watts	Poyser
Fletcher	Webbe	Russell
Gallagher	Court	Shaikh
Hamitouche	Diner	Turan
Hull	Donovan	Ward
Ismail	Erdogan	Ward
Kaseki	Gantly	Wayne
Khan	Gill	Williamson
Klute	Heather	
Murray	Jeapes	

**The Mayor (Councillor Theresa Debono) in the Chair**

**34 MINUTES**

**RESOLVED:**

That the minutes of the Council meeting on 26 February 2015 be confirmed as a correct record and the Mayor be authorised to sign them.

**35 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

None.

**36 MAYORAL ANNOUNCEMENTS**

**(i) Apologies for absence**

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors Doolan and Poole.

Apologies for lateness were received from Councillors Caluori, Ismail and Webbe.

**(ii) Order of Business**

The order of business was not changed.

**(iii) Declaration of Discussion Items**

None.

**(iv) Mayor's Announcements**

The Mayor thanked everyone involved in the recent Civic Awards, Ben Kinsella Award and Freedom of the Borough event, which was a huge success. The Mayor particularly thanked those who had taken the time to nominate others so we can recognise the people who make special contributions to their communities.

The Mayor had recently participated in the annual 5 mile Dick Whittington Walk from Highgate Hill to Mansion House, with all the other London Borough Mayors and reminded colleagues about the imminent fundraising dinner in aid of Home Start Islington and Islington Foodbank.

**(v) Length of Speeches**

The Mayor asked colleagues to do their utmost to keep speeches within the permitted length.

**37 LEADER'S ANNOUNCEMENTS**

Councillor Watts, Leader of the Council noted that this was the first full Council meeting since the tragic death of Alan Cartwright and commended the Police for bringing charges so swiftly and the community for uniting to fight knife crime and ensuring that the Council and Police play their part. The Leader thanked all those residents who participated in the vigorous and constructive debate at the Crime Summit on 14 March and who committed to work together to defeat knife crime.

Councillor Watts advised that Transport for London have, after a lengthy campaign, agreed to pilot a 20 mile per hour speed limit on some red routes in the borough, which will be enforced by the Police. The Leader also advised that unfortunately he was also appalled by Transport for London's plans to close Tufnell Park station for eight months to replace the lifts and the lack of consultation prior to the announcement. Local Councillors have been working hard campaigning with Jeremy Corbyn MP and would continue until Transport for London listen to the local community.

Councillor Watts advised this is the last meeting before the General Election and urged colleagues to ensure residents are registered to vote; we need to do all we can to ensure a high level of participation.

**38 CELEBRATING 50 YEARS OF ISLINGTON COUNCIL**

Councillor Watts introduced the item advising this year is the borough's 50<sup>th</sup> Birthday. Islington and Finsbury were bought together in 1965, following the 1963 Local Government Act which introduced the biggest changes in local government in London since 1900. In 1965 an average house in Islington cost £3,365.

Councillor Greening spoke about the differences between Finsbury and Islington in 1965. In 1965 they were very different places and many Finsbury Councillors tried hard to avoid a merger with Islington and looked at a merger with Shoreditch and the City instead. Finsbury still had many factories and industrial sites; 90% of noise complaints were about factories rather than pubs and clubs. Both boroughs had significant ethnic minority communities,

largely drawn from Cyprus and the Caribbean and both communities faced prejudice and difficulties with housing. Finsbury was also a much more radical Council; the bust of Lenin which was once in Finsbury Town Hall is now back in Finsbury in the Library. The differences between the Councillors from the two boroughs reduced in the early 1970s when Islington became more radical.

**39 PETITIONS**

Bridget Stark and Dr Jonathan Foyle presented a petition requesting a new consultation on the proposed new visitor centre in Caledonian Park.

**40 YOUNG MAYOR AND YOUNG DEPUTY MAYOR - WELCOME AND PRESENTATION OF BADGES**

The Mayor presented the Young Mayor, Taiga Asada, and the Young Deputy Mayor, Abu Mensah, with their badges of office.

**41 QUESTIONS FROM MEMBERS OF THE YOUTH COUNCIL**

Question 1 Youth Councillor Christiane Pangula to Councillor Richard Watts, Leader of the Council.

What is the Council doing to encourage young people to register to vote and to engage with the upcoming election?

Reply:

Thank you for your very important and timely question. The Government has introduced a significant change to our electoral system, by requiring individual voter registration. Nationally one billion people have been lost from the electoral register and this has created real challenges for the Council, especially regarding young people. We are working with the University and Colleges and student unions to encourage everyone to register. The Electoral Services team here do a very good job and are putting in a lot of time and effort. I would also ask our Youth Councillors to do their bit and spread the word as well.

Question 2 Youth Councillor Abu Mensah to Councillor Asima Shaikh, Executive Member for Economic and Community Development.

How many apprenticeships have been created in Islington Council over the last year? If you were in Parliament, what would you do to support young people into apprenticeships?

Reply:

Thank you for your question, especially as it relates to one of our key priorities. 45 Apprenticeships have been created and we are committed to create 200 by 2018. We launched the apprenticeship scheme in 2009 and pay participants the London Living Wage. Of the 45 apprentices we currently have, more than half are from BAME backgrounds. The apprenticeships give people valuable experience and some have gained permanent employment with the Council. We are very committed and doing all we can, but we need to get government to do much more; we want to see every company getting a government contract providing apprenticeships.

Question 3 Youth Councillor Taiga Asada to Councillor Richard Watts, Leader of the Council.

We were told that Islington has been recognised by Stonewall as an excellent employer for LGBT staff. Why do you think it has improved so much, moving from 66<sup>th</sup> in 2014 to 13<sup>th</sup> in 2015?

Reply:

Thank you for your question. We are very proud to be in the top fifteen employers. Islington has a reputation as a tolerant and diverse borough and there are two or three things we do here which do make a difference. We support the staff forum and hold the History Months, but we can do more; we are very clear that where discrimination still exists we will do more to combat it. We were very proud to fly the LGBT and Transgender flags and we were the first council in the country to host a gay marriage, which was an honour to attend. We will continue to fight for equality across the borough.

Question 4 Youth Councillor Tanjina Uddin to Councillor Janet Burgess, Executive Member for Health and Wellbeing.

The Youth Council recognises the importance of local health services. What is the Council doing to raise awareness of these services among young people and how are these services engaging with schools?

Reply

Thank you for your question. I am very pleased you are interested in health services as it is very important for young people to be fully engaged. We have school nursing services at all primary and secondary schools, raising health awareness and supplying immunisation screening. The health team also work to develop the skills of school staff particularly in relation to sexual health, relationships, alcohol and smoking cessation and we are committed to improving mental health support, especially in secondary schools. We also have weight management services and an oral health programme in primary schools. For older young people LIFT and Platform and a number of other partners offer a range of services and we have a Youth Health Forum and Youth Health Trainer projects to help raise awareness. There is a lot going on and I would be happy to meet you to discuss it further.

## **42 QUESTIONS FROM MEMBERS OF THE PUBLIC**

Question 1. Anita Frizzarin to Councillor Claudia Webbe, Executive Member for Environment and Transport

What is Islington Council's Policy on Disabled Cycling?

Reply:

Thank you for your question. We take equality absolutely seriously and are directly accountable for our actions and Councillor Comer, our Equalities Champion interrogates the Council to ensure we are firmly on agenda. We ensure that our policies and our activities take equality very seriously. The policy is contained in part in the Council's Transport Strategy, which recognises health and disability are important factors in people's mobility. We work with developers and designers to ensure that disability and cycling remain at the forefront of what we do. Equality is not an added extra; it is integral to all our policies. I hope you are

getting a clear response and that I'm sending a clear message that equalities remain at the forefront of what we do as a Council.

Supplementary question:

Is there a policy or not and have you consulted on it?

Reply:

It is contained within our Transport Strategy. Health and equality are integral, not separate; we integrate it into our policies and yes, we work with disabled groups and have a great scheme. Peddle Power in Finsbury works with disabled people and is just one example of what we do in terms of cycling. I want to see clear cycle routes for all, Quietways for everyone – for all our communities. We engage with disabled groups to ensure cycling is good for everyone in Islington.

Question 2. Ernestas Jegorovas to Councillor Joe Caluori, Executive Member for Children and Families

Will the Council support schools teachers and the School Places Crisis Campaign?

Reply:

This is the third time I've been asked this question. The campaign is about a school place crises and we don't have one here; we can manage the places we need for the future. If we joined, we would be working to support a campaign about a lack of school places when we have enough. We aren't opening a Free School, the City of London are, there has been a lot of development in the south of the borough, but where there is pressure on places we are providing more locally; the need is localised.

Supplementary question:

With the election on May 7<sup>th</sup> and just a handful of Tories, the choice is really just Labour or Green, so what is Labour's Educational Plan?

Reply:

We are continuing our commitment to community schools, to drive up standards and achieve the best for our children. We have been doing really well and I've been pushing hard to ensure that Labour Councils can open community schools. We are currently prohibited from opening a new school, whilst a couple of companies can get together and open one. But this is a very broad question and I would be happy to meet you to discuss our plans further.

#### **43 QUESTIONS FROM MEMBERS OF THE COUNCIL**

Councillor Poyser to Councillor Convery, Executive Member for Community Safety.

The Archway Bridge is an Islington symbol that is well known throughout London. Sadly and tragically, despite the current restraint measures, people still commit suicide from this bridge. Each suicide traumatises many people in Islington's mental health community, as well as the families and loved ones of the suicide victims. At last, steps are being taken by Transport for London (TfL) to add further anti-suicide restraints on the bridge and they are being submitted to the Planning Committees in Islington and Haringey. We hope the proposed measures are successful in their aim without too much compromise in the striking visual impact of the

Victorian Bridge. Suicide is frequently a spur of the moment act and potential victims go on to lead happy lives after they change their mind at the last minute. Could Councillor Convery please tell us about progress with plans to put up signs on both sides of the bridge giving a phone number for the Samaritans?

Reply:

Thank you for your question. I'd like to thank David and Ros Miller from the Faiths Forum for campaigning on this issue. Work on a suicide prevention plan is progressing and it is important that we recognise and respond to suicide risks and our local action plan, the Local Crisis Care Concordat provides support for those who display suicidal behaviour. Any suicide is a tragedy that affects family and friends. In the public realm they can have a very big impact indeed and dozens of people can be affected. Over the last two years there has been intense pressure and we now have agreement from Transport for London (TfL), Haringey Council and English Heritage to install anti jump fencing on the bridge, although there is some opposition from the Highgate Society and local Lib-Dem Councillors. We also requested that TfL install CCTV on the bridge and they are funding the installation of this. The CCTV will be linked through to our control room so we can respond quickly if anyone on the bridge appears to be agitated and finally, we have also spoken to the Samaritans about signs; there are some already installed but these are very small and we are seeing if these can be made more visible.

Supplementary Question:

Is Councillor Convery aware that Bristol Council have halved the number of suicides from the Clifton Suspension Bridge?

Reply:

David's quite right. It is a stunning listed Victorian bridge and I thought it very encouraging that Bristol decided to put up fences despite concerns about the aesthetics of Brunel's bridge. It is very difficult to prevent all suicides, but TfL have proposed a very high fence and think it will be very effective. I hope we can placate the Highbury Society and Lib-Dem Councillors; safety has to come before aesthetics. The most recent attempt was foiled by staff at St Aloysius College who physically restrained someone until the police arrived. The impact on the school is traumatising and we will do our very best to stop it from happening.

Councillor Russell to Councillor Murray, Executive Member for Housing and Development.

The Lands Tribunal Decision No: LRX 78 2014k dated 26 January 2015, decided that leaseholder charges must be calculated using figures obtained from the lowest hierarchical level (eg the nearest meter). Will the council agree to apply the same approach when calculating charges for tenants rather than the current system of pooled charges across the borough?

Reply:

We have made an active choice to pool tenants charging to ensure fairness, but we are required by law to recharge Leaseholders for the specific costs relating to their property. With tenants we think it is fairer not to penalise those who live in older blocks and if we changed this policy the costs for residents in Turnpike House would rise by 30% because they'd no longer be protected. The policy also helps those residents who are elderly, disabled or housebound as their costs are levelled out to some extent by pooling. There are issues that we need to look at; the rate is set each year in the budget and as costs are down on previous years it looks likely that we will be able to provide a rebate to residents. There

are also some blocks which are very badly insulated where residents need the heating on for longer and the pooled charges helps spread these costs. I know that the Environment and Regeneration Scrutiny Committee have been looking at this and I look forward to receiving their recommendations, but none of these issues detracts from pooling being the right thing to do.

Supplementary question:

I understand the fairness principles behind pooling, but it is not a way of tackling poorly insulated homes. We need to insulate them. Will you look at controls – at the moment there is no incentive to save heat?

Reply:

This is a very important issue and we have an insulation programme which includes external cladding to insulate buildings. It is very hard to effectively insulate street properties, but we have a very good track record. The cost of insulation brings us back to pooling; even if we can only do one block, the saving is shared across all blocks. We won't have to say to some tenants that they have to pay more until we can afford to do their block; it is much fairer. We have looked at metering individual flats and I know the Environment and Regeneration Scrutiny Committee are similarly looking at this, but we have to consider the equality implications for elderly people and those who are housebound.

#### **44 NOTICES OF MOTION**

##### **1 MOTION - GIVING EVERY YOUNG PERSON THE BEST START**

Councillor Picknell moved the motion, seconded by Councillor Turan. Councillor Caluori and Councillor Nick Ward contributed to the debate.

The recommendations were put to the vote and CARRIED.

RESOLVED:

1. To continue to work with the entire family of schools in Islington to give every young person the best possible start in life.
2. To make representations to government to allow the council to open new local authority maintained schools in the borough that can help provide future generations with high quality education.

##### **2 MOTION – WE NEED A FAIR DEAL FOR ISLINGTON**

Councillor Wayne moved the motion, seconded by Councillor Williamson. Councillors Heather, Russell, Chowdhury and O'Halloran contributed to the debate.

The recommendations were put to the vote and CARRIED.

RESOLVED:

1. To continue to make a difference for local people, the council will fight for the best deal for Islington from any future government.

3. **MOTION - ISLINGTON TO APPLY TO THE SYRIAN VULNERABLE PERSONS RELOCATION (VPR) SCHEME FOR FUNDING TO HOST SYRIAN FAMILIES**

Councillor Russell moved the motion. Councillor Watts moved an amendment to the motion. Councillor Kaseki seconded the amendment. Councillors Safi-Ngongo and Ismail contributed to the debate.

The recommendations in the amended motion were put to the vote and CARRIED.

The motion as amended was put to the vote and CARRIED.

RESOLVED:

To play a part in this important national and international initiative to respond to the suffering and trauma of refugee families; building on the dialogue that has taken place between the Leader of the Council and Citizens over recent months.

To work with any appropriate community and faith groups that wish to accommodate refugees and to co-ordinate necessary support.

To liaise with neighbouring authorities and all interested parties, including our MEPs, local MPs and housing associations, to make representations to the Government for it to provide adequate financial support to meet the costs of accommodating refugees, in-light of the caps on housing benefit and the benefit cap more generally imposed by the current Government.

45 **REVISED CHIEF WHIPS REPORT**

Councillor Alice Perry, seconded by Councillor Poyser, moved the recommendations in the revised report.

The recommendations were put to the vote and carried.

RESOLVED:

**1. Amendment to the Constitution**

That the post holders specified below may exercise the Council's power to issue Community Protection Notices under the Anti-social Behaviour, Crime and Policing Act 2014 if authorised by the Service Director – Public Protection to do so be agreed:

**Greenspace:**

Parks Operations Manager  
Area Parks Manager  
Area Parks Manager  
Area Parks Manager  
Parks & Open Spaces Manager

**Public Protection:**

Out of hours ASB Team Manager  
ASB Team Leader  
ASB Officer  
Noise Patrol Saturday Officer

Noise Patrol sessional Officer  
ASB sessional Officer  
Street Management Officer  
Senior Animal Welfare Officer  
Animal Welfare Assistant  
Pollution Officers  
Air Quality Officer  
Construction Impacts Monitoring Officer  
Acoustics Officer  
Noise Officer (licensing)  
Daytime Response and Patrol Manager  
Senior Street Management Officer  
Daytime Response and Patrol officer

**Community Safety**

MAGPI Neighbourhood Officer

**2. APPOINTMENT TO ISLINGTON HEALTH AND WELLBEING BOARD**

That Ms Sorrel Brookes be appointed to Islington Health and Wellbeing Board, as the Lay Vice-Chair of Islington CCG, for a period of one year, or until a successor is appointed, be agreed.

The meeting closed at 9.45 pm

**MAYOR**