

Members' Briefing



**Barking &
Dagenham**



Leader's borough update

In his video this week, the Leader sends his heartfelt condolences to those who continue to be affected by the devastating earthquakes that took place last week, in Turkey and Syria.

He also talks about how the council is making women's safety a priority and mentions some of the behaviours being tackled that can cause women to feel anxious or scared, such as staring, following and wolf whistling.

He also reminds residents that February is LGBT+ History Month which is all

about celebrating our LGBT+ community. He stresses that this year is a really important anniversary, as it marks 20 years since Section 28 was abolished, which had a profound impact on local government and in schools and the way we talk about homosexuality.



How well do you know your borough?

We previously shared 2021 Census data for the borough with you on topics including age, country of birth, ethnicity, household size, living arrangements, migration and religion.

The Office for National Statistics (ONS) has now released more data and you can find out how life has changed between the last two censuses (held in 2011 and 2021) for people living in Barking and Dagenham in terms of disability, health, housing, unpaid care and working hours. You can find out more about the changes [here](#).

You can also create your own profile for your local area using census data. [Building a custom area profile](#) allows you to get data by different area types, for example your neighbourhood, ward, local authority or parliamentary constituency. And if it doesn't have the geography you want, you can draw your own map.

We have now added pre-built profiles to our [Population and demographics page on our website](#).



Be First appoints Geoff Raw as new Managing Director

Following an extensive search, Be First were pleased to announce that Geoff Raw has been selected to take over as Managing Director in May.

Geoff will be bringing vast experience, skill and strategic insight to the council's wholly owned regeneration company. His passion and enthusiasm for placemaking was clear throughout the recruitment process and has been a central theme throughout his career.

Geoff will be looking to carry on the great success already achieved at Be First, London's largest social house building agency, and ensure that in Barking and Dagenham, no one is left behind. Read more about the appointment [here](#).



Women's Safety Online meeting

Tuesday 21 February, 6pm to 7pm

If you would like to join
email csp@lbbd.gov.uk

in partnership with



Residents invited to join our online meeting on women's safety

As part of our work to ensure residents, especially women, continue to feel safe in the borough, we're holding an online event with the police to showcase the things we're doing together to make sure this is the case.

Our community safety and domestic violence teams will join the police in giving presentations on the work they're doing around women's safety, followed by a Q&A session.

The event takes place on Tuesday 21 February from 6 to 7pm on Microsoft Teams. We know that crime and safety is an issue for lots of people, so we hope lots of residents will join the session. If they are interested, they need to email csp@lbbd.gov.uk

THURSDAY
9TH MARCH

MARIANNE

BROADWAY
THEATRE



Marianne - UK Premiere

Thursday 9th March

The Broadway Theatre, Barking IG11 7LS

Doors Open: 7pm

Tickets - Free

www.thebroadwaybarking.com/sales/genres/films/marianne

UK premiere of documentary film 'Marianne' featuring Cllr Saima Ashraf

[Film Barking & Dagenham](#) are proud to present the UK premiere of '[Marianne – The Movie](#)' (12A) at the [Broadway Theatre](#) on 9 March from 7pm and you're invited. The night will include a panel discussion and Q&A featuring Deputy Leader, Councillor Saima Ashraf.

'Marianne' is a French language (English subtitled) documentary that follows seven French Muslim women. The film explores their individual stories with Islam and in particular their experiences of practising their faith in France and the challenges they have faced in doing so. Through their respective backgrounds and points of view, the film questions the concepts of secularism, universal feminism, freedom and French identity as they are currently defined.

Part of our Women's Empowerment Month programme, this event will include the UK premiere of the film followed by a panel discussion and Q&A. Confirmed panellists include 'Marianne' Director Valentina Canavesio, award-winning Franco-Irish journalist and filmmaker Dr Myriam Francois, Opera singer Narimène Bey and Councillor Saima Ashraf, who feature in the film.

Tickets are FREE and can be booked [here](#).

Training updates for councillors

This week we have included details of a Member's Briefing and several LGA and LGiU courses and events. For details on how to access the courses, please see the Members' Training section below.

Borough News



National Apprenticeship Week 2023

We celebrated National Apprenticeship Week 2023 last week with a range of activities throughout the week.

National Apprenticeship Week is an opportunity to celebrate the achievements of apprentices and the positive impact they make to communities, businesses, and the wider economy.



Local groups invited to help spend £10,000 on equality and diversity

The council is inviting local community groups to help spend a £10,000 pot of money to help promote social inclusion, celebrate diversity, and support equality across the borough.

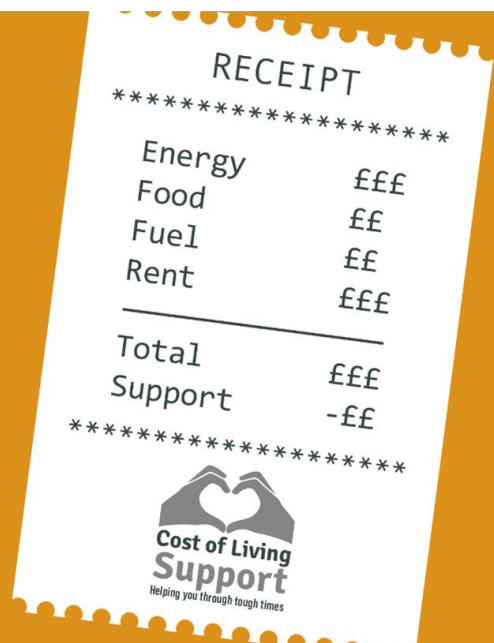
Our Equality and Diversity Community Fund, which was launched in 2019, offers charities and local groups the chance to apply for up to £500 for initiatives that provide opportunities for residents with protected characteristics.

The next round of funding is now open for any equalities events – key dates include Easter (April), St George’s Day (April), Mental Health Awareness Week (May), Learning Disabilities Week (May), Carers Week (June), Windrush Day (June), Pride (June/July), Eid ul-Adha (July), and South Asian Heritage Month (July/August).

Interested groups can [apply here](#). Applications close at midnight on Tuesday, 28 February.

Around the council

Cost of Living Support



Giving residents a helping hand through the cost of living crisis

We've been sharing lots of ways residents can get help with money, food, energy, wellbeing and more.

If you know someone who could benefit from this support, please do help us spread the word. There's lots of information available online, or residents can speak to staff at one of our Community Hubs or partner buildings. They can also take a look at where these are located [here](#).

While we might not have the answer to everything, residents can reach out and we'll do our best to connect them to the support they might need.

And as temperatures continue to drop, residents are reminded that there are lots of [warm spaces](#) across the borough that they can visit so they don't have to put the heating on at home.

More information on the cost of living support available can be found at



Residents invited to open a savings account today through Barking and Dagenham Money

The Council has partnered with Leeds Credit Union to bring more affordable loans options and saving accounts to residents through Barking and Dagenham Money (BD Money).

The aim is to help local people become more financially resilient, keep more money in their pockets and access appropriate services to meet their financial needs and ambitions. This is not-for-profit, with all benefits staying in the community.

Since its launch earlier this month we've racked up hundreds of new members. For residents considering opening a savings account through BD Money, it's straight-forward, hassle-free and there's also a wide range of trusted, low-interest loans available.

More information can be found at www.BDMoney.co.uk



Help and support available for residents through the Household Support Scheme

Residents who may be struggling with their finances or to make ends meet are being encouraged to get in touch.

Funding is available to vulnerable residents to support them with essentials over the coming months.

Residents can [apply online](#) or email benefits@lbbd.gov.uk.

There are also [a number of other support services](#) including:

- Our Community Food Clubs which are free of charge and can provide £20 worth of food per week for a period of either three or six months at www.lbbd.gov.uk/community-food-clubs
- Our money and debt webpages provide an income and expenditure calculator and budgeting tools that will help people understand how much money they have coming in and how much is going out, helping them look at areas where they can make savings at www.lbbd.gov.uk/money-and-debt
- Residents who are worried about their finances and need help to tackle debt can now get advice and support from our local Barking and Dagenham Money website at: www.bdmoney.co.uk
- People struggling with increasing energy costs should contact their energy supplier about possible funds they may be entitled to, to help them through difficult periods. They can also access the Warm Homes Grant at www.gov.uk/the-warm-home-discount-scheme
- People with disabilities who aren't claiming specific disability benefits may be able to take advantage of a number of benefits available, including Personal Independence Payments, Disability Living Allowance (for children), and Universal Credit. For those caring for someone with disabilities they may be able to claim Carer's Allowance although this is means tested, at www.gov.uk/financial-help-disabled/disability-and-sickness-benefits
- People with a water meter who are experiencing financial difficulties may want to look into the Watersure scheme at www.ofwat.gov.uk/households/customer-assistance. Most water companies also have a fund to help those who are struggling, and it might be worth contacting their water provider.

- People who are out of work and looking to get into employment can get help and support from our Job Shops at www.lbbd.gov.uk/help-finding-work
- Anyone worried about a lack of skills can find courses and support on the Adult College website at <https://adultcollege.lbbd.gov.uk/>
- Residents who need help with emergency living expenses for food, fuel (gas and electric for customers who pay via a key meter), travel expenses and household appliances and/or clothing in exceptional circumstances can apply for help from our Hardship Fund (Individual Assistance Payment) at www.lbbd.gov.uk/hardship-and-covid-support-schemes.

Residents can also contact our Homes and Money Hubs which are open for a drop in at Barking Learning Centre and Dagenham Library from 9am to 4pm, Monday to Friday or via email at: homesandmoneyhub@lbbd.gov.uk.



Jobs and training opportunities available from our Job Shops

Residents who need help and support to get into work can visit our Job Shops.

Jobs and training opportunities are advertised on the website every Monday, and residents can register with the service by completing the [online form](#). They will then be contacted by a member of staff.

Alternatively, residents can contact the shops by telephone: Dagenham Job Shop – 020 8724 8877; Barking Job Shop – 020 8724 8870.

For details of jobs available every week, residents can visit www.lbbd.gov.uk/help-finding-work.

For more information about help and support, residents can visit the Barking and Dagenham Working Together campaign page at www.lbbd.gov.uk/working-together.

Local Government News

Local Government Finance Settlement

As MPs were preparing to discuss the [local government finance settlement for 2023 to 2024](#) last Wednesday (8 February), London Councils set out its key priorities for ensuring local services have adequate funding for taking on the capital's challenges. While the settlement will deliver a funding uplift to boroughs, London Councils highlighted the following concerns:

- High inflation and increased demand for council services – including from residents struggling due to the cost-of-living crisis – mean London boroughs will still need to make £100 million of savings in 2023/24 to balance their budgets.

- Given the cost-of-living pressures facing residents, it is disappointing that a third of the total funding increase available depends on boroughs raising council tax to the maximum permitted level.
- The funding uplift from the government follows a period of significant reductions. London boroughs' overall resources will still be 18 per cent lower in real terms compared to 2010/11, even though population growth means there are around 800,000 more Londoners using local services.
- Short-term funding arrangements undermine boroughs' ability to invest strategically. The 2023/24 funding settlement for councils is the fifth single-year settlement in a row, which makes it harder for boroughs to assess what resources will be available for services beyond this timeframe.

[Chair of London Councils, Cllr Georgia Gould](#), said: "Boroughs play a vital role in supporting Londoners through the cost-of-living crisis, but for too long have been hampered by inadequate funding and a lack of long-term planning from central government. The entire system needs urgent reform.

"London faces a wide range of major challenges. Giving boroughs better funding tools is essential for investing in local services and enabling us to make faster progress in reducing poverty, driving inclusive economic growth, tackling climate change, and supporting Londoners' other key priorities."

You can read the [briefing sent to London MPs here](#).

Children's Services Strategy

Responding to the [government's long-term strategy to fix children's social care](#), London Councils has welcomed the strategy's emphasis on early intervention, joined-up help for struggling families, and expanding council's social care workforce.

However, with councils in London collectively overspending on children's social care budgets by around £200 million a year, [London Councils' Executive Member for Children & Young People, Cllr Ian Edwards](#) has warned that funding remains a "major concern."

"Vulnerable children in London and across the country deserve high-quality social care that will not only keep them safe but help them thrive", he said. "A

sustained growth in investment for local services will be essential for making these ambitions a reality and we look forward to working with ministers to help ensure this happens.”

Chief Executive changes

The London borough of Brent has appointed current Lewisham chief executive Kim Wright to become its new chief executive, subject to the approval of full council.

Kim will replace Carolyn Downs, who announced her intention to step down as chief executive at Brent last year. Carolyn will leave the council in April.

Tower Hamlets has announced that current chief executive Will Tuckley will leave by mutual consent on 2 March, subject to agreement at full council

This week’s coverage in the national and regional media

Evening Standard, 7 February – [London first-time buyers: average cost of starter home up £50,000 in five years](#). Mentions Barking and Dagenham.

Metro, 7 February – [Map reveals the six London councils opposing ULEZ expansion](#). Mentions Barking and Dagenham.

Retail Gazette, 7 February – [Data: the 10 most and least expensive locations for retail rents](#). Mentions Barking and Dagenham.

Architecture Today, 7 February – [Architecture Today Awards 2022: Infrastructure and Landscape finalists](#). Mentions Barking and Dagenham.

Local Government Lawyer, 6 February – [Supreme Court to hear this test case over final injunctions and unknown trespassers](#). Mentions Barking and Dagenham.

ITV News, 6 January – [ULEZ expansion: London mayor Sadiq Khan warns objecting councils 'you will fail'](#). Mentions Barking and Dagenham.

Let's Recycle, 6 February – [Lower waste volumes sees ELWA report £7m underspend](#). Mentions Barking and Dagenham.

Media Releases

[Proactive work by east London community rangers leads to arrest of man with a crossbow in council park.](#)

[Council celebrates National Apprenticeship Week 2023.](#)

Members' Training

Member's Briefing

The next Member Briefing will take place on Tuesday 28 February at 7pm online via Teams and will focus on the Zero Carbon Roadmap and Climate Change Action Plan.

Training from the Local Government Information Unit (LGiU)

The LGiU are offering the following training:

Scrutiny - Wednesday 22 February, 9.30 to 11.30am (online)

This introductory session explores the role of overview and scrutiny within an authority, how to get the best results from its work and the key skills and approaches for doing so. Join them to take part in guided, interactive activities that will help you build a team, programme your work, scope your project, and gather evidence.

Speed Reading – Tuesday 21 March, am to 3pm (online)

Learn fun ways to train your brain to remember lots of information and

understand specific techniques to improve your ability to process and absorb written information using different reading techniques.

Training from the Local Government Association (LGA)

The LGA are offering the following sessions:

Personal safety for councillors – Tuesday 21 February, 2 to 3.30pm

This Government funded webinar has been specially devised for councillors who are keen to improve their awareness of personal safety. Built around the role of the elected member, the session is full of practical advice and guidance. Included within the webinar are references to surgeries, canvassing, home visits and managing unexpected doorstep visitors.

Sustainability in council services – Show and Tell – Thursday 16 March, 10.30am to 12 noon

The LGA has commissioned the Zero Carbon Britain team at the Centre for Alternative Technology (CAT) to undertake an exciting project to develop draft route maps for councils across England to understand how to embed sustainability across some service areas, through an Innovation Lab. The lab was made up of a series of workshops that brought together voices from across councils to contribute expertise in how service areas and operations work in reality. Participants were from all levels in councils, from officers to senior management and CEOs. This approach enables a whole system understanding of councils to inform the outputs of the lab.

In this webinar, funded by Government, we will be hearing from the CAT team, as well as some of the lab's participants, about how they found the experience and what the next steps are for the project. There will also be ample time for questions and feedback from attendees.

One to One Development Sessions

The LGA are offering councillors the opportunity to have one-to-one

development conversations with one of the Leadership Academy Facilitators. This will be available to councillors in leadership positions for the next three months. These sessions are not political and will be provided by tutors from the LGA's Leadership Academy programme who a number of councillors might have met from participation on the programmes. They will be focussed on helping councillors adapt their personal leadership style through three structured coaching calls. For more information, please contact Leanna McPherson at: leanna.mcpherson@lbbd.gov.uk

If you are interested in joining any or all of these courses, please email: leanna.mcpherson@lbbd.gov.uk or lois.taylor@lbbd.gov.uk

The LGA also offers help for new Councillors via the New Councillor Hub, which can be found [here](#).

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And finally...

The Members' Briefing is intended to keep you up to date with what is going on in the council, in the borough and in the world of local government. Please let us have your suggestions on items for inclusion in future bulletins and any feedback you may have on how it can be improved.

