

Members' Briefing



**Barking &
Dagenham**



Safe spaces created for women to feel safe across the borough

In our continued effort to ensure everyone, and in particular women, feel safe in the borough, we've launched an initiative to provide safe spaces for people to go if they need help. Known as Safe Havens, these are places where people can go if they are worried someone might be following them, are on their own

and unsure how to get home, or they don't feel safe at home.

We now have over 30 Safe Havens that will:

- Provide a welcoming space.
- Help people with calling someone – friends, family or the police if need be.
- Provide practical information, such as bus routes, information about train stations and directions.
- Make sure people feel safe and confident to leave when they want to.

As part of the scheme, people can collect a Safe Haven 'In Case of Emergency' card from any of our [Community Hubs](#). These cards will allow people to add their details and an emergency contact, which they can give to someone in a Safe Haven if they need to go to one. The person at the Safe Haven can then use the card to get in touch with their emergency contact.

You can find out more [here](#).



Residents give their views on a food system for the future

Access to healthier, fresh food that is affordable and more skills, resources and land for food growing are just some of the views from residents as part of a review into the borough's food environment.

The six-month project, led by Company Drinks CIC and national charity Sustain on behalf of the council, involved more than 500 residents in face-to-face and online interviews to research the local food landscape and create a good food plan for the borough.

The feedback received highlighted four key areas for the council to consider, including the development of a Food Partnership across private, public, and voluntary sectors, providing more climate-friendly food grown locally, delivering better access to healthier options, and encouraging more training and business opportunities for local food enterprises.

The council commissioned the research ahead of the relocation of the City of London's historic wholesale markets, which are set to move to the borough in 2027. The findings will feed into a borough-wide food strategy that will aim to create an environmentally sustainable food system for our residents, while making the most of the prospective new employment opportunities.

Other plans include the development of a 'food school', offering a place for young people to learn skills in world cuisine, as well as resources to inspire school children around healthy eating and careers in food. The council is also planning to develop a 'food hub', which will offer subsidised kitchen space for food entrepreneurs and support community-led food and drinks businesses.

For more information about the report, current and future projects and how to join the Food Partnership, visit lbbd.gov.uk/food-partnership-and-action-plan.



Healthy activities and meals for children during the Easter school break

The [Holiday Activity and Food programme](#) is back, jam-packed with fun activities to keep the young ones active while making friends during the Easter school break. Each activity includes a healthy, hot lunch.

There are a range of organisations across the borough providing activities for children and young people, aged 5 to 16, who live or go to school in Barking and Dagenham.

This provision is free for children who are eligible for benefit-related free school meals, with paid places available for everyone to join the fun. Working parents may be eligible for [tax-free childcare](#) with some providers.

Bookings are required, so parents should book early to avoid disappointment. More information can be found [here](#).

Training updates for councillors

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

Borough News

census 2021

About the Borough – How well do you know your local area?

We previously shared 2021 Census data for the borough on topics such as age, country of birth, ethnicity, household size, living arrangements, migration

and religion – this included an [online tool](#) which can be used to create custom profiles of different areas, one of our electoral wards, or the immediate area around your postcode.

We've now built a selection of Barking and Dagenham profiles which you can find [here](#). They include a profile that compares [our borough](#) to London and profiles for each of our electoral wards.



Residents invited to host a street party and join the Coronation celebrations

Residents are being invited to join in the fun and host a street party to celebrate the Coronation of His Majesty The King and Her Majesty The Queen Consort. They can show their support for the Royal Family and get to know their neighbours by applying to host a street party before 27 March.

Residents are being encouraged to get creative with decorations, plan fun games, and prepare delicious food and drinks for all to enjoy. This is the perfect opportunity to bring the community together and mark this special occasion.

The council's Summer of festivals Weekender, including a special Coronation Day event, will take place on 6-7 May at Valence Park, with more details to be announced soon. More information about hosting a street party can be found on the [council website](#).



Borough residents and groups invited to nominate a community hero

Residents and local groups are being asked if they know someone who goes above and beyond to make a difference in the community – whether they started a community garden, run a charity, volunteer on a regular basis or put on activities for the elderly.

Whether it's litter picking, running a food bank or doing Zumba with the elderly - we need residents to take a moment to nominate the borough's 'unsung heroes' so we can celebrate them through film.

Residents can [find out more and nominate here](#).



Giant retro light-up games come to Valence House

Four giant light-up games will fill the grounds of Valence House Museum in Dagenham with brightly coloured illuminations for three nights only from Thursday 23 until Saturday 25 March, with 15ft high games including 4-In-A-Row, based on the classic board game Connect 4 and Snake – based on the mobile phone game from the 1990s.

Brought to the borough by Creative Barking and Dagenham, the evening events are FREE to attend and it's also an opportunity to visit Valence House Museum.

[Tickets can be booked here.](#)



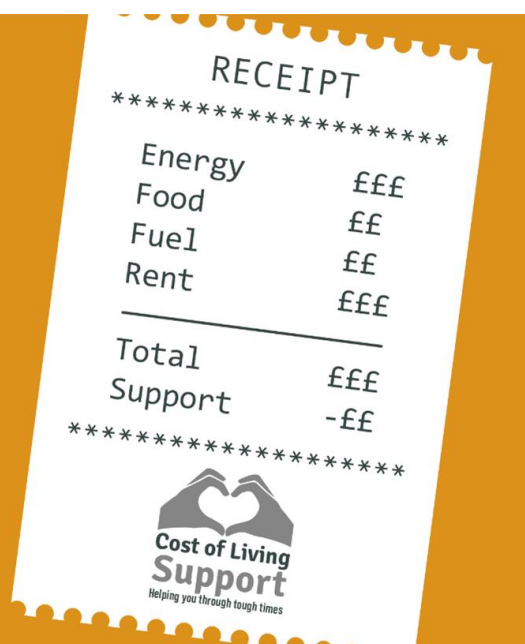
Things are heating up as microwave is fly tipped in the latest episode of the Wall of Shame

The [Wall of Shame](#) is back with more B&D fly-tippers caught on camera – and we need residents' help stopping them.

You can watch the latest episode on our website. If you think you recognise anyone featured, please email grimecrime@lbbd.gov.uk with the details.

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 if they prefer, 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 www.lbbd.gov.uk/cost-living-support



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 Community Hub and Dagenham Library Community Hub 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

Urgent Budget action required to tackle growing homelessness crisis

London's housing crisis has been put into stark relief with new figures published last week by London Councils revealing that on average at least one child in every classroom in the capital is homeless.

The latest figures suggest there are now 166,000 homeless Londoners – equivalent to the entire population of a city such as Oxford – living in temporary accommodation arranged by their local borough. That total includes 81,000 children, meaning one in every 23 children in London is homeless.

The capital's homelessness crisis is driven by a severe shortage of affordable accommodation and new research conducted by Savills and Rightmove on behalf of London Councils suggests housing affordability for low-income Londoners in the private rented sector has shrunk even further due to increasing rents.

Ahead of last Wednesday's Budget announcement, boroughs have called on

the government to increase help for households struggling with their finances, including by raising Local Housing Allowance (LHA) rates.

London Councils' Executive Member for Regeneration, Housing & Planning, Cllr Darren Rodwell, said: "The situation is unsustainable. Homelessness has a devastating impact on those who experience it, and it also leads to massive costs to councils and the wider public sector.

"We need urgent action from the government. The Chancellor must use the Budget to boost support for struggling households and to help us deliver the affordable homes London communities are desperate to see."

MPs call for 'fresh support' to boost economic growth in London

A group of cross-party MPs has urged the Chancellor to use the Budget to boost economic growth in London.

Describing the capital as a "vital cog in driving the UK's future prosperity", the All-Party Parliamentary Group (APPG) for London hopes to see fiscal measures that will help businesses and create new jobs and opportunities.

Sir Bob Neill MP, Co-Chair of the APPG for London, said: "The Budget is a chance for the Chancellor to show he recognises London as an invaluable national asset. Rather than trying to level London down, the government must do everything it can to get London back in business.

"We want London to be the best city in the world to live, to visit and to run a business. To achieve that, the Budget must bring fresh support for London's economic recovery and help the capital overcome its immense challenges."

Homes for Ukraine

One year on from the Russian invasion of Ukraine and the launch of the Homes for Ukraine visa scheme, London boroughs are [thanking London's local communities](#) for offering sanctuary and support to thousands of Ukrainians arriving in the capital.

Close to 17,000 Ukrainians have arrived in London on the Homes for Ukraine visa scheme since the scheme was launched on 14 March last year. Thousands more have arrived via other schemes such as the Ukraine Family Visa.

Speaking on the anniversary of the launch of the Homes for Ukraine scheme, [London Councils' Executive Member for Communities Cllr Claire Holland](#), said: "I would like to thank Londoners for their selfless and compassionate welcome of Ukrainians to the capital.

People across London's communities have stepped up to the plate, offering all kinds of support.

"Historically London has been proud of its role as a place of sanctuary to those fleeing the direst circumstances and it's amazing to see that ethos shining through even as we face our challenges as a city.

"Boroughs have also been working hard to support Ukrainian arrivals but face huge barriers which are linked to the long-term issues that blight our city. It is no surprise that finding suitable affordable accommodation for arrivals once their sponsorship arrangement ends is the biggest mountain to climb. We are determined to do more, with government and other partners, to overcome these challenges."

By election results

Two by-elections took place in London on 9 March:

In LB Haringey, the Tottenham Hale ward by-election was won by Sean O'Donovan (Lab). [See full result here](#).

In Hounslow, the Heston West ward by-election was won by Emma Siddhu (Lab). [Full result here](#).

This week's coverage in the national and regional media

Evening Standard, 16 March – [Three men jailed after 'taking turns' during alleyway rape in Barking.](#)

UK Authority, 15 March – [Barking and Dagenham Council loans laptops to elderly people for free.](#)

Property Week, 15 March – [MIPIM Day 1: Blog by Susan Freeman.](#) Mentions Cllr Darren Rodwell.

Room 151, 15 March – [Fiona Fletcher-Smith: how to solve the housing crisis.](#) Mentions Barking and Dagenham.

On London, 15 March – [Richard Brown: A census snapshot of employment across London.](#) Mentions Barking and Dagenham.

Evening Standard, 15 March – [A child in every London classroom is homeless, new analysis finds ahead of Spring Budget.](#) Mentions Cllr Darren Rodwell.

On London, 15 March – [Borough figures show London's homeless outnumber population of Oxford.](#) Mentions Cllr Darren Rodwell.

Evening Standard Homes & Property, 15 March – [Budget 2023: What should Jeremy Hunt do? How to fix London's 'toxic' housing market.](#) Mentions Barking and Dagenham.

Metro, 15 March – [Teachers' strike: Is your school closed today \(March 15\)? How to check.](#) Mentions Barking and Dagenham.

Architects Datafile, 15 March – [An estate of renewal.](#) Mentions the Gascoigne Estate.

Evening Standard, 14 March – [Five outer London postcodes becoming new property hotspots as London returners search for the best of both.](#) Mentions

Dagenham.

EGI, 14 March – [Why London hasn't really lost its way](#). Mentions Barking Riverside.

Newham.gov.uk, 13 March – [Mayor of Newham Rokhsana Fiaz OBE co-signs letter condemning the treatment of asylum seekers living in hostels across the Capital and the UK](#). Mentions Cllr Darren Rodwell.

Facilities Management Journal, 13 March – [BD Group appoint acting CEO](#).

Media Releases

[Budding young filmmakers from east London invited to gain work experience on a live film shoot](#).

[East London council creates safe places to go if residents need help](#).

[Join us in celebrating the Coronation this May](#).

[Free laptops available as part of device lending scheme pilot](#).

[Thames View Skate Park gains a new £40,000 lease of life by council and partner](#).

Members' Training

Member Briefing

The next Member Briefing will take place on Thursday 23 March at 7pm online via Teams and will focus on the council's Investment Strategy.

Training from the Local Government Information Unit (LGiU)

The LGiU are offering the following training:

Project Management – Thursday 23 March, 10am to 3pm (online)

From large, intimidating workloads to the multitudes of smaller tasks that we face daily, projects are part of both our work and personal lives. Set yourself up for success with helpful tools like key questions to ask and a simple project framework to apply to the work currently on your docket. Fight, overwhelm and improve your communication skills in this interactive online session.

Training from the Local Government Association (LGA)

The LGA are offering the following session:

Annual Public Health Conference 2023 - Tuesday 21 March to Thursday 23 March 2023, 9.30am to 1pm

This key annual public health conference will offer delegates the opportunity to hear from leading experts on the very latest thinking in national public health policy issues, as well as gaining insights from those delivering on the ground. It will provide a much-needed opportunity for the public health community to come together, share learning, take stock and plan for the future.

Over three half day virtual sessions, delegates will be able to put their questions and comments to a line-up of speakers and will have the opportunity to participate in sessions sharing good practice from local areas and to discuss issues that matter to them.

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](#).

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.