

# Members' Briefing



**Barking &  
Dagenham**



## Leader's borough update

In his video this week, the Leader invites residents to keep the weekend of 6 and 7 May free, so they can join in the FREE Summer of Festivals Weekender which takes place in Valence Park.

On Saturday 6 May, the council will host a special Coronation Day event in honour of His Majesty The King and Her Majesty The Queen Consort, where we will broadcast the coronation ceremony on a big screen with entertainment throughout the day.

On Sunday 7 May, the council will host the One Borough Festival, which will bring together the Steam and Cider Fair and the Roundhouse Music Festival.

He ends by sharing news of the £800k funding for Valence House Museum and the Thames Freeport getting the green light from government – a move which will generate over £4.6bn investment and create 21,000 jobs for us and neighbouring boroughs.

---



### **Thames Freeport given green light**

The Thames Freeport has been given the go ahead to formally constitute its board and start operating fully, following the approval of the final business case by the UK government.

The Freeport is an economic zone located in the Thames Estuary and the UK's largest port - the Port of London. With 1,700 acres of development land, no location can match Thames Freeport for access to Europe's largest consumer

market and its excellent connectivity to 18 million people.

A partnership between Ford, Forth Ports Limited and DP World, Thames Freeport will see over £4.6 billion in new public and private investment, and the creation of over 21,000 new jobs and many more across supply chains. Significant investment in training and skills will contribute to the 'levelling-up' of the communities and businesses in East London and South Essex.

The Freeport has already started to deliver new business growth, generating over 500 new jobs, with six businesses joining its sites that offer a package of financial incentives. This announcement reinforces the great work that is already in place to boost the speed of investment, through a comprehensive Trade and Investment Programme with international partnerships to boost global trade. It also recognises Thames Freeport as a centre of innovation, decarbonised fuels, smart technology, and light freight on the river Thames – setting a standard for a green, net zero freeport of the future.

To strengthen the board of the Thames Freeport, three Non-Executive Directors have been appointed to provide strong leadership, governance, and private and public expertise to make Thames Freeport a place where businesses thrive.

---



## **We're investing in Barking Station**

Barking is one of the top 20 busiest stations in the country and a lot is about to change there.

The improvements include a new gate further away from the stairs, toilets on platform 1, new shops, the old clock, kiosks on the platform re-opening for business and solar panels to power the station with green energy.

These are just some of the changes that commuters will see over the coming months, thanks to a £9m investment from the Railway Heritage Fund, c2c, Department for Transport and the council.

The first phase of a three-stage plan of improvements at the station is due to be completed by September 2023.

Watch the [video](#) to find out more.

---



## Celebrating our long serving staff

Last week we celebrated our second annual Long Service Week as we said a huge thank you to staff who have worked for Barking and Dagenham Council or in wider local government roles for more than 25 years.

It's a fantastic achievement and our staff should be really proud of their long service. We showed just how much we value their fantastic commitment, experience and dedication with some of our longest serving staff taking part in a special Thank You event with Cllr Rodwell, Leader of the Council, Cllr Twomey, Deputy Leader and Cabinet Member for Finance, Growth and Core Services and Fiona Taylor. We also thanked staff who've worked 25 plus years for the council by including their names on our [virtual roll call of honour](#).

During the week we shared [staff stories](#) from over the years including a special video from Julia Bailey, a Front Line Officer in our Schools Library / Home Library Service, who has worked for B&D Council for an incredible 42 years, and Tina Welham, a Senior Sales and Leasing Officer, who has devoted 33 years to the council.

Watch the above video to find out more about their time at the council.

---



## **£800K plus funding secured for Valence House Museum**

Over £800K in funding has been secured to give Valence House Museum some much needed renovations.

The well-loved museum received the funding from the Department for Culture, Media and Sport as part of their Cultural Investment Fund.

The money will go into renovating the green spaces around the museum as well as going into restoring the historic moat.

Read more about it [here](#).

---



## **National Emergency Alert system goes LIVE**

The government's new Emergency Alerts system is now live. The system will enable people to be contacted via their mobile phone when lives are in danger.

It will be used to warn people in the event of emergencies, such as severe flooding.

Emergency Alerts are sent to all compatible mobile phones within an area of

risk. They don't track a person's location, need their phone number, or collect personal data. Only the government and the emergency services will be able to send them. If people don't have a mobile phone, they'll still be kept informed through other channels.

If anyone gets an Emergency Alert on their phone, they'll hear a loud, siren-like sound. A message on their screen will tell them about the emergency and how best to respond.

They'll be able to check an alert is genuine at [www.gov.uk/alerts](http://www.gov.uk/alerts). If they receive an alert, they should read the alert carefully and follow the instructions. They can also opt out if they want to.

To find out more about Emergency Alerts, residents should visit [www.gov.uk/alerts](http://www.gov.uk/alerts)

---

## **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**

---





## **Borough's women prove it's never too late to learn**

As part of activities for this year's Women's Empowerment Month, the council's Cabinet Member for Employment, Skills & Aspiration, Cllr Sade Bright paid a visit to the Adult College on Parsloes Avenue in Dagenham.

At the college she met with staff and a number of adult learners, who were mainly women, undertaking a range of courses.

Part of the college's ethos is the belief that the best way people can be helped and empowered is to help them develop their skills and confidence, whatever their starting point. Adult learners are supported by qualified teaching, support and work teams to help them to unlock their talent and fulfil their potential.

Courses available include business administration, childcare, digital skills, English, ESOL, health & social care, maths, teaching assistant, wellbeing and

many more.

The 2022 – 2023 programme is now open and interested residents can visit the website [adultcollege.lbbd.gov.uk](http://adultcollege.lbbd.gov.uk) or telephone 020 8270 4722 to find out more.

**This Easter**

Each activity includes a healthy lunch

Get involved in **healthy** and **fun** activities

From **sports and dancing** to **arts and crafts** and **Easter egg hunts** there is something for everyone!

Department for Education **Barking & Dagenham**

**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](#).

---



## **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](#).

---

## Around the council

---



## 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](http://www.lbbd.gov.uk/cost-living-support)

---

**Interest paid  
on a £500 loan  
over 39 weeks**

**Family  
Loan**

**£493.78**



Pay Day Lender

**£424.50**



Doorstop Lender

**£72.50**



Leeds Credit Union  
Family Loan

For more information, please visit  
[BDmoney.co.uk/affordable-loans](http://BDmoney.co.uk/affordable-loans)



## **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](http://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](mailto: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](http://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](http://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](http://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](http://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](http://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](http://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](http://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](http://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](mailto: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](http://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](http://www.lbbd.gov.uk/working-together).

---

## Local Government News

---

### London Leaders stand ready to work with the Met to rebuild trust

Baroness Casey's [independent review](#) into the standards of behaviour and internal culture of the Metropolitan Police Service, published last week, has found the force to be institutionally racist, misogynistic and homophobic.

The year-long review, commissioned in response to grave levels of public concern following the kidnap, rape and murder of Sarah Everard by a serving Met officer and other troubling incidents, is described by Baroness Casey as: "Rigorous, stark and unsparing."

"Its findings are tough and for many will be difficult to take", she says. "But it should leave no one in any doubt about the scale of the challenge."

Responding to the review's findings, [London Councils Executive Member for Community Safety and Violence Against Women and Girls, Cllr Jas Athwal](#), said: "The Casey Report is bleak and it sets out in black and white the Metropolitan Police Service's failings that unfortunately will resonate with too

many Londoners' experiences of the Met. It highlights the concerning experiences of women, young people and people from ethnic minorities in particular.

“A city as diverse as London needs a police force which reflects the communities it serves, and a police service which all Londoners feel they will be treated fairly by, irrespective of their gender, ethnicity, religion, sexuality or any other characteristic which is part of a person's identity.

“The swift and decisive action that Sir Mark Rowley has taken to cut out the rot within the service since he took office in the autumn must continue at pace. Local borough leaders met Sir Mark last week to discuss the impact of the Casey Report on the Metropolitan Police's Turnaround Plan.

“London leaders have a unique insight into the range of issues facing local communities, and we stand ready to work with the Met as it implements the significant changes needed to rebuild trust and confidence amongst London's diverse communities.”

### **Boroughs call for 'more ambitious action' to tackle homelessness**

London needs 'more ambitious action' to tackle its homelessness crisis. That was the verdict of London Councils following the Budget proposals set out by Chancellor Jeremy Hunt on 17 March.

[Chair of London Councils, Cllr Georgia Gould](#), said: “We had hoped to see the Chancellor announce a rise in the Local Housing Allowance, which would go a long way to making housing more affordable for low-income Londoners. We also need much more support for building the affordable homes that our communities desperately need.

“Further devolution to the capital is vital. Boroughs would be in a much better position to tackle many of London's longstanding challenges if we could take the lead on policy decisions and direct resources for investing in services.

“Boroughs remain as committed as ever to working with the government on

these issues and in securing a fairer, more prosperous, and more sustainable future for London that delivers for our residents and for the UK economy.”

Highlighting the worsening homelessness crisis in the capital, [new figures](#) published by London Councils have revealed that at least one child in every classroom in the capital is homeless.

A briefing summarising all the key policy announcements relating to public spending and local government finance announced in the Spring Budget was sent to London Councils members last week.

[You can read the briefing on the website here.](#)

### **LOTI remit will evolve to embrace non-digital innovation too**

The [London Office of Technology and Innovation](#) (LOTI) has said it is evolving to extend beyond technology and data to work with boroughs, the GLA and other partners on wider innovations.

In a [blog post](#) announcing the plans, LOTI Director Eddie Copeland says: “Tech and data are extremely powerful. They will play a key role in the responses to most big challenges. But they are rarely enough alone.

“It’s therefore self-limiting for LOTI to deal with only those innovation methods associated with tech and data.

“If we’re really to address London’s big challenges, we must also embrace a wider set of non-digital innovation tools and methods that have huge potential in their own right and which can also augment what can be done with tech and data.”

LOTI was founded as a membership organisation in July 2019 and is hosted by London Councils.

### **Delivering for tenants: Online event**

The London Housing Directors' Group is hosting an online event introducing the 'Delivering for tenants – The Foundations of an Effective Local Authority Landlord Service' report alongside a discussion between a panel of social housing providers and housing experts who will take questions from the live audience.

The online event will be held via Teams on Thursday 13 April, from 3.30pm to 5pm. The report sets out the foundations that, collectively, London local authorities agree should underpin a high-performing council landlord service.

The event will include a presentation on the local Government Association's Social Housing Management Peer Challenge – a companion piece in the drive to achieve the high-quality landlord services that tenants deserve.

The event is open to all. [You can register online here.](#)

---

## **This week's coverage in the national and regional media**

**USSA News, 23 March** – [Daniel Korski: To rise to the digital challenge, councils should embrace private sector practitioners and volunteers.](#) Mentions Barking and Dagenham.

**Evening Standard, 22 March** – [Met Police must confront its homophobia, says family of Stephen Port's victims after damning Casey report.](#)

**Evening Standard, 21 March** – [London hotspots for lung disease revealed with sharp divide between rich and poor boroughs.](#) Mentions Barking and Dagenham.

**Letting Agent Today, 21 March** – [Council brands lettings agency "dodgy" and issues big fine.](#) Mentions Barking and Dagenham.

**The Loadstar, 21 March** – [Thames Freeport given the green light by the UK government.](#) Mentions Cllr Darren Rodwell.

**Daily Mail, 20 March** – [Horrifying moment knife-wielding thief charges at a driver after robbing him of his new iPhone.](#) Mentions Dagenham.

**City A.M, 20 March** – [London house price growth slows, but you'll still need over £1m to live in Camden, Kensington and Westminster.](#) Mentions Barking and Dagenham.

**The Sun, 19 March** – [Inside the 87 unpatriotic councils spending NOTHING on King's coronation including Charles' own tight fisted council.](#) Mentions Barking and Dagenham.

**Evening Standard, 18 March** – [Met Police officer found guilty of stalking woman he met on duty during 'campaign of harassment'.](#) Mentions Barking and Dagenham.

---

## **Media Releases**

[East London council announces new plans for Women's Museum.](#)

[Borough's women proving its never too late to learn.](#)

[Statement on the publication of the Casey Report.](#)

[Barking and Dagenham Council thrilled to announce its Summer of Festivals Weekender featuring the historic Coronation Day.](#)

---

## **Members' Training**

### **Training from the Local Government Information Unit (LGiU)**

The LGiU are offering the following training:

**Strategic thinking** – Wednesday 26 April, 10am to 3pm (Online via Zoom)

Creative, strategic thinking is massively important to a politically led and fast-changing organisation. That's why the LGiU are taking you beyond the

buzzwords and confusing jargon to focus on how to think strategically and apply that mindset to a coherent vision for your organisation's future. Get the tools you need to influence your team and implement your plans in this highly interactive training.

## **Training from the Local Government Association (LGA)**

The LGA are offering the following session:

**Biodiversity and nature recovery show and tell** - Thursday 20 April,  
10.30am to 12noon (Online)

As councils look to tackle their net zero targets, it is important to remember that there is an ecological crisis happening as well and responses to both are intrinsically linked. A key consideration of councils is looking to the Environment Act to see what is now required of them. Local Nature Recovery Strategies, Biodiversity Net Gain, protected sites and species are just a handful of new requirements that councils now need to act on.

In this webinar, funded by Government, we will hear from a range of councils about their approaches and experiences delivering biodiversity and nature recovery activities to date. These form part of a set of case studies showcasing approaches and experience drawn from across the country which will be launched at the event by the Planning Advisory Service.

## **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](mailto:leanna.mcpherson@lbbd.gov.uk)

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