

Members' Briefing



**Barking &
Dagenham**



Leader's borough update

In his video this week, the Leader mentions last Friday's St George's Day celebration which saw a flag raising ceremony and bunting flying across the Town Square. He also wished Eid Mubarak to our Muslim residents who were celebrating Eid-Al-Fitr over the weekend.

He shared more good news as 95 per cent of the borough's children were offered their first preference primary school – the second-best result in London.

He ends by informing residents aged 65 years and over that they are now able

to borrow a laptop for up to six weeks for free from the Barking Learning Centre Community Hub. Free data and digital courses are also on offer as well as help with the cost of living crisis.



Council tenant kicked out of Dagenham home after attacking neighbour

A woman whose serious anti-social behaviour ended up with her being handed a jail sentence has had her home repossessed by the council.

Sonia Wells, 56, was booted out of the three-bedroom property on Comyns Road, Dagenham, after the council successfully obtained an outright possession order at a hearing at Romford County Court on Wednesday 12 April.

The move follows several attempts by the council to tackle the tenant's long-term anti-social behaviour which included harassment, intimidation, racial abuse and shouting insulting words, which included threats to burn down her neighbour's house.

After attacking a neighbour, Wells was handed a 20-week jail sentence and council enforcement officers took the opportunity to begin the process of repossessing the property.

Residents can report anti-social behaviour at: www.lbbd.gov.uk/community-safety-and-crime/make-report/antisocial-behaviour.



Nine in ten children offered first preference school in B&D

Figures released on National Offer Day last week (17 April) show that 95.52% of parents in the borough (2,918 pupils) were given their first preference primary school, placing Barking and Dagenham second in London and smashing the capital's average of 88.57%.

99.08% of children received a place at one of their preferences, and 99.05% at one of their top three preferences. The demand for primary school places in the borough has been increasing and we received 3,055 applications this year, so this a great result and a credit to our School Admissions staff.

The top five boroughs for first preference offers were City of London (95.83%), Barking and Dagenham (95.52%), Hillingdon (94.93%), Newham (93.66%) and Enfield (92.47%).

Parents and carers are encouraged to accept the places they were offered by Tuesday 2 May.



Council expands popular School Streets programme

The council recently expanded its successful School Streets programme which aims to keep kids safe by reducing the amount of traffic on roads in and around schools.

A school street is a road outside a school which has a temporary traffic restriction during school pick-up and drop-off times (8am to 9.15am and 2.45pm to 4.00pm).

The scheme, which started in 2021 and now features 10 local schools, has been a hit with schools and parents alike, with many now feeling safer bringing their child to school and finding the benefits of early morning exercise.

Marsh Green Primary, Valence Primary School and Thames View Juniors have

all recently joined the programme.

Surveys of residents, schools and pupils show over 70% support the programme and many more schools want to join the scheme to improve road safety and air quality for young people.

School Streets reduce the chances of an accident taking place by drastically reducing the number of cars on roads around schools when they are at their busiest.

Currently, the programme has 10 schools taking part with 17 roads affected, with some schools closing more than one street during pick up and drop off because of multiple entrances.



Residents invited to help us bring EV charge points closer to them

We're installing new electric vehicle charging points in the borough and we want to make sure we're putting them in the right places. Residents can help by telling us where they think they should go [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



Summer of Festivals Weekender celebrating the Coronation

Residents are being urged to mark their calendars for Saturday 6 and Sunday 7 May for our Summer of Festivals Weekender at Valence Park, Dagenham.

On Saturday, residents can join us from 11am to 5pm for a special [Coronation event](#) to honour His Majesty The King and Her Majesty The Queen Consort. We'll be screening the historic Coronation event, and residents can enjoy a picnic while soaking up the festival vibes.

On Sunday, from 1pm to 7pm, residents can enjoy the [One Borough Festival](#), where we're mixing in old favourites like the Steam and Cider Fair and Roundhouse Music Festival. There will be classic cars, tribute acts, dance performances, family fun activities, food and drink stalls, and more.

The best part is it is all FREE entry.

Visit lbbd.gov.uk/coronation-day for information on the Coronation Day and lbbd.gov.uk/one-borough-festival for information on the One Borough Festival.

If anyone you know wants to exhibit or perform at these events, applications are now open, and forms can be found on the above weblinks.



Nominate now for the Borough Recognition Awards

If you think someone deserves a shout out for what they do for the local community, nominations for the Borough Recognition Awards are now open.

If you know someone who has gone above and beyond to make a positive impact on the lives of others, then we want to hear about them. These awards are an opportunity to recognise the hard work and dedication of those who make a real difference in our borough.

To nominate someone, simply visit our [website](#) and fill out the nomination form.

The deadline for nominations is Friday 28 April and the winners will be awarded at the annual Mayor Making event on Friday 19 May.

Let's celebrate the amazing people in our community and show them our appreciation for all that they do.

Around the council

cost of living hacks



Cost of living hacks to help reduce costs

We're sharing a handful of [cost of living hacks](#) to help reduce household costs.

Did you know you [could save up to £1,050 a year](#) by making (mostly!) small cost-free changes around your home?

We're all guilty of leaving things like appliances on standby or filling the kettle with more water than needed – that's why we're encouraging residents to [check out these top tips to help reduce their household costs.](#)

And, don't forget, our [Community Hubs](#) and partner buildings are dotted across the borough and open for anyone who needs support. Whatever the worry, residents can pop in and speak to a friendly face.

Residents are also being 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.

For more cost of living support, visit 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 <https://www.lbbd.gov.uk/benefits-and-support/discretionary-hardship-support/discretionary-financial-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.

Local Government News

Boroughs commit to improving social housing services

The [London Housing Directors' Group](#), with the support of London Councils, has led a new shared vision for delivering high-quality landlord services to council tenants in the capital.

Published recently, their report: [Delivering for Tenants: The Foundations of an Effective Local Authority Landlord Service](#), sets out best practice principles on how boroughs can go beyond their statutory and regulatory responsibilities to deliver the highest possible housing standards.

[London Councils' Executive Member for Regeneration, Housing & Planning, Cllr Darren Rodwell](#), said: "Boroughs are proud social landlords. Social housing is a vital part of London's infrastructure that provides affordable homes for hundreds of thousands of Londoners."

“However, the social housing sector is under massive pressure. Too often we have seen examples of tenants living in poor quality housing and receiving a substandard service. Our tenants deserve better. Everyone should have a home that they can be proud of. This report will help us make that ambition a reality and I am grateful to everyone – especially tenants who contributed to putting it together.

“When it comes to deciding the future of social housing in London, national policy and investment decisions remain fundamental factors. Boroughs will continue to work with ministers on this important agenda and push for the funding required to support our shared goals.”

Primary Schools admission figures

98 per cent of children due to start primary school in London this September have been offered a place at one of their preferred schools, figures published by the Pan London Admissions Board revealed last week.

The Pan London Admissions Board has overall responsibility for the school application co-ordination scheme in the capital. Membership includes representatives of the Association of London Directors of Children’s Services, the London Inter Authority Admissions Group and the London Grid for Learning.

London primary schools received 87,277 applications in total this year, a 2.67 per cent decrease compared to last year.

[London Councils Executive Member for Children and Young People, Cllr Ian Edwards](#), said: “It is positive that once again the overwhelming majority of children have an offer from one of their preferred schools. Boroughs have worked diligently with schools to ensure there are the places needed to meet demand across the capital.

“London boroughs are continuing to work with schools experiencing decreasing demand for school places to achieve good outcomes for young Londoners. London still has the best performing schools in the country, and it is essential we protect them in this difficult climate.

“We remain keen to work with government to respond to pressures surrounding primary school places and to support the growing demand for development of specialist SEND provision at a local level, ensuring that all London pupils have the best start in life.”

London Festival of Learning

[London Funders](#) – the cross-sector membership network for funders and investors in London’s civil society – is hosting its annual Festival of Learning from 10 to 24 May.

This year’s programme will feature a number of in-person networking events, kicking off with [‘Let’s get the learning started’](#) on 10 May (3 to 5pm, St Luke’s Community Centre, EC1) and concluding with [The Festival Finale](#) on 24 May (2 to 5pm, The Phoenix Garden, WC2).

The complete festival programme and booking links are available on the [London Funders website here](#).

This week’s coverage in the national and regional media

The Guardian, 20 April – [Capita admits customer data may have been breached during cyber-attack](#). Mentions Barking and Dagenham.

Evening Standard, 20 April – [London house prices: every borough ranked from most to least expensive after a dramatic year of rise and falls](#). [Mentions Barking and Dagenham](#).

The Voice, 20 April - [Helping you find the way in business](#). Mentions Barking and Dagenham.

Evening Standard, 18 April – [London’s rogue landlords fined a record £8.6 million by local councils in first three months of this year](#). Mentions Barking and

Dagenham.

Landlord Today, 18 April – [You must follow our rules, council chiefs tells landlords](#). Mentions Barking and Dagenham.

BBC News, 17 April – [More London children get first-choice primary school](#). Mentions Barking and Dagenham.

Evening Standard, 17 April – [12-hour A&E wait crisis in London and yet more strikes on way](#). Mentions Barking, Havering and Redbridge University Hospitals.

Evening Standard, 17 April – [Where are all the water fountains? Wide disparity found across London](#). Mentions Barking and Dagenham.

Evening Standard, 17 April – [How east London has made ground on its neighbours with a decade of house price growth](#). Mentions Barking and Dagenham.

Media Releases

[Council tenant kicked out of Dagenham home after attacking neighbour](#).

[Council expands popular School Streets programme](#).

[National Offer Day: Nine in ten children offered first preference school in Barking and Dagenham](#).

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 sessions:

Progress on children and young people's mental health policy in England
- Thursday 18 May, 2pm to 3.30pm (Online)

A range of policies such as the 2017 Transforming Children and Young People's Mental Health Green Paper, the NHS Long-Term Plan, and post COVID-19 recovery, have been announced regarding children's mental health in England over the past decade. However, the scale of children's mental health needs remains of real concern to councils, schools, families and young people themselves, particularly given the impact of the pandemic, school closures and the current cost of living crisis. Children's mental health has also been highlighted in recent announcements including the Family Hubs and Best Start for Life, Schools White Paper and Special Educational Needs Green Paper. The Government is currently developing a strategy for mental health (all-age).

The Centre for Mental Health and the Children and Young People Mental Health Coalition (CYPMHC) have been commissioned by the LGA to produce a report exploring these policy approaches, announcements and steps taken to tackle the rising demand in children's mental health. It looks at the progress that has been made and what else needs to happen to ensure that central government, local government, NHS and wider partners are able to tackle children's mental health needs in England. This webinar will explore the outcomes of this report.

One to One Development Sessions

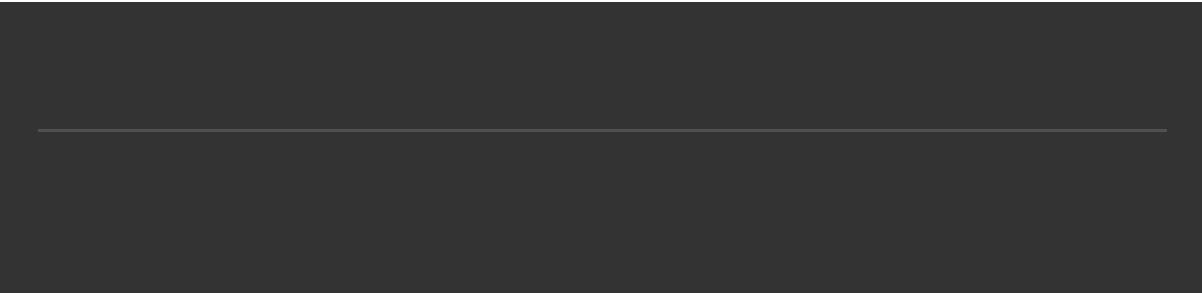
The LGA are offering councillors the opportunity to have one-to-one development conversations with one of the Leadership Academy Facilitators. This will be available to councillors in leadership positions for the next three months. These sessions are not political and will be provided by tutors from 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 email yon.edomi@lbbd.gov.uk if you have any suggestions on items for inclusion in future bulletins and any feedback you may have on how it can be improved.



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