

Members' Briefing



**Barking &
Dagenham**



Leader's borough update

In his video this week, the Leader mentions events lined up to kick off the historic King's coronation, starting with the raising of the Coronation flag outside the Town Hall last Thursday and then Saturday's free Coronation Day and Sunday's One Borough Festival.



Council hosts London Fire Brigade training exercise

Fiske Court on the Gascoigne estate has been hosting the London Fire Brigade over the past two months for a regular training exercise.

The purpose of the exercise is to implement and practise lessons learnt following the Grenfell tragedy, in particular the LFB's tactics for keeping residents safe in high-rise buildings.

Fiske Court is a decanted council tower block which has been serving as a training facility for the past two months until demolition works commence as part of the council's estate regeneration programme.

Council Leader, Cllr Darren Rodwell, Deputy Leader and Cabinet Member for Community Leadership & Engagement, Cllr Saima Ashraf and Acting Chief Executive, Fiona Taylor were joined by Frazer Ferguson, Deputy Assistant

Commissioner for the LFB at a training event last Tuesday. You can [watch the video here](#).



Dagenham Park School bags industry award

Dagenham Park Church of England School has been shortlisted for a prestigious [Tes Schools Award 2023](#), with a nomination for the Inclusive School of the Year Award.

The winners of the 15th edition of the Tes Schools Awards will be chosen by a panel of judges, including school leaders, researchers and experts, and will be announced at a gala ceremony at London's Grosvenor Park Hotel on Friday 23 June.

The awards recognise the most outstanding teachers and schools in the country, and it's not the first time that Dagenham Park School have been acknowledged. The school won the English Team of the Year award in 2017 and was shortlisted for the Creative School of the Year award in 2018.



We now have a dedicated census page on the Intranet

The council's Insight and Innovation team have been analysing the 2021 census data to see how Barking and Dagenham compares regionally and nationally, what the trends are and how census results break down in different wards.

The team have analysed each topic (e.g. housing) for the borough and have made the information available on the intranet. It is a rich source of data which helps us understand our residents and how the Borough is changing.

There is data per topic (ethnicity, housing, religion etc), ward-level data, interactive articles, census maps and area profiles. You can find out more at <https://lbbd.sharepoint.com/sites/Intranet/SitePages/2021-Census.aspx>

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

Barking and Dagenham JOBS AND SKILLS FAIR

Barking &
Dagenham

WORK &
SKILLS

DATE: THURSDAY 18 MAY 2023
TIME: 11AM TO 3PM
VENUE: SHORT BLUE PLACE
(OUTSIDE ASDA AND MCDONALDS, BARKING)

Barking and Dagenham
Employment and Skills
service are proud to present
our very first in-person Barking
and Dagenham Jobs and Skills Fair.



On the day you will be able to:

- ✓ Talk to employers, recruiters and training providers face to face
- ✓ Engage in interviews on the spot for open vacancies
- ✓ Have a specialist review your CV and give you tips to improve it
- ✓ Find local jobs and training courses



For further details please email
vacancies@lbbd.gov.uk or come along on the day.

MC185 APR23

Council invites residents to its first ever mega Jobs and Skills Fair

Residents are being invited to find out about jobs and training opportunities available at a Job and Skills Fair which will take place on 18 May.

On the day, they will be able to talk to employers, organisations looking to recruit staff and a number of training providers, be interviewed on the spot for open vacancies and speak to specialists who will be able to review their CVs and where necessary, improve them.

For those looking to improve their skills or get on training courses they will be able to speak to providers who can recommend the relevant courses for them.

In addition, residents will be able to get help and advice to help them deal with the cost of living crisis.

The event takes place on Thursday 18 May, from 11am to 3pm, at the Short Blue Place in Barking Town Centre (outside ASDA and McDonalds).

To find out more, residents can email vacancies@lbbd.gov.uk or register at <https://www.eventbrite.co.uk/e/jobs-and-skills-fair-barking-and-dagenham-tickets-627129861297> or just turn up on the day.



Coronation weekend kicks off with flag raising ceremony

Last weekend saw the country come together to celebrate the Coronation of His Majesty The King and Her Majesty The Queen Consort. The celebrations kicked off as the borough marked the historic occasion with the raising of the Coronation flag outside the Town Hall last Thursday.

This was followed by a special [Coronation Day](#) on Saturday 6 which included a screening of the Coronation event. And on Sunday 7, residents were able to enjoy the [One Borough Festival](#) which included elements of the Steam and Cider Fair and Roundhouse Music Festival with classic cars, tribute acts, dance performances, family fun activities and more.



Our Community Hubs supporting residents through the cost of living crisis

As part of our efforts to support residents through the cost of living crisis, our Community Hubs continue to play a vital role in making sure our residents have a place to go to access help, advice and support.

Ash Siddique from the Northbury Community Hub at Al Madina Mosque talks about the help and support available to help the whole community.

There's lots of other support available and residents can find out more by heading to our [Cost of Living webpage](#).

Around the council

**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



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

Over £100,000 in affordable loans have so far been handed out to borough residents through our partnership with Leeds Credit Union.

The Council partnership with Leeds Credit Union aims 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.

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

London Councils welcomes increase in new council housing

London Councils has welcomed new data showing an increase in delivery of new council housing in the capital.

Figures released by the GLA reveal that London boroughs have already exceeded the target of 20,000 council-built homes by 2024. That target was set in 2018 by the Mayor of London and has been reached a year early, with more council-built homes started in the capital in 2022 than any year since the 1970s.

[London Council's Executive Member for Regeneration, Housing & Planning, Cllr Darren Rodwell, said: "Boroughs are proud to be building the next generation of council homes across the capital.](#) We want to give more Londoners the opportunity to live in affordable, high-quality homes – and increasing the supply of council housing is vital to achieving that.

"London's housing pressures remain immense. Although we're pleased with the progress being made, we remain absolutely determined to keep driving up

delivery and building the homes our communities are crying out for.”

London Housing Development Academy open for short courses

[The Housing Development Academy announced at the end of the March](#) has begun to deliver its first courses, with over half of London boroughs now participating in the programme.

Set up by the London Housing Directors’ Group, with support from London Councils as part of our commitment to increasing council housebuilding, the Academy offers short courses on project management skills with learning based on real-life experience.

To find out how the Housing Development Academy can support councils across London’s in-house development team, [register here](#).

Generative AI and Local Government

The London Office of Technology and Innovation (LOTI) has [launched a survey to explore what good and appropriate practices in using generative AI](#) (artificial intelligence for local government might be.

Since its launch last year, ChatGPT, which is built on AI’s GPT algorithm, has attracted more than 100 million users. Unlike other types of technology uptake, the users will be spread across councils and not necessarily from ‘digital’ or ‘IT’ teams. For example, generative AI might help individuals to write briefings, identify problems in coding, or create visual designs for communication campaigns.

However, these types of generative AI must also be used responsibly. The algorithms may be trained on or produce harmful or biased content, and have flaws hard-wired in like ‘hallucination’, where the algorithm ‘makes up’ information to respond to a prompt.

The LOTI survey will gain an initial understanding of the use of AI in local government and emerging issues. They are keen to hear thoughts, ideas, or

feedback from anyone with a view on the use of accompanying responsibility for local government, in particular, those from:

- Local government (or other public sector) from the UK and beyond
- Developers of generative AI who are creating use cases
- Researchers or academics
- Civil society, community groups or campaigners

[You can complete the LOTI survey here \(survey will remain open until 26 May\).](#)

This week's coverage in the national and regional media

LocalGov, 3 May – [Khan exceeds 20,000 council house building target.](#)

Mentions Cllr Darren Rodwell.

ITV News, 2 May – [Tenant evicted and jailed for threatening to burn down east London neighbour's house.](#) Mentions Barking and Dagenham.

Evening Standard, 3 May – [Vapes with tank size over eight times legal limit among 1,000 seized from Notting Hill shop.](#) Mentions Barking and Dagenham.

Evening Standard, 2 May – [Which London schools will be affected by the NEU teachers' strike?](#) Mentions Barking and Dagenham.

Time Out Magazine, 28 April – [London is getting a new women's museum later this year.](#) Mentions Barking and Dagenham.

Media Releases

[Dagenham Park School shortlisted for industry award.](#)

[East London Council and the London Fire Brigade start high rise fire safety exercise.](#)

[Fiona Taylor appointed as Chief Executive at Barking and Dagenham Council.](#)
[New artworks and community garden unveiled on the Becontree Estate in East London.](#)

[Barking and Dagenham Council to celebrates King Charles Coronation with the Summer of Festivals Weekender.](#)

[Court powers mean Bateman Close resident can't have visitors.](#)

[Council Leader launches scathing attack on Met Police following publication of yet another inspection report – and calls for a bigger role for London council leaders.](#)

[Eyesore garden cleaned up following council warning.](#)

Members' Training

The next Member Briefing session will take place on Monday 12 June at 7pm. It will be online via Teams and will focus on: Meet the B&D Trading Partnership.

Training from Local Government Information Unit (LGiU)

The LGiU are offering the following sessions:

Chairing: Wednesday 7 June, 9.30am to 12.30pm (Online)

Improve how you chair online, hybrid and in-person meetings and learn easy-to-implement techniques to manage participation. Master the technology and processes around online meetings and gain confidence in how you navigate challenging situations that may arise. The session will also touch on team dynamics and how to best facilitate productive and engaging sessions.

Scrutiny: Wednesday 21 June, 9.30am to 11.30am (Online)

Asking questions and actively listening is of course a crucial skill for elected members. But this is most intensely highlighted when it comes to scrutiny, probing, and questioning in a local authority. This engaging training will keep participants on the edge of their seats in anticipation while providing

comprehensive tools and frameworks to implement moving forward.

Training from 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.

Adult social care assurance: the return of regulation and the role of elected members: Tuesday 6 June, 1.30pm to 3pm (Online)

On 1 April 2023, a new system of adult social care assurance went live. Under the Health and Care Act 2022, the Care Quality Commission (CQC) has a new duty to independently review and assess councils' delivery of their adult social care duties under the Care Act, and the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care has new legal powers for statutory intervention in cases where a

council is judged to be failing, or has failed, to discharge its duties. A programme of improvement and support will also be part of the assurance process.

The role of elected Members in assurance is important, as is the role of democratic leadership in maximising the opportunities of assurance and mitigating its risks. This webinar – specifically aimed at elected Members – will bring together senior colleagues from the Department of Health and Social Care, the regulator and local government. Delegates will hear updates on all recent developments and have plenty of opportunity to raise questions and comments with all speakers.

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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