

Members' Briefing



**Barking &
Dagenham**



Leader's borough update

In his video this week, the Leader reports from Barking Abbey at the unveiling of the model of the Abbey and its history and invites residents to pop down and visit this historical site.



Barking Abbey Model unveiled

Last week saw the unveiling of the model of Barking Abbey as well as improvement works including a new public space at the entrance of the Curfew Tower.

The Curfew Tower (formerly the Fire Bell Gate) is the only remaining gateway of Barking's Saxon Abbey. It is a Grade II listed building which was originally built in 1370. The bell rang to remind people to put out fires and lights before the nightly curfew – a practice which didn't cease until 1900. There is a chapel built into the tower – which holds a stone relic called the Holy Rood which was visited by pilgrims in medieval times and has also survived the demolition of the Abbey.

Rich in history, the 'Abbey Gate' - as it was also known - is the only gateway to Barking Abbey still standing, following the abbey's closure and demolition

during Henry VIII's reign. The abbey ruins are listed as a Scheduled Monument by Historic England and are at the heart of the heritage Conservation Area in Barking town centre.

As part of the Barking Abbey and Town Centre Heritage Project delivered by Be First and funded by The National Lottery Heritage Fund, landscaping works were carried out for the public realm in front of the tower. The improvements create an attractive and useful open space for the local community.

The York stone has been re-set with a cobbled border to represent the ancient Church Path and draw people towards the medieval gateway, St Margaret's Church, and Abbey ruins.

The works promote Barking's heritage too. A bronze model of Barking Abbey, and heritage mosaics celebrating Abbey Green and the protest heritage of the 'Three Lamps' have recently been installed. Pupils from St Joseph's and St Margaret's Primary Schools buried a time capsule of writings and illustrations about Barking's past, present and future.



LIVE
with the Leader
Police Special
Have a question for the leader or the Police?
Email socialmedia@lbbd.gov.uk
#BDLeaderLive **Barking & Dagenham**

Leader's Facebook LIVE special with the Police

Residents are being invited to send in their questions and find out more about the work our local Police force do during a LIVE Facebook Q&A session with Council Leader, Cllr Darren Rodwell and Borough Commander, Chief Superintendent Stuart Bell.

Interested residents can email their questions to socialmedia@lbbd.gov.uk by 12 noon on 12 June and make sure to tune in on Thursday 15 June, from 6pm on the [Leader's Facebook page](#).



Residents invited to have their say on air quality in the borough

Residents are being invited to add their experiences, thoughts and ideas about air quality in the borough through a newly launched interactive map.

The map is part of a wider project called Community Air Quality: Breathing in

Barking and Dagenham and has been produced in collaboration with researchers at Imperial College London, and a panel of local resident ambassadors.

The map will give a wider picture of air quality in the borough. Residents can add their experiences and read others [online here](#).



Moving from Tax Credit to Universal Credit

Residents who receive either Working Tax and/or Child Tax Credits, and no other benefits, are being reminded that they will soon be invited to claim Universal Credit by the Department of Work and Pensions (DWP).

DWP will be writing to residents who claim Tax Credits only and inviting them to claim Universal Credit within three months. This does not apply to anyone who receives legacy benefits such as Employment and Support Allowance, Jobseekers Allowance, Income Support or Housing Benefit with tax credits.

Residents are reminded to wait until they are invited before making a claim. This is because if the amount they receive in Universal Credit is lower than their current tax credit, protection will be applied so they don't lose any money.

Information on how to apply for Universal Credit will be included in the letter from DWP.

Residents who need additional support to complete their application, can get help through [Citizens Advice](#).

More information can be found at on the ['Understanding Universal Credit'](#) website.

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



We're marking Carers Week 2023

Carers Week will run from Monday 5 to Sunday 11 June and aims to raise awareness of and celebrate the amazing work unpaid carers do every day, as well as highlight the challenges they can face.

To celebrate Carers Week, Barking and Dagenham Carers will be hosting events and activities throughout the week, including pamper days, health checks and day trips. Find out more by heading [here](#).



Local businesses invited to join our Safe Haven scheme

Earlier this year, we launched our Safe Haven scheme where through local businesses, we provide safe places for people to go if they're feeling scared, anxious, worried or just need some general help.

There are currently over 30 across the borough and we are looking for more. Safe Havens will:

- Provide a welcoming space.
- Help the person 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 the person feels safe and confident to leave when they want to.

For businesses interested in becoming a Safe Haven, our partners at Studio 3 Arts are running several online training sessions over the next few weeks:

- Friday 9 June – 11am to 12.30pm
- Friday 16 June – 11am to 12.30pm

Any business that would like to attend or find out more information, can email fern@studio3arts.org.uk Please help spread the word.



Bike dumper on Ripple Road caught on camera

The Wall of Shame is back with more fly-tippers caught on camera.

If you recognise anyone featured, email grimecrime@lbbd.gov.uk now so that we can put a stop to their fly-tipping.

You can Head to the [Wall of Shame page](#) for more episodes.



Affordable, trusted loans 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 partnership 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

Around the council



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

Building London's sustainable and inclusive future

Funding for support services for victims and survivors of VAWG

Funding for Violence Against Women and Girls (VAWG) support services is fragmented, complex and difficult to understand, leading to some victims and survivors falling through the gaps, a new report commissioned by London Councils reveals.

The report by AVA (Action Against Violence and Abuse), launched at a parliamentary event last Wednesday, 24 May shines a light on the funding landscape of support services for victims and survivors of VAWG by mapping current available funding and its impact on people's lives.

It reveals a number of significant challenges support services are facing in accessing funding which undermine their ability to provide a sustainable high-quality service. These include the fact that the majority of funding available for VAWG support services is short term, which can mean that key staff are often on notice to be made redundant as the next tranche of funding is sought.

London Councils Executive Member for Community Safety and Violence Against Women and Girls, Cllr Jas Athwal, said: "This short-term nature of funding to provide support services means vulnerable Londoners are being exposed to unnecessary risk whilst facing barriers in accessing the vital support

they need. We need long term and sustainable funding to ensure that Londoners can access the right support for them and at the right time.

“VAWG is endemic in our society, and it has to stop. London boroughs are working together to highlight it and to do everything we can to tackle it in all its forms, working in conjunction with our partners. London Councils’ report sets out just how vital support services for survivors of VAWG are, and why it’s so important that we secure long-term funding guarantees to be able to deliver it.”

[You can read the report on London Councils’ website here.](#)

Renters’ (Reform) Bill

The government has published its long-anticipated [Renters’ \(Reform\) Bill](#), setting out the government’s proposed changes to the law in relation to rented homes, including provision abolishing fixed term assured tenancies and assured shorthold tenancies; imposing obligations on landlords and others in relation to rented homes and temporary and supported accommodation.

Responding to the Bill’s publication, [London Councils’ Executive Member for Regeneration, Housing & Planning, Cllr Darren Rodwell](#), said: “Two million Londoners live in private rented sector homes, and they all deserve stronger protection.

“Banning no-fault evictions is an essential step forward. Too often we’ve seen Londoners turfed out of their homes for no good reason and made homeless, turning their lives upside down. With London’s homelessness pressures at near-record levels, we cannot afford for things to continue as they are.

“Boroughs want to work with the government to make a success of these reforms, but it is vital that councils are provided with the powers and resources we need to enforce the new rules. We will also continue to push for more action on the other issues driving London’s housing shortage. This includes addressing the chronic shortage of affordable housing in the capital and using the benefits system to provide more support for renters struggling to pay their rent.”

London Infrastructure Framework

The London Infrastructure Framework, launched by London Councils at UKREiff in Leeds, brings together a pipeline of strategic infrastructure projects for London with pan-London cross-party support in one place.

The Framework sets out the role of infrastructure in building a more inclusive, sustainable and prosperous London. It highlights the need for new partnership and financing models for our infrastructure and regeneration projects, underpinning our desire for an ambitious new growth deal for London that allows the city to keep more of the proceeds of local growth so that the capital can fully contribute to the drive for national growth.

[You can read more about the London Infrastructure Framework here.](#)

This week's coverage in the national and regional media

Architects' Journal, 25 May – [AJ100 Collaboration of the Year 2023 contenders announced.](#) Mentions Barking and Dagenham.

Constructions News, 24 May – [Decision on instruction to restrain urban explorers awaited.](#) Mentions Barking and Dagenham.

Londonist, 24 May – [Bus tours of Barking and Dagenham to show off 'Roding Riviera'.](#)

Place North West, 23 May – [Building Safety Act: Culture change or culture shock?](#) Mentions Cllr Darren Rodwell.

Building Magazine, 23 May – [Why partnerships are key to fixing the housing crisis: an interview with Sir Michael Lyons.](#) Mentions Barking and Dagenham.

London Loves Property, 22 May – [The great London divide: South of the river](#)

[outperforming the North in house price growth and sales volume](#). Mentions Barking and Dagenham.

The Mirror, 19 May - [Grieving family unable to bury stabbed teen near home 'due to threats from gang members'](#). Mentions Barking and Dagenham.

London Business News, 19 May – [The 5 cheapest areas to rent in London – Cheapest London boroughs list for renters](#). Mentions Barking and Dagenham.

Media Releases

[New Mayor appointed in Barking and Dagenham](#).

[East London council plants over 600 new trees in streets and green spaces](#).

[Barking and Dagenham's A House for Artists scoops esteemed RIBA London Awards](#).

[Over £100,000 in affordable loans handed out to residents through the council's partnership with Leeds Credit Union](#).

[New Corporate Plan sets key priorities for Barking and Dagenham: a place where people are proud to live, work, study and stay](#).

Members' Training

Member Briefing

The next member briefing will take place on Tuesday 13 June at 7pm. It will be held in Barking Town Hall and will focus on Waste Strategy.

Training from Local Government Information Unit (LGiU)

The LGiU are offering the following sessions:

Charing: 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:

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

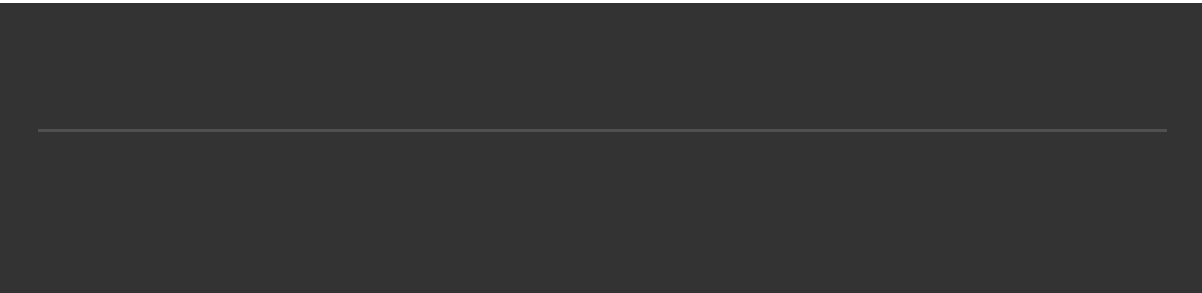
The LGA are offering councillors the opportunity to have one-to-one development conversations with one of the Leadership Academy Facilitators. This will be available to councillors in leadership positions for the next three months. These sessions are not political and will be provided by tutors from 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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