

Members' Briefing



**Barking &
Dagenham**



Leader's borough update

In his video this week, the Leader lets parents know that if they are looking for some free and low-cost activities for their children to look at our Summer Holiday Activity and Food programme which is open to all school-age children aged 5 to 16.

He is encouraging parents to check out the fantastic, healthy activities for young people, while they make friends and have fun – and every activity includes a healthy meal.

The Leader also mentions Studio 3 Arts who are running lots of free activities for families over the holidays, including arts and crafts and week-long Urban Arts Camps which include a free healthy lunch every day.

The Leader ends with an invite to the free Barking Folk Festival is taking place on Saturday 5 August at the historic Barking Abbey Green.



Residents encouraged to pay Council Tax by Direct Debit and be in with a chance to win £1,000

The council is encouraging residents to pay their Council Tax by Direct Debit to save time, help manage their personal budgets and be in with a chance to win £1,000.

By setting up a Direct Debit, residents don't have to worry about missed

payments or deal with any additional costs for late payments.

When residents set up a Direct Debit, their Council Tax is automatically deducted from their bank account on agreed dates.

The council has announced that everyone who pays their Council Tax by direct debit in the borough will be automatically entered into a prize draw for a chance to win £1,000.

To be eligible, residents must be registered to pay their Council Tax via Direct Debit by midnight, 30 November and the lucky winner will then be randomly selected.

Council tenants are also being encouraged to pay their council rent by Direct Debit each month to save time and help manage their finances.

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

Residents can get advice, help and support with the cost of living, including money, energy, food and wellbeing support [here](#).

An advertisement for the MMR vaccine. The background is red with large white letters 'M', 'M', and 'R' in separate boxes. Below each letter are the words 'MEASLES', 'MUMPS', and 'RUBELLA' respectively. To the right, a man in a blue polo shirt and jeans stands next to a young child in a blue t-shirt, both looking upwards. The text on the left reads: 'Protect yourself and your family from measles, mumps and rubella. Get two doses of MMR from your GP surgery.' Below this is a dotted line and the 'i' logo for 'immunisation' with the tagline 'Helping to protect everyone, at every age'.

M M R
MEASLES MUMPS RUBELLA

Protect yourself and your family
from measles, mumps and rubella.

Get two doses of MMR from your GP surgery.

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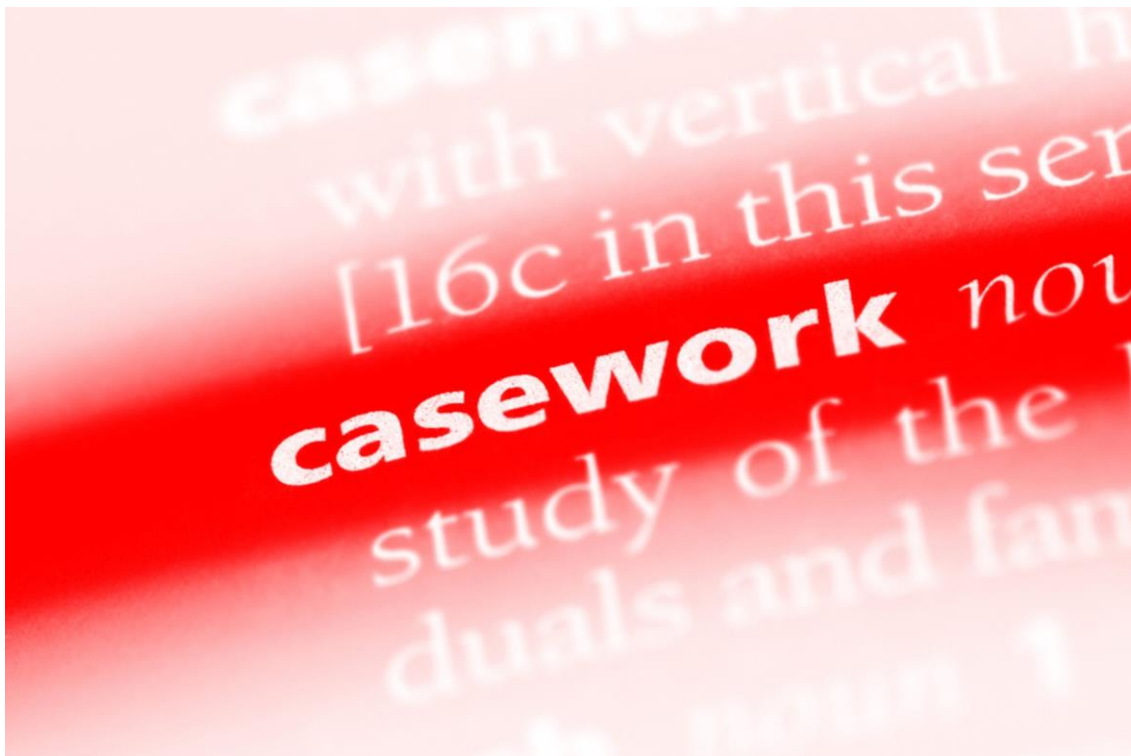
immunisation
Helping to protect everyone, at every age

Parents urged to make sure their children have had their MMR vaccine

Measles cases are rising across the capital and parents are being reminded to ensure their children get the vaccine.

There is no cure and vaccination is the only protection against children becoming seriously unwell. Measles is very infectious – just one case can infect nine out of ten unprotected people and it's more than just a rash, in some cases it can lead to meningitis and sepsis causing real risk to life.

Parents are being asked to check their child's red book to make sure the child is up to date with their vaccinations. They can catch up on any missed doses of the MMR or they can either contact their GP or call 020 8017 4292 to arrange an appointment at a local clinic.



Further guidance on Member's casework to avoid delays

Members are being reminded that they need to ensure that there is sufficient consent in place to direct the queries to the Member's Feedback Team - for example if a father is asking for information about their daughter's housing application, the team would need consent as this would be considered personal information which they cannot share without consent.

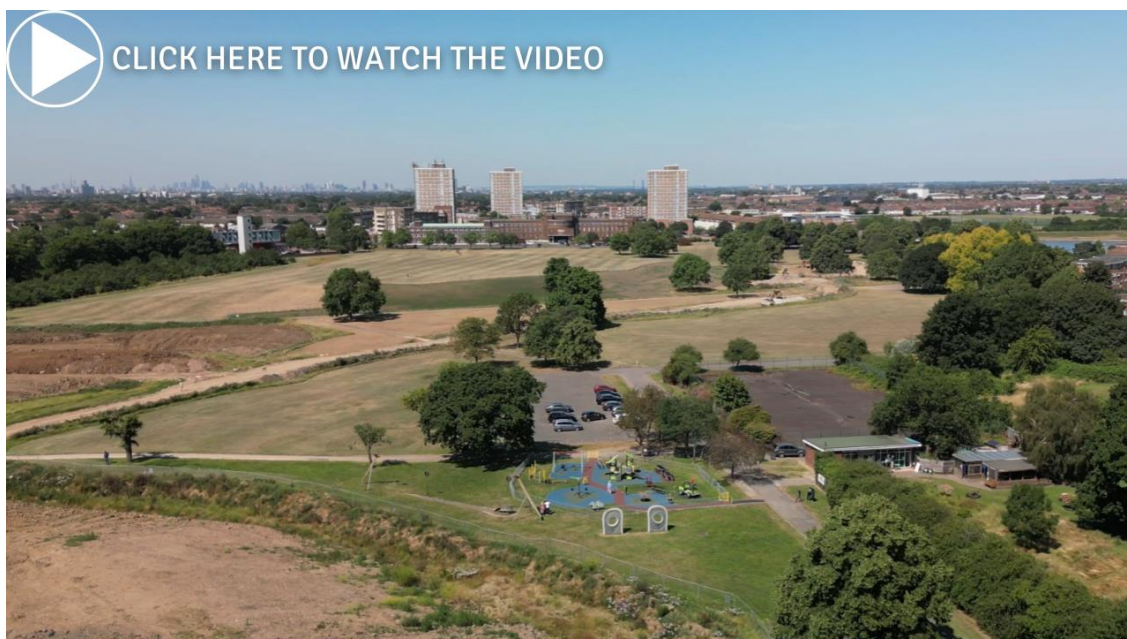
Also, on the issue of service requests being submitted without being logged online in the first instance, Members are advised to let residents know that they will need to report online, or they can log it for the person themselves.

The team is currently dealing with a high level of casework and cases without consent are causing further delays in the processing of cases.

Training updates for councillors

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

Borough News



Celebrating Love Parks Week

The national Love Parks Week 2023 kicked off last Friday to celebrate parks, green spaces, and the dedicated volunteers and workers that look after them all year round.

To mark the week, we're launching our Love Your Parks social media campaign to highlight the [wonderful park facilities](#) available on our doorsteps.

From outdoor gyms and play areas, to walking trails, a splash park and sports

facilities – there’s something for everyone and plenty to see, do and enjoy all year round.

We’re also investing £23m in parks and green spaces across the borough.

Things kicked off with an update on Central Park – where a brand-new toddler area was recently installed, plus a junior adventure play area, with much more to come – there’s lots to look forward to!



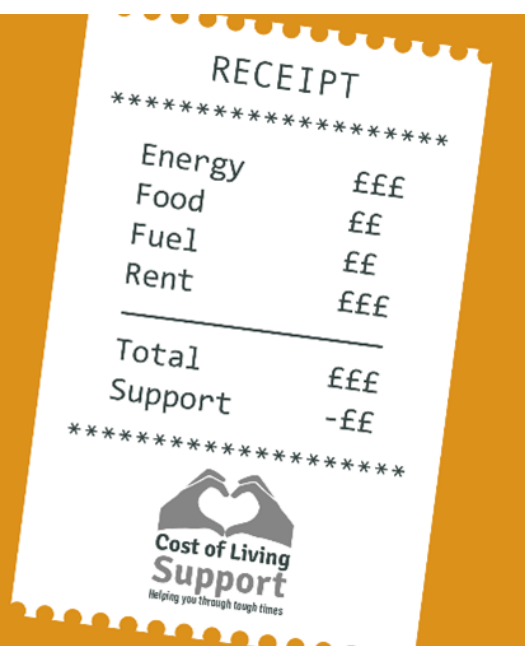
Barking Folk Festival is back - save the date

Residents are being invited to save the date and join us for the Barking Folk Festival on Saturday 5 August at Barking Abbey Green from 12pm to 7pm as we celebrate the best music and dance from around the world.

As well as performances from Skinner Lister, Beans on Toast, Honey and the Bear and more, there will be plenty for the whole family to get involved in including a playground area, creative workshops, Dino Crafts, flower workshop, facepainting, funfair and more.

Residents can find out what else is going on [here](#).

Cost of Living Support



Cost of living survey

We're asking residents how the cost of living is affecting them so that we can improve the support on offer in Barking and Dagenham.

The survey takes just three minutes and residents who take part could be in for a chance to win £500.

Please help us spread the word – [the survey can be found here.](#)

Residents are also reminded there's a range of cost of living support available online and through our Community Hubs.



Our HAF Summer programme returns

Arts, crafts, sports and much more are just a few of the exciting things that children across the borough can take part in our HAF Summer programme.

Children aged between 5 – 16 who are eligible for free school meals can take part in the Holiday Activities and Food Programme (HAF) for free.

For children who are not eligible for free school meals, there may be paid places available.

Booking is essential on all activities, so residents are advised to book early to avoid disappointment.

Residents can find out what's on the programme [here](#).

Around the council



Adult College launches 2023/24 prospectus – empowering our residents to be the best they can be!

Residents can work towards achieving their lifelong learning ambitions through taking advantage of learning opportunities available from the Adult College.

This is an opportunity for residents to acquire additional knowledge, skills, qualifications and enhance their wellbeing.

Whatever the starting point or skills level, the Adult College is able to work with residents to support and empower them to grow in confidence and to develop

their skills to progress on to further training, higher level qualifications or into employment.

Courses on offer range from Business Skills, Childcare, Continuous Professional Development, Construction, IT and Computing, English, ESOL, Family Learning, Maths, Health and Social Care among others.

Residents can view details of the courses available in the [Adult College Prospectus - 23/24](#).

They can find out more about courses, financial and other support available by contacting the Adult College on 020 8270 4722 or email adultcollegeenquiries@lbbd.gov.uk



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 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



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

Long term plan must deliver more high quality and affordable homes

The Secretary of State for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities, the Rt Hon Michael Gove MP, this week announced a new long-term plan for housing covering a wide range of policy areas including ownership, leasehold reform, planning procedures, and regenerating key towns and cities. [You can read his full speech here](#).

Responding to the announcement, [London Councils' Executive Member for Regeneration, Housing & Planning, Cllr Darren Rodwell](#), said: "Boroughs are ready and willing to help deliver the homes our communities need, but this requires more local powers and resources for housebuilding.

"There are at least 143,000 potential new homes we could begin building immediately in London if the funding was in place, and we would welcome the prospect of enhanced government support for housing development and regeneration. We are calling for reform of Right to Buy receipts, increased grant allocations, and investment in new infrastructure so that we can truly turbocharge affordable housebuilding.

“The focus must be on supporting delivery of affordable, high-quality homes. The government’s pledge to extend permitted development rights does not guarantee this will happen – in fact it brings serious risks. Boroughs must retain the ability to ensure housing is built to the right standards, in suitable locations, and with the necessary local infrastructure such as GP surgeries and transport connections.”

Schools ‘in-year’ admission system in need of overhaul as numbers soar

Pupils who change schools during term-time have to navigate a challenging system, which leads to some children missing out on their education, a [new report](#) by London Councils has revealed.

The report makes a number of recommendations to improve the current system for children, families, schools and local authorities, beginning with greater powers for councils to have oversight of all in year admissions.

[London Councils Executive Member for Schools and Young Children, Cllr Ian Edwards](#), said: “London Councils shares the government’s commitment to ensure all children, especially the most vulnerable in our society, are safe and have access to an excellent education. But boroughs need greater powers to bring about the necessary changes to create a system that is faster, fairer and more simple to navigate.

“We look forward to working with government and head teachers across the capital to ensure local authorities have oversight of all in-year admissions to decrease disruption to children and schools, as proposed in the Schools White Paper last year.”

A New Met for London

Two weeks ago, the Metropolitan Police launched its new policing plan – [A New Met for London](#) – setting out how the Met intends to deliver more trust, less crime, and high standards.

Responding to the plan, [London Councils Executive Member for Community](#)

[Safety and Violence Against Women and Girls, Cllr Jas Athwal](#), said: “It is positive to see the Met committing to a proactive approach to tackling male violence against women and girls and London boroughs stand ready to support the Met in its new targeted initiative in whichever way we can.

“(The Met’s) broader commitment to neighbourhood policing, resourcing public protection and increasing the number of community support officers is an opportunity to create a Met workforce that represents London’s diverse communities. We will continue to work closely with the Met to help keep Londoners safe.”

The ‘Big Listen’ findings vital to inform social workforce strategy

A major survey of children’s social workers in London and the south east of England shows the vast majority are passionate about their work, while also pointing to the serious challenges and pressures many face.

The research for the [Big Listen project](#) involved 52 local authorities across London and the South East.

The survey found that 88% respondents felt that they can make the difference to children and young people through their work, but the survey also provides fresh evidence of longstanding workforce concerns with around 40% of respondents describing their workload as unmanageable. Around 20% of respondents from local authorities stated that they intended to work for an agency in future, this figure was even higher for respondents from ethnic minorities.

[London Councils’ Executive Member for Children & Young People, Cllr Ian Edwards](#) said: “The Big Listen has provided us with vital insight. Carrying out the research across the two regions has undoubtedly brought many benefits and presents a good model for future cooperation.

“We’re grateful to all those who shared their views as part of the Big Listen. Now we’re determined to show that those views have been heard as we develop our workforce strategy.”

Measles warning

The [UK Health Security Agency \(UKHSA\) has published modelling](#) that suggests that, unless MMR vaccination rates improve, London could see a measles outbreak with tens of thousands of cases.

The risk in London is primarily due to low vaccination rates over several years, further impacted by the Covid-19 pandemic, particularly in some areas and groups where coverage of the first MMR dose at 2 years of age is as low as 69.5%

Parents should check their children are fully vaccinated with two MMR doses, which gives 99% life-long protection, by checking their red book or with their GP practice, which younger and older adults can also do. Anyone not up to date should make an appointment as soon as possible.

[More information on the NHS vaccination is available here.](#)

This week's coverage in the national and regional media

Evening Standard, 27 July – [Rishi Sunak 'steps in' to sort out London housing crisis taking a dig at Sadiq Khan for sky-high home prices](#). Mentions Cllr Darren Rodwell.

The Guardian, 27 July – [We laid Bob Kerslake to rest this week. Think of him - and give the civil service the respect it deserves](#). Mentions Barking and Dagenham.

Public Sector Executive, 25 July – [One million new homes in cities](#). Mentions Cllr Darren Rodwell.

Architects' Journal, 24 July – [Nimtim reimagines Becontree Estate road junction as community square](#).

Architects' Journal, 24 July – [Handing back £1.9bn of housing funds to the Treasury is no disaster](#). Mentions Barking and Dagenham.

The Intermediary, 24 July – [Outer London boroughs show surge in commercial property use, according to EG data](#). Mentions Barking and Dagenham.

Autocar, 24 July – [London mayor 'listening' as calls grow to scrap ULEZ expansion](#). Mentions Cllr Darren Rodwell.

Landlord Today, 22 July – [Tough for renters – Agent's insight into London markets](#). Mentions Barking and Dagenham.

Media Releases

[No let off for letting agent as its fined £3k.](#)

[Have a puff on that! Dropped cigarette costs Newham woman hundreds of pounds.](#)

[Council recovers much needed family home following concerns about anti-social behaviour.](#)

[Pay Council Tax by Direct Debit for a chance to win £1,000.](#)

Members' Training

Training from the Local Government Information Unit (LGiU)

The LGiU are offering the following sessions:

[Strategic Thinking](#): Wednesday 6 September, 10am to 3pm (Online)

Creative, strategic thinking is massively important to a politically led and fast-changing organisation. That's why we're 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 session.

Make a difference as a Councillor: Tuesday 12 September, 9.30am to 12.30pm (Online)

This interactive workshop will give you some of the tricks of the trade from an experienced councillor and democratic services officer and leave you with actions to make a difference for your community. This workshop will also help you keep hold of the bigger picture and achieve your goals for your community.

Scrutiny: Wednesday 27 September, 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 you on the edge of your seat in anticipation while providing comprehensive tools and frameworks to implement moving forward.

Managing casework: Thursday 28 September, 9.30am to 12.30pm (Online)

Sustainably carrying out multiple roles and working with a variety of people requires resilience and a healthy work-life balance.

Personal resilience is about maintaining a sense of well-being, being mentally strong, effectively meeting different demands and performing at one's best on behalf of individuals, and communities as well as being an effective leader. This is a very practical seminar that will provide each participant with methods and helpful ideas to manage the pressures they face and enable them to be able to maximise the positive aspects of being an elected member.

Training from Local Government Association (LGA)

The LGA are offering the following sessions:

Recycling fit for the future: Monday 18 September, 2.30pm to 4pm

Local flexibility is key to effective waste and recycling services. Catering for people in urban areas with many flats will require a different approach to rural, less populated communities. With this in mind, this session will look ahead to the implementation of government's reform of recycling services (the consistent collection framework for households and businesses), the new extended producer responsibility scheme for packaging, and the deposit return scheme for drinks containers. It will look at practical ways to increase participation in recycling schemes and consider what needs to be done to tackle the "hard to recycle" items in household waste. This will require viable end markets for materials that are not currently recycled at scale, such as flexible plastics.

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 von.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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