

# Members' Briefing



**Barking &  
Dagenham**



## **Leader's borough update**

In his video this week, the Leader talks about the events unfolding in the Middle East and how shocked and saddened we all are and extends our deepest sympathies to all those affected by these tragic events, regardless of religion, race or national origin.

He mentions the hope for a peaceful resolution as he knows some residents may have family or friends living in the region and who will be understandably concerned about them. The Leader adds that he is aware that worldwide events can be extremely distressing when people see others suffering but says

the borough has a proud history of supporting each other in times of stress and that we will continue to respect and support each other and come together as a community.

The Leader ends with an appeal that as we approach the winter months, it is important people who are eligible, especially those over 65 or are vulnerable, to get their flu jab.



## **Four local residents join our latest cohort of new Graduate Trainees**

The council has been taking part in the National Graduate Development Programme since 2009. It's a fantastic scheme with some of the brightest graduates joining us and helping to provide a pipeline of future leaders.

As part of our drive to ensure our workforce is reflective of the community we serve, we created a local route for our residents and council employees.

And last week our latest cohort, six graduates, have joined the council and includes four local residents, including some who went to local schools. This is the most diverse group of graduates we've had and it's all part of our commitment to ensure local people benefit from good education, skills development, and employment.



### **Repair surgeries for council tenants now open**

Council tenants with existing or ongoing repairs in their homes can now speak to a member of the housing repairs team face to face at the Barking Learning Centre and Dagenham Library.

Repair surgeries will be open for appointments on the first and third week of

every month between 9.30am and 3.30pm. The next repairs surgeries will take place on:

- Monday 6 November 2023, 9.30 to 3.30pm at Dagenham Library (Ground Floor Glass Pod)
- Monday 20 November 2023, 9.30 to 3.30pm at Barking Learning Centre (Meeting Pod 2)

Residents will be able to book 20 minute appointments via a [booking form](#) which will be made available online.



### **Inclusive Digital Zones now open to residents**

Our Inclusive Digital Zones, based in Barking Learning Centre and Dagenham Library are set to open to help remove some of the barriers to digital technology that people with disabilities may face.

The zones are equipped with cutting-edge technology, including screen readers, magnification software, and speech recognition tools. They have also been carefully designed to include accessible seating and adjustable desks, as well as volunteer digital champions who can offer support to those who need help getting online.

Residents are invited to come along to our launch days at:

- Dagenham Library, Wednesday 18 October, 10am to 11am
- Barking Learning Centre, Thursday 19 October, 1pm to 2pm

For more information, including our inclusive workshops, free laptop borrowing scheme for over 65's and free mobile data for eligible residents, [visit our website](#).

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## **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.

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## **Borough News**

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CLICK HERE TO WATCH THE VIDEO

# We're marking National Hate Crime Awareness Week

## **We don't stand for hate in Barking and Dagenham**

Last week we marked National Hate Crime Awareness Week to stand up against hate.

The week ran from 14 to 21 October with plenty of things for residents to get involved in, including learning more about Stop Hate UK, information stalls and an online seminar.

Residents can still find out more about hate crime and how to report it on our [website](#).

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## **Last chance to apply for the Equalities and Diversity Fund**

Community organisations across the borough are being invited to apply for grants of up to £500 from our Equality and Diversity Community Fund.

The fund allows local charities and community groups to play a bigger role in staging a range of events throughout the year.

The funding should be related to our Equality and Diversity Calendar, which involves everything from Christmas to LGBT+ History Month and national independence days. Residents and community groups can [view the full calendar and apply here](#).

These projects should promote social inclusion, celebrate diversity, and support equality through providing opportunities for people with protected characteristics.

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## **Your Estate, Your Call - it's time for residents to vote!**

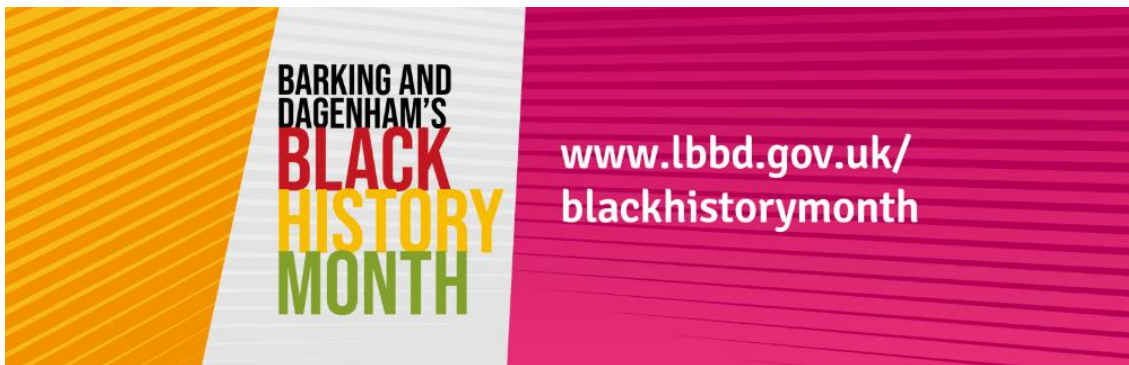
Last month we asked residents for their ideas on how we could improve three housing estates in the borough: Ibscott, John Burns Drive and Highview House in Marks Gate.

We received 51 ideas in total and a shortlist has been prepared. Bin storage, cycle storage and improvements to a play park are among the ideas put forward by the community.

It's now time for residents to cast their vote and let us know which suggestions are their favourite.

[Voting closes on 10 November.](#)





## **Celebrating Black History Month 2023 in Barking and Dagenham**

Black History Month returns this October, marking the annual celebration of the rich and diverse history of our black, African, and Caribbean community.

There is lots to see and do, including children's workshops and special tours of Eastbury Manor House, which will look at the colonial heritage of the 16<sup>th</sup> century Grade-1 listed building.

A one-off Black History Month pop-up market will take place on Thursday 26 October (at Barking Market) to showcase black-owned businesses and local community groups.

Throughout the month, residents will also be able to read about inspirational people as part of our Black History Month Hall of Fame, which will be shared online and through social media.

First celebrated in the UK in October 1987, the focus of this year's Black History Month will be on honouring the achievements of black women.

For more information visit [here](#).

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## **Around the council**



## **Residents interested in a career in construction invited to get in touch**

Residents interested in a career in the construction industry are being invited to get in touch with the Barking Riverside Innovation in Construction Centre (BRIC).

The BRIC training centre in Barking Riverside is offering construction training and qualifications plus brand-new test centre facilities where interested residents can book for their CITB Health, Safety and Environment tests. They will also be able to gain a Level 1 Health and Safety in Construction qualification.

On successful completion of the course, participants will gain the green CSCS labourer card which will allow them to work safely in the construction industry. Staff at the BRIC will also assist participants in gaining other industry related construction cards.

Residents can also save the date for a Construction Job Fair which takes place

on Wednesday 15 November at the Bric Training Centre, Infrastructure Way, Off Choats Road, Gate A, IG11 0YN from 10am to 12 noon.

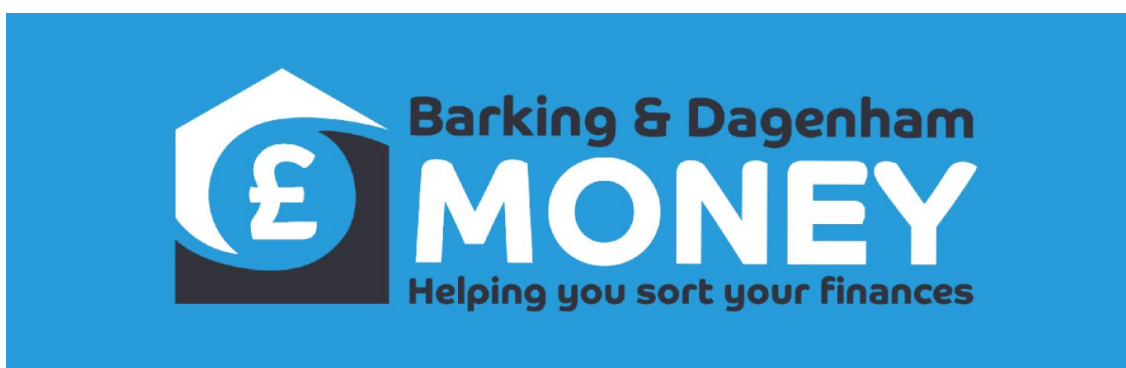
Residents can register to attend on the Eventbrite page at:

<https://www.eventbrite.co.uk/e/construction-jobs-fair-tickets-740836139837?aff=ebdsshcopyurl&utm-campaign=&utm-content=&utm-medium=&utm-source=&utm-term=>

To find out more please contact [bric@lbbd.gov.uk](mailto:bric@lbbd.gov.uk) or telephone 020 8227 2777/07977 017133.

You can also visit the website at: [www.lbbd.gov.uk/BRIC](http://www.lbbd.gov.uk/BRIC)

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## **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](http://www.BDMoney.co.uk)

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## **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 <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](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).

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## Local Government News

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### **Borough budgets on ‘knife edge’**

London Councils has released new analysis warning that boroughs need to make over £500m of savings next year to balance their budgets.

Nine in ten London boroughs expect to overspend on their budgets this year – estimated at over £400m in total across the capital.

[Cllr Claire Holland, Acting Chair of London Councils, said](#): “Borough finances are on a knife edge – with grim implications for the future of local services in the capital.

“The combination of higher costs due to spiralling inflation, skyrocketing demand for services, and insufficient levels of government funding leaves boroughs in an extremely precarious position.”

Ahead of the government’s Autumn Statement in November, London Councils has [launched its key priorities](#). These include an overall funding increase of at least 9 per cent, investment to reduce homelessness, and reforms to the broken local government finance system.

### **London Device Bank**

[London Office of Technology and Innovation](#) (LOTI) has been supporting the [London Device Bank](#), a project which has prevented over 2.5 million kg of CO2 emissions in the first year.

The London Device Bank is part of [Get Online London](#), a digital inclusion service by [Good Things Foundation](#), offering free refurbished devices to digitally excluded people.

[Eddie Copeland, Director at LOTI, said](#): “We’re delighted to see these remarkable achievements by Get Online London in its first year of service, further cementing its place as London’s sustainable solution to digital exclusion.

“Tackling London’s digital divide is a key element in building a fairer and more prosperous city. Current rates of digital exclusion are unsustainable and make other forms of inequality worse.”

## **Circular Economy Week**

One World Living, one of seven themes in London Council’s [pan-London Climate Programme](#), hosted its annual conference last Wednesday 18 October as part of ReLondon’s [Circular Economy Week](#).

You can find the latest updates from the London Councils Climate Programme on their [blog](#) and [social media](#).

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

**Architecture Today, 19 October** – [Neave Brown Award for Housing 2023](#).  
Mentions A House for Artists.

**What House?, 19 October** – [Range of schemes available to help buyers at Barking development](#).



**Skip & Waste, 18 October** – [ELWA and Wastecare host 'Jumbo the Battery Elephant' in East London shopping centres](#). Mentions Barking and Dagenham.

**Letsrecycle.com, 18 October** – [Cory launches second carbon capture consultation](#). Mentions Barking and Dagenham.

**Evening Standard, 17 October** – [Bellway to slash number of homes built in 2024 and average selling price falls](#). Mentions Barking Riverside.

**British Geological Survey, 17 October** – ['First of its kind' online tool created to help tackle pollution in London](#). Mentions Barking and Dagenham.

**Big Issue, 17 October** – [Social investment fund tackling inequality backed by Macquarie Group Foundation and BD Giving](#).

**Room 151, 17 October** – [Roundtable special report: how to overcome cash management challenges](#). Mentions Barking and Dagenham.

**New London Architecture, 16 October** – [London's housing challenge: Innovation in delivery and design](#). Mentions Barking and Dagenham.

**Evening Standard, 16 October** – [Major new lifesaving training programme from London Ambulance Service launched in capital's schools](#). Mentions Barking and Dagenham.

**London Loves Business, 16 October** – [More Londoners to avoid high cost lenders thanks to support for community lenders](#). Mentions Barking and Dagenham.

**Co Star, 13 October** – [Last Mile 2023: High land values forcing logistic developers to think radically in London](#). Mentions Barking and Dagenham.

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## Media Releases

[Cigarette costs Dagenham smoker over £500.](#)

[East London council launches inclusive Digital Zones to bridge digital access.](#)

[An update on council finances.](#)

['Innovative' council foster care team awarded prestigious Fostering Excellence Award.](#)

['We won't stand for hate' says Barking and Dagenham Council.](#)

[Council asks people to consider adoption as it marks National Adoption Week.](#)

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## Members' Training

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

The LGiU are offering the following sessions:

**[Communicating in a crisis](#)**: Tuesday 14 November, 9.30am to 12.30pm  
(Online)

Crisis in local government is not new and often they can happen when you least expect them. This practical workshop will help you respond when a crisis strikes — particularly through your council's communications team.

Key outcomes:

- Awareness of the reputational risks for your organisation
- Understand what to expect when crisis strikes
- Create your own crisis communications plan

**[Managing Casework](#)**: Tuesday 28 November, 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.

**Budget setting**: Thursday 7 December, 9.30am to 12.30pm (Online)

Dive into financial planning and budgeting, particularly when organisations are still grappling with the effects of the pandemic and the cost-of-living crisis.

Key outcomes:

- Understand the immediate and potentially ongoing financial effects of the COVID-19 pandemic and cost of living crisis on the council's finances.
- Understand the financial planning and control process at a typical local council.
- Appraise and evaluate how councillors can most effectively influence budget and spending decisions.

### **Training from London Councils**

London Councils are offering the following session:

**Building age-friendly communities: Empowering and connecting older residents** - Wednesday 8 November, 1 to 1.45pm (Online)

How can we support our older residents to feel safer, more welcome and connected to their local community and provide them with a stronger voice in the way decisions are made? Join us to learn about the UK Network of Age-friendly Communities and how Newham Council is embracing this initiative to transform into an age-friendly borough.

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

The LGA are offering the following sessions:

**Learning from Safeguarding Adults Reviews: Discrimination and**

### **Discriminatory Abuse:** Wednesday 1 November, 2 to 4pm

This webinar is the third in a series of events that takes forward learning from Safeguarding Adults Reviews and is supported by Partners in Care and Health. Speakers at this webinar will provide insights into different areas of discrimination and discriminatory abuse from a safeguarding adults' perspective. Safeguarding Adults Reviews and the process of undertaking them, help to identify the multiple and complex issues and challenges in this area of practice.

### **Finance without numbers – An introduction to local government finance:** Thursday 2 November, 6.00pm to 7.30pm

This virtual event is for newly elected members or those just looking for a refresh. The event will provide an overview of local government finance without any numbers - focussing instead on roles and responsibilities, key terminology and processes. It will give you an understanding of both what you need to be aware of in your role and what you need to understand about your authority's role. The session will cover:

- Members' role in finance
- How finance decisions are made
- Some key financial issues and terminology

### **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, across the borough and in the world of local government. Please email [yon.edomi@lbbd.gov.uk](mailto: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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