

Members' Briefing



**Barking &
Dagenham**



Leader's borough update

In his video this week, the Leader mentioned last Wednesday night's Storm Ciaran which was followed by heavy rains and wind but reassured residents that our crews are working hard to remove flood water and keep people safe.

He also mentioned his visit to the newly developed Gascoigne Estate to celebrate the completion of more affordable and environmentally friendly homes - part of the new neighbourhood which will see 2,000 homes built.

The Leader also provided a reminder of the EFG Jazz Festival - a fantastic

programme of free entertainment and events taking place between the 10-19 November.



Low carbon, affordable homes completed in Gascoigne Neighbourhood

The borough's greenest housing block has been completed by Be First - the eight new properties are affordable and feature cutting edge technology to help its residents reduce their emissions and energy bills.

The homes 'fabric first' approach means the materials used ensure it is airtight and thermally and energy efficient. The homes are also ready for low carbon technologies like heat pumps and networks.

Triple glazed windows and improved ventilation provide high levels of insulation, protection from noise pollution, and prevent damp and mould developing while maintaining a comfortable, warm indoor temperature.

Homes across the whole of the redeveloped Gascoigne Neighbourhood are connected to a district heating system and have been designed with energy efficiency in mind, ultimately providing a 40% CO2 emissions reduction against building regulations. On top of this, all phases of the Gascoigne Neighbourhood are adopting an active travel development strategy, meaning pedestrians and cyclists are prioritised which promotes sustainable travel and enhances a sense of community.



Residents invited to have their say on changes to the Council Tax Support Scheme

Residents are being invited to have their say on proposed changes to our working age Council Tax Support Scheme. The proposed changes include the introduction of income bands, making it easier for residents to identify the discounts they are eligible for.

The proposals may result in changes to some of the amounts people receive. Any potential changes would take effect from 1 April 2024.

Residents can share their views by dropping into face-to-face support sessions at the Barking Learning Centre on Wednesday 1 November and Dagenham Learning Centre on Wednesday 8 November from 9.30am to 3.30pm or online at <https://oneboroughvoice.lbbd.gov.uk/cts-2024-25>

Residents who would like additional support to help them to complete the questionnaire can email benefits@lbbd.gov.uk with the subject 'CTS consultation'.

The consultation closes on Thursday 23 November.

REPAIRS SURGERIES



Repairs 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.

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



Join us to mark Remembrance Day

Remembrance Day gives us the opportunity to remember and pay our respects to those who have fallen in war. Across the weekend, there will be several events for you to join.

Friday 10 November – The Royal Naval Association will hold a Memorial

Service at the Cross Keys War Memorial. Another wreath-laying service will take place at the Job Drain Memorial, Barking. Both events will take place at 10.45am.

Saturday 11 November – There will be a wreath-laying ceremony at the War Memorial on the corner of Heathway and Church Elm Lane at 10.30am.

Sunday 12 November – You can take part in the Remembrance Parade and Service at St. Margaret's Church, and a Remembrance Service at Dagenham Parish Church from 10.20am.

For full details of the Remembrance events taking place across the borough visit our [website here](#).



Book your tickets as the EFG Jazz Festival returns to the borough

Barking and Dagenham opens its doors once again for another unique collaboration of culture, creativity and community as part of the EFG London Jazz Festival. Over the two weekends of the festival which takes place from 10 to 19 November, we're bringing free and affordable events to the borough with an exciting programme.

[Find out more and book today!](#)



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: Ibbscott, 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.](#)

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 or telephone 020 8227 2777/07977 017133.

You can also visit the website at: www.lbbd.gov.uk/BRIC



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

Increase in housing pressures puts council budgets under strain

With reports that the national housing crisis is putting increasing pressure on councils' budgets across the country, London Councils is reiterating calls for the government to work with councils to reverse the number of households relying on temporary accommodation.

The number of households entitled to homelessness support from a London borough increased 15.2% between April 2022 and April 2023. London Councils is urging the government to take the following steps:

Raise Local Housing Allowance (LHA). LHA, which eligible households receive as part of their housing benefit or Universal Credit if they have a private landlord, has been frozen since 2020 despite private rents increasing since then. Boroughs believe LHA should be increased to cover at least 30% of local market rents – a policy the government adopted successfully at the height of the Covid-19 pandemic.

Support councils to buy accommodation sold by private landlords. 40% of all homes listed for sale in London in 2022 were previously let by a private landlord. The government should build on initiatives such as the Local Authority Housing Fund by providing increased capital investment for housing acquisitions, particularly to acquire homes being sold by private landlords as they exit the market.

Boost Homelessness Prevention Grant funding. Local authorities play a vital role in supporting struggling households to avoid homelessness. Councils require an immediate emergency funding increase to ensure local services have the resources needed in the face of rising levels of demand for support.

Increase Discretionary Housing Payments. These payments are used by councils to help residents in financial crisis meet their housing costs. They are an essential homelessness prevention tool, but government funding for Discretionary Housing Payments in 2023-24 has been frozen at 2022-23 levels, despite significantly increasing homelessness pressures.

Bring forward a cross-departmental strategy to reduce homelessness.

Tackling homelessness must become a major priority at a national level with government departments working together – in addition to key partners such as local authorities – as effectively as possible.

Eco-refill project is putting the circular economy in schools

Pupils in Richmond and Wandsworth are being encouraged to change behaviours around plastic consumption and develop entrepreneurial skills through eco-refill shops located in their schools.

The project, currently being piloted in 11 schools across the two boroughs, is explained in this [blog, by Ali Malvern, Programme & Policy Lead, Climate Change and Sustainability, for Richmond and Wandsworth Councils](#), who says: “the model for these eco-refill shops is a great example of affordable circular economy in the local area while working to draw in the wider community.”

The blog space has been created by London Councils to share learning from borough officers and leaders about London local government’s progress on net zero and adaptation. [You can follow the blogs here.](#)

London boroughs are [investing £2 million in the next phase of London Councils’ Climate Programme](#), accelerating local government’s collaborative work to tackle the climate emergency. [You can read more about the programme and its seven themes here.](#)

By-election result

A by-election took place in the Higham Hill ward in Waltham Forest on Thursday 26 October.

The by-election was won by Shumon Ali-Rahman (Labour). [You can read the result in full here.](#)

This week's coverage in the national and regional media

Government Business, 2 November – [London boroughs warn of homelessness crisis](#). Mentions Cllr Darren Rodwell.

Evening Standard, 1 November – [London's rental hell: How priced out tenants have been pushed to the brink](#). Mentions Barking and Dagenham.

LocalGov, 1 November – ['Tragic and shameful' rough sleeping increase in London](#). Mentions Cllr Darren Rodwell.

OnLondon, 1 November – [Where is Havering heading?](#) Mentions Barking and Dagenham.

Housing Executive, 31 October – [The need to improve tenant satisfaction in social housing](#). Mentions Barking and Dagenham.

Local Government Lawyer, 30 October – [Bin men who took extra waste for cash handed suspended sentences](#). Mentions Barking and Dagenham.

Evening Standard, 30 October – [What are the London constituencies for the next election? Boundary changes explained](#). Mentions Barking and Dagenham.

Building Design, 30 October – [When specifying drainage components for balconies, non-combustible should be non-negotiable](#). Mentions Barking Riverside.

London Review, 29 October – [Mapped: Areas with the highest level of destitution as one million kids living in poverty](#). Mentions Barking and Dagenham.

Express, 28 October – [The deprived borough where house prices rocketed by almost 400 percent](#). Mentions Barking and Dagenham.

Mail Online, 27 October – [Primary school teacher who refused to take Covid](#)

[tests and wear a face mask at the height of the pandemic loses discrimination legal battle.](#) Mentions Gascoigne Primary School.

Media Releases

[Residents interested in a career in construction invited to get in touch.](#)

[Ex council employees sentenced to jail for fraud.](#)

[Barking and Dagenham residents invited to share views on Council Tax Support Scheme 2024/25.](#)

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:

One to One Development Sessions

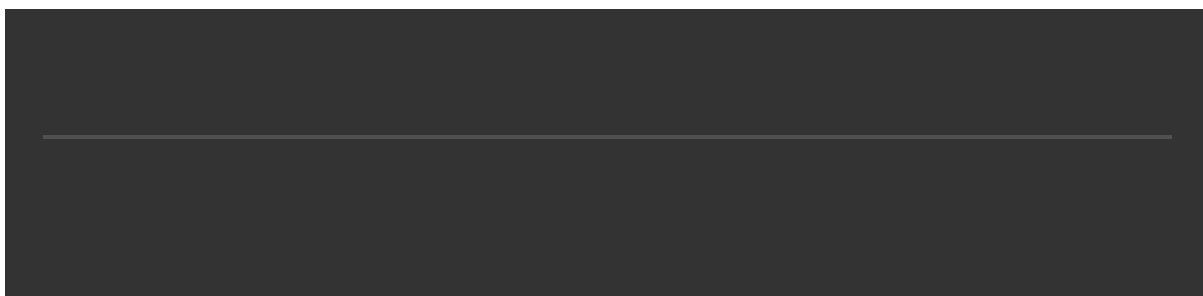
The LGA are offering councillors the opportunity to have one-to-one development conversations with one of the Leadership Academy Facilitators. This will be available to councillors in leadership positions for the next three months. These sessions are not political and will be provided by tutors from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