



 click to watch



## **Leader's borough update**

The Leader mentions us celebrating LGBT+ History Month this February, a national event, which marks lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender history, as well as celebrating gay rights and the civil rights movements.

He mentions the progressive Pride flag being flown to show support for the LGBT+ community, and to recognise the struggles and campaigns which paved the way for greater equality. He adds that throughout February, we have lined up a programme of events including a poetry open mic night, social events and book displays in our libraries and encourages residents to check it out.

The Leader reminds residents about news coverage on outbreaks of measles in the West Midlands and parts of London and that sadly, the current outbreak of measles is not surprising given the low take up of the MMR vaccine over recent years.

He advises residents that measles spreads easily between people who have not been vaccinated and can be extremely serious, even life-threatening and that the best protection is the MMR vaccine.

The Leader ends by appealing to parents whose child(ren) have missed one or both doses of the MMR vaccine, to contact their GP to book an appointment.



## **New Police Team launched to focus on Dagenham Heathway**

A community focussed push by residents and local businesses has resulted in a new police team being launched to focus on localised issues in Dagenham Heathway.

Residents have been calling for additional police resources in the area to reduce antisocial behaviour and crime.

The new team will provide high visibility and a presence around Dagenham Heathway and respond to issues impacting the local community and businesses. The council's enforcement team will work closely with the police to tackle any issues to make sure residents feel safe and reassured when out and about.

Alongside the police, the council has also launched two new Community Reporting Hubs at Whalebone Lane Community Hub and Dagenham Community Hub in Dagenham Library. Enforcement and Police officers will be at each hub twice a week:

- Dagenham Library Community Hub, every Monday, 3pm to 7pm and every Thursday 10am to 2pm
- Whalebone Lane Community Hub, every Monday 10am to 2pm and every Thursday 11am to 3pm

Residents will be able to report crimes, antisocial behaviour or raise any issues.

More information on the Community Reporting Hubs can be found on the [council website](#).

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## Vital new SEND school gets the go ahead

Planning permission has been granted for the new Oxlow Bridge School in record time.

The 100-place school will be built to accommodate local pupils with special educational needs (SEN).

This is part of our commitment to making sure that everyone in Barking and Dagenham gets access to the support and education they need.

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

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## **National Apprenticeship Week 2024 kicks off on 5 February**

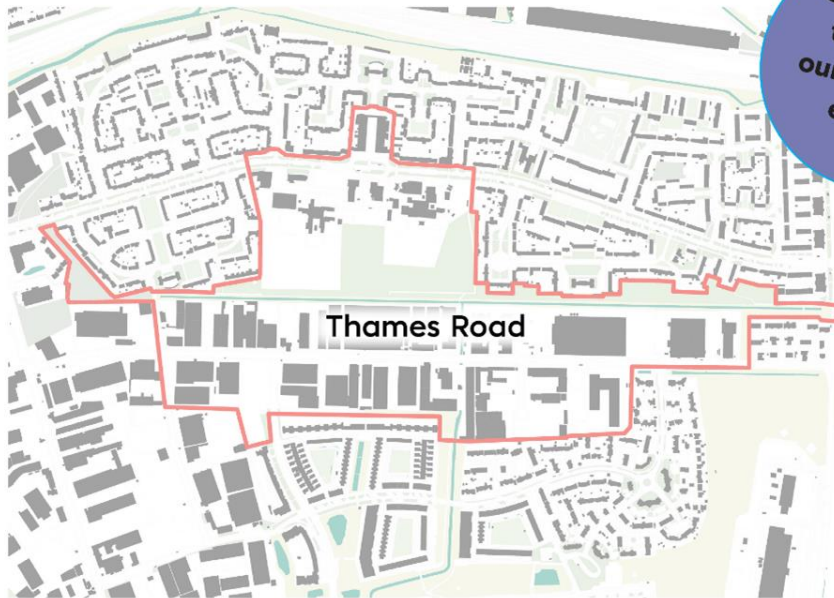
[National Apprenticeship Week](#) (NAW) 2024 runs from 5 to 11 February and is the 17<sup>th</sup> annual celebration of apprenticeships.

The theme for this year is 'Skills for Life' and is encouraging everyone to consider how apprenticeships can help them develop the skills and knowledge for a rewarding career and for employers to develop a workforce with future ready skills.

A number of events will be taking place throughout the week and include:

- 5 February – Council employee apprenticeship presentation lunch
  - 7 February – Apprenticeship Careers Fair at the BLC
  - 8 February – Local business apprenticeship seminar
  - 8 February – Schools Apprenticeship Levy information Session
  - 9 February – Celebration of Learning event
-

# Share your experiences of Thames Road



*Come along  
to one of  
our February  
events*

## **We're talking to residents and local businesses about a new Place Strategy for Thames Road**

The council's regeneration arm, Be First, are hosting a series of engagement events with residents and local businesses during February to shape a new Place Strategy for Thames Road.

These virtual and in-person events will be asking the community how they think Thames Road can be improved, explaining how residents can get involved in the proposals, and more.

You can find out more about these events here:

<https://yourcall.befirst.london/thames-road-place-strategy>

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## **Residents encouraged to sign up for council's Green Garden Waste service**

Residents are being urged to sign up to the council's Green Garden Waste service ahead of collections beginning in March.

The service, which costs £50 for the year, collects, and recycles flowers, weeds, leaves, grass cuttings, twigs and hedge trimmings.

Launched in 2017, the service saw over 7,300 residents sign up last year.

Residents can now take advantage of 19 fortnightly collections between March and December if they sign up before Wednesday 14 February.

The Green Garden Waste service has proved a significant part of the council's efforts to meet the Mayor of London's target of having a 50 per cent recycling rate by 2030.

Residents can sign up for the Green Garden Waste service at [lbbd.gov.uk/green-garden-waste-collections](http://lbbd.gov.uk/green-garden-waste-collections).

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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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## Council marks LGBT+ History Month

February marks the start of LGBT+ History Month - a time to honour and celebrate the LGBT+ community while addressing ongoing challenges and remembering those who have sadly lost their lives.



In remembrance and in celebration, we raised the progressive Pride flag outside the Town Hall last Thursday and will fly it throughout the month.

A number of events will be taking place throughout the month including a Poetry Open Mic Night on Thursday 15 February at Dagenham Library and an LGBT+ History Month Social on Thursday 22 February.

In addition, our libraries will be showcasing curated LGBT+ History Month book collections until Wednesday 28 February.

You can take a look at the full programme [here](#).

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**53% OF RESIDENTS SKIP  
OR HAVE SMALLER  
MEALS BECAUSE OF COSTS**



**IT'S NOT OKAY.  
BUT IT IS OKAY TO REACH OUT FOR SUPPORT**

**[WWW.LBBD.GOV.UK/COST-LIVING-SUPPORT](http://WWW.LBBD.GOV.UK/COST-LIVING-SUPPORT)**

### **We're still supporting residents with the cost of living**

Now more than ever, as the temperatures drop, some residents will be feeling the pinch with sky high energy prices and the cost of food and shopping.

That's why we're sharing easy ways for residents to access help if they need it - from benefits and low-cost loans, through to income maximisation and signposting them to food banks, warm spaces, and wellbeing support.

There's lots of help available and it's really important that we can all talk about

it.

Residents can take a look at the latest cost of living support guides which bring together the support we offer, alongside our partners in one place.

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## **Apprenticeship Jobs Fair**

Residents are being invited to an Apprenticeship Jobs Fair which will take place on Wednesday 7 February as part of events for National Apprenticeship Week 2024.

[National Apprenticeship Week](#) (NAW) 2024 runs from 5 to 11 February and is the 17<sup>th</sup> annual celebration of apprenticeships.

The theme for this year is 'Skills for Life' and is encouraging everyone to consider how apprenticeships can help them develop the skills and knowledge for a rewarding career and for employers to develop a workforce with future ready skills.

The Jobs Fair will take place at the Conference Room at Barking Learning

Centre from 10am to 12 noon. There will be live vacancies for attendees to apply for, plus apprenticeship providers to answer any questions residents may have.

For more information, please email [vacancies@lbbd.gov.uk](mailto:vacancies@lbbd.gov.uk)

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## Things are re-heating up – microwave dumper spotted on the Wall of Shame

[The Wall of Shame](#) is [back](#) with more fly-tippers caught on camera.

We're determined to put a stop to people dumping across our borough, but we need your help and that of our residents. So if you know or recognise anyone featured, please let us know by emailing [grimecrime@lbbd.gov.uk](mailto:grimecrime@lbbd.gov.uk).

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## Around the council

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### **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.

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)



## **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).

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### **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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### Spring Budget: London local government priorities

London Councils has written to the Chancellor of the Exchequer, the Right Hon Jeremy Hunt MP, ahead of the Spring Budget, due to be announced on 6 March, to set out London local government's most pressing priorities, with recommendations aimed at stabilising local public services, protecting the most vulnerable from the cost of living crisis and stimulating economic growth.

These include Extending the Household Support Fund to support our most vulnerable residents; Removing the January 2011 cap on Local Housing Allowance payable for Temporary Accommodation in Housing Benefit subsidy; Providing new funding for delivered wraparound support for newly recognised refugees.

Providing additional funding for council Housing Revenue Accounts to support an improvement in standards throughout 2024/25 and address the critical challenge of damp and mould; Increasing Adult Social Care market sustainability funding to reflect inflationary pressures and increase discharge funding to ensure patients receive reablement support to become physically fit, regain their independence and return to their ordinary residence; Delivering a fully devolved single employment and skills fund to reduce London's huge skills shortages, with three-quarters of firms having open vacancies and two-thirds struggling to fill them; Reintroducing the VAT Retail Export Scheme for foreign visitors to make London and other UK destinations more competitive for overseas shoppers; Establishing a partnership with local government through the Cities Commission on Climate Investment (3Ci) to catalyse private investment into local net zero programmes and pilot neighbourhood level approaches to decarbonisation; Commit to offering deeper devolution to London government.

[You can read the letter to the Chancellor here.](#)

## **New report: Managing Falling School Rolls in London**

A new report from London Councils highlights that London boroughs are forecasting a drop in demand of 7,904 places across reception and Year 7 between 2023/24 and 2027/28.

The reduction in school places will have a significant impact on the amount of funding a school receives, meaning London schools will have to make further difficult decisions to balance their budgets. This could mean narrowing the curriculum, offering fewer after school clubs or reducing the number of teaching and support staff. In some cases, school leaders and local authority leaders will have to make difficult decisions to merge or close schools.

Responding to the report's findings [Cllr Ian Edwards, London Councils Executive Member for Children and Young People](#), said: "London boroughs are seeing a significant reduction in the number of pupils beginning primary and secondary education, which has major implications for the future of schools across the capital.

"This report comes at a time when unfortunately, some of our schools and local authorities are negotiating a complex balancing act. The drop in demand for places means schools face extremely difficult decisions over how to balance their budgets.

"London has some of the best schools in the country, with over 90% of all our schools being rated good or outstanding by Ofsted. We are working diligently to ensure that this level of high-quality education is accessible for all children entering schools in the coming years and allow our schools to thrive despite this difficult climate.

"London Councils will work closely with key education partners in London, including government, to mitigate the impact of this drop in demand for school places on school budgets and children's achievement."

[You can read the report in full here.](#)

## **How can councils find the space for the innovation they need?**

After more than a decade of budget cuts, combined with new social pressures (Covid-19, cost of living crisis, etc) that have vastly increased demand for services, local government has no choice but to innovate. The dilemma is that these self-same pressures can make it almost impossible for local government to innovate as radically as it needs to.

In his latest blog post, London Office of Technology and Innovation (LOTI) Director Eddie Copeland explores the barriers to innovation in local government, what the sector can do to overcome them and how LOTI can help.

You can read the blog [here](#).

## **APPG for London**

Ahead of the regulatory changes for the social housing sector from April 2024, the All-Party Parliamentary Group (APPG) for London hosted a private roundtable event with the Housing Ombudsman last Monday.

The event, which was well attended by MPs, was an opportunity for London MPs and the sector, including boroughs and registered social landlords, to share their views and for an open and honest discussion around the challenges facing housing providers in the capital.

The APPG for London is a forum for MPs and Peers to work together on a cross-party basis to strengthen the capital's voice in Parliament. The group's purpose is to promote the capital in the interests of all Londoners. London Councils provides the secretariat to the group on behalf of London government, including the Mayor of London and the London Assembly. [You can read more about the APPG for London and their work here.](#)

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

**31 January** – [Warning to private tenants to be wary of 'no win, no fee' action.](#)  
Mentions Barking and Dagenham.

**Construction Index, 30 January** – [Approval for Wilmott's Dagenham school.](#)

**FM Business Daily, 30 January** – [The UK's first 'Super Shredder' launches at Barking Riverside.](#)

**Evening Standard, 29 January** – [London house prices: property in the capital is at its most affordable since 2014.](#) Mentions Barking and Dagenham.

**DESiblitZ, 27 January** – [How a police callout uncovered a drugs network worth millions. Mentions Barking and Dagenham.](#)

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## **Media Releases**

[Community Reporting Hubs launched in Barking and Dagenham.](#)

[New police team launched to focus on Dagenham Heathway.](#)

[East London council wins wasted law case against Manchester law firm.](#)

[Holocaust survivor visits east London for Holocaust Memorial Day 2024.](#)

[East London youngsters trained in emergency first aid.](#)

[Update on fatal collision in Dagenham.](#)

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## **Members' Training**

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

The LGA are offering the following sessions:

**Data and managing council performance – free introductory training for councillors** - Friday 1 March 2024, 10am to 12.30pm

This introductory training session will focus on data and the role it plays in managing council performance. The programme which has been developed in association with King's College London has been designed for councillors.

The session will cover the following topics:

- what is data?
- common ways in which data is analysed and presented
- key questions to ask of our data
- performance management – measuring what matters.

**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 [von.edomi@lbbd.gov.uk](mailto: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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