



Council approves 2024/25 budget while calling for a fairer funding deal

The council has agreed its budget for 2024/25, against a backdrop of severe financial pressures faced by councils across the country.

The financial plans, approved at a full Assembly meeting last Wednesday, outlined the key drivers for the council's budget pressures, including inadequate

government funding, coupled with inflation and rising costs for essential services, particularly in children's and adult services.

The council has a strong track record of managing finances carefully, but our funding has reduced by 40% since 2010, adding pressure to our overstretched budgets.

In response, we have protected statutory services and we're doing everything we can to right size the council and balance our budget.

As part of the budget announcement, Council Tax will increase by 4.99% from April (excluding the GLA element) - 2.99% towards the general fund and 2% ringfenced for social care. This works out as an additional £1.40 per week on an average Band D property.

The council continues to support residents who are struggling to make ends meet and they can visit a local Community Hub to find out more about the [essential support we can provide with energy costs, money concerns, food, and wellbeing.](#)

The council is also calling on government to provide fairer funding, based on our population and deprivation levels, so we can provide the services and support our community need.

[You can find out more about the 2024/25 budget here.](#)



It's all 'GOOD' for The Adult College, Barking and Dagenham

Staff and students at The Adult College, Barking and Dagenham are celebrating following the publication of its latest Ofsted inspection report – which graded it 'good' and says it “fosters the belief in residents that they can lift themselves up and improve their lives through education”.

Inspectors, who visited the college between Monday 4 and Thursday 7 December 2023, praised it as “a calm and warm environment, with a strong culture of respect and collaboration.”

Ofsted found the college to be good overall, with inspectors judging both the personal development and the work to develop behaviours and attitudes of learners to be particularly strong. The quality of education, and leadership and management, were also found to be good.

The full inspection report is available [here](#).

Residents interested in finding out about courses with the Adult College can visit <https://adultcollege.lbbd.gov.uk/>

You can read the [full press release here](#).



Women's Empowerment Month is back!

Women's Empowerment Month is back in 2024, celebrating the outstanding contributions of women and girls in Barking and Dagenham.

This year's theme, "Inspire Inclusion", speaks to the diversity of our borough – we'll continue to champion women, and learn from the historic figures who came before us.

To kick off the month, a flag-raising ceremony took place last Friday in front of the Town Hall. We have a fantastic line-up of activities, workshops, and events

throughout the month – and we want you to get involved. You can check out the [full programme here](#).



Leading by example – local councillors sign up as Maths Champions

Ten councillors have signed up to a programme which aims to raise the profile of maths in the borough, aimed at working with adults to become more enthusiastic about maths and to help them improve their skills.

The Maths Champions scheme is run by the Adult College in partnership with National Literacy, an independent charity who promote the value of maths and work to raise levels of numeracy.

According to a recent Government Skills for Life survey, almost half of the adult

population in the country, may seriously struggle with many aspects of numeracy.

The Champion programme aims to raise the profile of maths in the borough and encourage people to raise their skill levels. The Champions will talk positively with residents who may feel anxious about maths, encourage individuals, groups and organisations to have a more positive approach towards numeracy and signpost people to take the first steps in improving their numeracy skills.

Adult residents interested in improving their maths, or supporting the scheme, can call the Adult College on 020 8270 4722 or pop into any of the college sites at 127 Ripple Road or on Parsloes Avenue.

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



Women's Museum launches on International Women's Day

You are invited to join us for the launch of our very first exhibition at the brand-new Women's Museum.

To celebrate the opening, a community party will take place on International Women's Day on Friday 8 March, from 5pm to 8pm. [You can book your space here.](#)

For residents looking for something to do with the kids, why not pop in for a special launch event for children and adults on Saturday 9 March from 11am to 3pm, where they can enjoy a range of free creative activities.

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



Come Cook With Us! community cookbook is here!

We're proud to launch our brand new 'Come Cook With Us!' community cookbook. It brings together a wonderful selection of recipes created collaboratively by residents, with the support of our project partners and community groups.

We want to help people access the food they need for happy and healthy lives and empower people to grow, cook, share and eat hearty, wholesome food, and share their skills and knowledge with others in the community. Our recent cost of living survey revealed that one in two of those surveyed skip or have smaller meals because they simply can't afford it.

That's why we want to take our support one step further when it comes to food. In our Come Cook With Us! cookbook you'll find a variety of cuisines, reflecting

the diverse borough we are so proud to call home.

We are grateful to everyone who has shared their wonderful recipes with us, and hope that this book helps to preserve them, as well as celebrate the rich culinary heritage, knowledge and skills within our community.

Over the coming weeks, we'll also be sharing tasty cooking videos to encourage residents to have a go at cooking the delicious recipes from the comfort of their homes.

[Find out more and take a look at the cookbook here.](#)



Residents and groups encouraged to apply for Activate Volunteering Fund

The Activate Volunteering Fund returns for a second round, making a £7,000 funding pot available to local residents in a bid to create more volunteering

opportunities across the borough.

Local organisations and groups are invited to bid for up to £700 each to use towards an activity, scheme or event that relies on volunteers. The fund supports initiatives of all sizes, from local litter-picking groups that need supplies to something bigger.

Successful applicants will be able to access support for their projects from the council's large pool of volunteers.

The first round saw local groups Bmoney Wise, Youth Spot Bar, JDS Striving for Excellence and Kingdom Builders access £2,800 of the £7,000 fund for initiatives including:

- Online classes for over 65s within the borough
- Support groups and activities for people living with anxiety and depression
- Skate Fest - an all-inclusive community-based activity
- Self-development classes and workshops.

The deadline for applications is Thursday 21 March. Residents can apply at <https://oneboroughvoice.lbbd.gov.uk/activate-volunteering>



Residents invited to tell us what they think about our parks

Our borough is one of the greenest in London with 28 parks and green spaces, covering over 463 hectares, which is equal to over 1,000 football pitches.

We want to know which of our parks and green spaces residents have been using and what they think of them; what they like or dislike and if they have any ideas on how we can improve them. We would also like to hear their ideas on how we can make them safer and welcoming for everyone.

The feedback from residents will help shape how our parks are managed, maintained and developed in the future and support applications for external funding to help bring even more improvements for everyone.

[Residents can have their say before the closing date on Sunday 31 March.](#)



**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

We are still supporting residents with the cost of living

Now more than ever, 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.

[View the Cost of Living Information Support Guides here.](#)

Residents can also drop into [Community Hubs](#) across the borough to access support face to face.



NHS

**Measles cases
are rising in London**

**Make sure your child
is up to date with
their MMR vaccinations**

The poster features a blue background. In the top right corner is the NHS logo. The main headline is split into two dark blue boxes with white text. Below the headline is an illustration of a woman with long dark hair sitting on a yellow sofa, talking to a young girl who is holding a pink teddy bear. To the right of the illustration is the text 'Make sure your child is up to date with their MMR vaccinations'.

Residents urged to make sure their children get the MMR vaccine

Residents may have seen in the news recently that there have been outbreaks of measles in the West Midlands and areas of London.

Sadly, the current outbreak of measles is not surprising given the low take up of the MMR vaccine over recent years and it spreads easily between people who have not been vaccinated.

Measles can be extremely serious, even life-threatening and the best way for residents to protect their children is the MMR vaccine and it is free of charge.

Any resident whose child, regardless of their age, has missed one or both doses of the MMR vaccine, need to make sure they have the vaccine as soon as possible.

They can find out how to get their child vaccinated [here](#).



Chill out – fridge freezer dumpers on latest Wall of Shame

The [Wall of Shame is back](#) – the show where we ask for your help identifying people who are selfish enough to think they can dump their rubbish on our streets.

If you know or recognise anyone on the show, email grimecrime@lbbd.gov.uk with any details.

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.

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 £200,000 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

£90 million monthly spending on homelessness accommodation 'threatens to bankrupt boroughs'

New data from London Councils reveals that boroughs' monthly spending on temporary accommodation for homeless households grew by almost 40% last year – reaching £90 million a month.

Skyrocketing rates of homelessness and a severe shortage of affordable accommodation have put major strain on boroughs' budgets, with London Councils labelling this a "critical danger" to their financial stability.

Ahead of this week's Budget, London Councils is calling for more government support to help councils meet these costs and reduce the risk of requiring a Section 114 notice – effectively declaring bankruptcy.

London Councils' Executive Member for Regeneration, Housing & Planning, Cllr Darren Rodwell, said: "Homelessness has a devastating impact on

individuals and families, while also bringing massive and unsustainable costs to boroughs' budgets.

“Boroughs work hard to house homeless Londoners. However, London’s ballooning temporary accommodation bill is a critical danger to boroughs’ financial stability. If things go on the way they are, it’s no exaggeration to say these enormous costs pose a bankruptcy risk.

“We’re urging ministers to boost funding support for boroughs grappling with a worsening homelessness crisis. Ending the unfair cap on housing benefit subsidy rates for temporary accommodation would relieve much of the pressure on boroughs’ resources, helping us balance the books while providing homelessness support to everyone who needs it.”

Homes for Ukraine scheme: MPs warn of growing homelessness

London Councils has responded to a new report from a parliamentary committee raising concerns about homelessness among Ukrainians in the UK.

In their [report](#), the Public Accounts Committee warns that the risk of homelessness is likely to increase as arrangements between Ukrainian guests and their UK sponsors end in break down.

London Councils’ lead for asylum and refugees, Cllr Grace Williams, said: “London has a long history of offering sanctuary to those fleeing war and persecution, and boroughs have been proud to play a key role welcoming Ukrainians to the capital.

“The capital’s shortage of affordable housing makes it extremely hard to find suitable accommodation for everyone who needs it. Homelessness is the worst possible outcome for Ukrainian guests and is a serious concern for boroughs.

London is already grappling with the most extreme homelessness crisis in the country.

“With the conflict continuing and London’s housing pressures as severe as

ever, this challenge is not going away. Boroughs will continue doing everything they can to help Ukrainian refugees into suitable accommodation. The government must ensure councils have the resources required to deliver this support, alongside all the other pressures currently facing local services.”

London Youth Gateway

London Councils’ Grants Team visited New Horizon’s London Youth Gateway project with Grants Committee members Cllr Christopher Kennedy (LB Hackney) and Paul Martinelli (City of London) to take a tour of the facilities and learn more about the day-to-day work they do at the project.

London Youth Gateway is one of the projects funded under the Pan-London Grants programme run by London Councils. The project provides services around prevention and targeted intervention for young people, making sure that young Londoners facing homelessness are safe and supported while helping them achieve long-term stability in terms of housing, income, health and migration status.

The project has supported more than 5,300 young Londoners since its launch in April 2022. You can learn more about this and other projects supported by the [Pan-London Grants Programme on London Councils’ website](#).

Spring Budget

Ahead of this week’s Spring Budget (due to be announced 6 March), London Councils is reiterating its call for the government to address the severe financial pressures facing London boroughs, including the continuation of the Household Support Fund, adequate housing and homelessness funding and reforming the broken local government finance system.

More information can be found in London Councils’ consultation response to the local government finance settlement, which is [available here](#).

This week's coverage in the national and regional media

Ethical Marketing News, 1 March – [UK's first community-led investment fund chooses NextEnergy Solar Fund. Mentions Barking and Dagenham.](#)

Home Care Insight, 29 February – [Care worker found guilty of 'despicable' fraud ordered to pay £40k.](#) Mentions Barking and Dagenham.

Evening Standard, 29 February – [Rough sleeping in London up by a third as capital faces 'homelessness emergency'.](#) Mentions Cllr Darren Rodwell.

London Reviews, 29 February – [Women's Museum, Barking.](#)

Evening Standard, 29 February – [Councils on the brink: London authorities on edge of going broke warn services are at risk. Mentions Barking and Dagenham.](#)

West Ham Utd, 29 February – [Hammers heroes open Bobby Moore Sports Hub in Dagenham.](#)

Evening Standard, 27 February – [London councils spending £90m each month on homeless accommodation.](#) Mentions Cllr Darren Rodwell.

Gov.uk, 27 February – [DLUHC announces allocation of funding for council-led initiatives advancing innovative digital planning services. Mentions Barking and Dagenham.](#)

Evening Standard, 26 February – [Violent patients face ban as east London NHS staff wear bodycams to combat rise in assaults.](#) Mentions BHRUT.

Letsrecycle.com, 26 February – [Newham plans for 'crucial' period before end of Renewi deal.](#) Mentions Barking and Dagenham.

Materials Recycling World, 26 February – [Councils' poll finds public against excess packaging.](#) Mentions Cllr Darren Rodwell.

Evening Standard, 23 February – [Health and Safety Executive looking at balcony collapse at multi-million pound development in Barking.](#)

Time Out Magazine, 23 February – [The surprising history of the Suffragette Line.](#) Mentions Barking Riverside.

Media Releases

[Barking and Dagenham residents cook up a storm as part of 'Come Cook With Us! community cookbook launch](#)

[Past and present England heroes honoured with new £13 million sports hub in East London.](#)

[Council approves 2024/25 budget while calling for fairer funding.](#)

[It's all 'GOOD' for the Adult College, Barking and Dagenham.](#)

[East London council rescues vulnerable tenant from converted crack den.](#)

[Over £250,000 in affordable loans handed out to residents through the council's partnership with Leeds Credit Union.](#)

[Barking trader fined for selling a vape to a kid.](#)

[Care worker found guilty of fraud and ordered to pay over £45,000.](#)

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 if you have any suggestions on items for inclusion in future bulletins and any feedback you may have on how it can be improved.

Copyright © [2020] [London Borough of Barking and Dagenham], All rights reserved.