



ISLINGTON

Towards a Fairer Islington: Our Commitment

Corporate Plan 2015-19

Foreword

The Fairness Commission and the Employment Commission both reinforced that Islington is a borough of contrasts. We have a thriving economy at the centre of a world city with 1.34 local jobs for every person of working age in the borough. However, it is also a very unequal place with rising inequality and high levels of poverty.

This unique context is why we have a clear vision:

“to make Islington fairer and create a place where everyone, whatever their background, has the same opportunity to reach their potential and enjoy a good quality of life”.

Over the past four years we have made significant progress in delivering the Fairness agenda. Since 2010, 1,800 affordable homes have been delivered; GCSE results have jumped from 143rd (out of 151 local authorities) to 39th, and youth unemployment has been halved. These achievements, and more, have been delivered despite unprecedented cuts to public sector and social security funding. Since 2010 the Government has cut its funding to Islington Council by half – a reduction of £150 million – putting Islington in the top ten worst hit areas in the country and leaving every household in the borough £1,000 worse off. And far deeper cuts lie ahead.

However, despite these challenges, we will continue to strive for fairness and equality for all residents.

In 2014 the current Administration was re-elected on three key priorities:

- Building more council housing and supporting private renters
- Helping residents to find the right job
- Helping residents cope with the rising cost of living

After consultation with local residents we added two additional priorities:

- Providing residents with good services on a tight budget
- Making Islington a place where residents have a good quality of life

These are the issues that residents say affect their lives most on a daily basis and are the commitments we will focus our work on over the next four years.

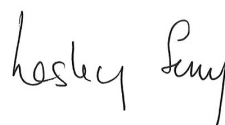
However, if we are to succeed, we will need to tackle the deeper social challenges which prevent residents from improving outcomes for themselves and their families: mental ill health; domestic violence; long-term health conditions; substance misuse; and long-term unemployment. Many of our residents face a combination of these problems and, as a result, are likely to be in repeated contact with multiple public services – not only those delivered by the Council but also health services, jobcentres, the criminal justice system and housing providers.

A great deal of public money in our borough is spent managing the impact of these social challenges because too many people are affected by them. If we are to deliver change for our most vulnerable residents, whilst continuing to deliver good quality public services for all, then we need to work with partners to tackle these challenges and reduce dependency on public services.

Islington is proud to be a council that has fairness at its heart and puts local people first. Equalities underpins everything we do. As an organisation we will focus on delivering efficient and value for money services where our staff treat public money as if it were their own. In the face of unprecedented Government cuts, we'll ensure we make the best use of our resources to deliver on the things that will have the biggest impact on the lives of Islington residents.



Richard Watts
Leader of the Council



Lesley Seary
Chief Executive

The Islington Commitment: 2015-19

This plan sets out the Council's vision and priorities for the next four years, what we will do to achieve them, and how we will measure our success.

Our vision:

We're determined to make Islington fairer. To create a place where everyone, whatever their background, has the opportunity to reach their potential and enjoy a good quality of life.

Our priorities:

Over the next four years, we will focus on:

1. Building more council housing and supporting private renters
2. Helping residents who are out of work to find the right job
3. Helping residents cope with the rising cost of living
4. Providing residents with good services on a tight budget
5. Making Islington a place where our residents have a good quality of life

Tackling deeper social issues:

The Council and its partners will work in new ways to reduce the scale of the deeper social challenges that are fundamental to improving the quality of residents' lives but also to ensuring the Council, and its partners across the public sector, are able to best manage the cuts to funding.

The key social challenges are:

- Mental ill health
- Domestic violence
- Long-term conditions
- Substance misuse
- Long-term unemployment

Our underpinning principles:

If we are to really make a difference, with significantly reduced resources, the Council and its partners need to work in new ways to maximise public sector resources and provide more joined up services. The principles we will work to in all areas are:

- a) Early intervention and prevention:** moving services to address problems before they become too ingrained to manage.
- b) People-centred services:** we will develop person centred policies and services, rather than systems or process led approaches, with more multi-agency, multi-disciplinary teams, pooled budgets and joint working both across Islington and within the Council.
- c) Co-production:** we will work together with service users as equals to develop policy and services and adopt the Co-production concordat approach used in 'Making it Real'
- d) Strong Partnerships:** All public sector organisations in the borough are facing cuts and so the importance of working together in the interests of residents has never been greater. No one partner can solve the issues outlined in this paper but a strong Partnership can, so we all need to see beyond our own service lens.
- e) Making every contact count:** residents facing multiple disadvantage are in contact with many services so it is essential that we make every contact count and avoid people having to negotiate their way through complex systems.
- f) Employment focussed:** Supporting people into employment should be at the heart of everything we do.

Priority 1: Building more council housing and supporting private renters

Islington is one of the most densely populated and expensive places to live in London. There is a shortage of good quality, genuinely affordable housing and a significant unmet housing need. 40% of council owned homes are smaller homes with only one bedroom and there is a particular need for homes with two bedrooms and larger family-sized homes. We want to ensure that everyone in Islington has a place to live that is affordable, decent and secure.

To do this we will:

Increase the supply and choice of affordable homes

- Deliver a further 2,000 affordable homes – 1,500 of which will be for social rent, including 500 council homes (sites include Andover Estate, Camden Estate, Kings Square Estate, Holly Park Estate and Blenheim Court)
- Give local people priority for council housing, and continue to let homes on lifetime secure tenancies
- Use incentives or enforcement action to bring empty properties back into use, and tackle tenancy fraud
- Make best use of existing homes, promoting our mutual exchange and mobility schemes and assisting tenants in overcrowded or under-occupied homes to move

Ensure effective management of council housing

- Improve the quality of our repairs service
- Ensure that major works carried out by contractors are timely

Prevent homelessness and provide options

- Provide homelessness prevention and advice services
- Coordinate advice and support to households impacted by the benefit cap and other planned welfare reforms
- Reduce the number of families in nightly booked temporary accommodation, which is costly for the council and insecure for families

Improve housing conditions for private tenants

- Establish a Social Lettings Agency to provide better standards and lower fees than private lettings agencies and be a catalyst for change
- Promote awareness of the rights and responsibilities of private sector tenants, establishing a single point of contact within the Council
- Monitor standards in the private sector and take action against rogue landlords and lettings agents

Key measures of success

- 2,000 new homes by 2019
- Increase in the percentage of First Time fixes for repairs and all major repairs completed within 3 months
- Reductions in numbers accepted as homeless and in numbers in temporary accommodation

Relevant strategies

- Islington Housing Strategy
- Islington Core Strategy

Partnership working through

- New Homes Board

Priority 2: Helping people find the right job

The extensive work undertaken by the Employment Commission has provided a clear sense of what we need to do to get more local people into work. The Council will lead the way in implementing recommendations of the Commission. We believe, with the right support, that more people can move off long term benefit dependency and find a job that is right for them.

To achieve this we will:

<p>Provide employment support for those who most need it</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Work with partners to agree common standards and working practices for employment support services across Islington and establish a network of employment coaches to share best practice ■ Provide one to one employment coaching to those who most need it including long term unemployed, disabled people and those with mental health problems ■ Deliver a programme of adult and community learning courses to out of work or low income families focused on skills for employment ■ Lead by example in encouraging employers to provide flexible work at London Living Wage ■ Support parents to find affordable good quality childcare
<p>Support employers to recruit locally</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Engage with employers to identify careers and skills they most need and work with schools, colleges and services to meet this demand ■ Make it easier for employers to get involved in the employment agenda, including a new one-stop-shop website to offer jobs, work placements and mentoring ■ Work with businesses to increase offers of mentoring, coaching, volunteering and work experience to Islington residents
<p>Create change for the next generation</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Provide one to one support to NEETs or those at risk of becoming NEET ■ Work with schools, employers and FE colleges to develop and promote take up of apprenticeships and vocational training – including 200 council apprenticeships over the next four years ■ Support schools to deliver good quality careers advice and guidance and provide young people with the employability skills that employers require – and a new network for careers leads in schools
<p>Lobby government</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ For devolution of employment support, prioritising youth careers and taking vocational education seriously

Key measures of success

- A reduction in numbers of long term unemployed (1 year plus) and numbers claiming sickness benefits
- All 16-18 year olds in education or training

Relevant strategies

- Employment Commission final report

Partnership working through

- Employment Services Board
- Business Engagement Leadership Group

Priority 3: Helping residents cope with the rising cost of living

The cost of living is an issue that has received extensive media coverage over the past year. The Joseph Rowntree Foundation reported that living costs in the UK have risen dramatically, by 25% in 5 years – an increase that is affecting all of us, and having a significant impact on Islington residents. As a result, living standards are falling and many people are being forced to make calculated choices between heating their homes and eating, or getting in to debt. Helping people cope with the rising cost of living will be a big focus for the council over the next four years.

To achieve this we will:

Support families to everyday costs

- Protect universal free school meals for all our primary school pupils
- Provide bursaries for low income families for childcare and for young people to stay in education post 16
- Support access to affordable local fresh produce including continuing our programme of improving underused open spaces for community led food growing
- Continue to provide high quality childcare services, including wraparound care, that is subsidised for low income families

Reduce energy bills

- Provide advice on fuel debt and help reduce fuel poverty, working with partners to help ensure everyone can afford to heat their home.
- Support residents in securing the best energy deals such as collective energy switching
- Supply a further 500 Council homes with cheaper energy by delivering Bunhill Phase 2 and the Canal Sourced Heat Supply project which will extract heat from the Regents Canal and feed it into the Bunhill heat network

Help people struggling with debt

- Use planning and other powers to crack down on payday lenders
- Ensure residents have access to good quality free advice on financial and debt advice, benefits including through the CAB and other advice providers
- Support the Credit Union to provide a viable alternative to payday lenders
- Provide crisis support for people in real need through our Residents Support Scheme, in conjunction with Cripplegate Foundation

Key measures of success

- £ savings secured for vulnerable residents through Islington
- Council energy schemes
- Increased take up of free school meals
- Increased membership of the Credit Union

Relevant strategies

- Affordable Energy Strategy

Partnership working through

- Sustainable Energy Partnership
- Islington Debt Coalition

Priority 4: Providing residents with good services on a tight budget

Underlying everything we do as an organisation will be delivering efficient and value for money services. The Council must work to become as efficient as possible to enable us to continue to provide good quality services in the face of significant cuts to our funding.

To achieve this we will:

Make it easier to access council services online

- Help people help themselves by moving more services online and ensuring they are easy to use
- Redevelop our website to make it accessible on smart phones and tablets so people can deal with the council in a way that suits them

Provide efficient, high quality core services

- Continue to deliver a high quality, efficient refuse and recycling service
- Keep Islington clean, with efficient street cleaning and fly tipping services, including a responsive service via Twitter and the Clean Islington app
- Continue to provide an excellent library service, using creativity and innovation to ensure we make best use of our resources while delivering a service people want
- Safe and welcoming parks, leisure and sports centres for all residents

Generate new income

- Maximise income to reinvest in local services
- Ensure our property and assets are used efficiently, raising income where practical

Maximise income collection

- Maintain current high levels of Council Tax and Business Rates collection
- Maximise collection of rent – from council homes directly managed by the Council and those in Partners for Islington managed stock
- Support residents in arrears through our Multiple Debts Team
- Maximise infrastructure and Section 106 funding from planning developments in Islington

Key measures of success

- Increase in numbers of transactions online and reduction in phone calls and face to face visits
- Maintain current high collection rates for Council Tax, Business Rates and rent

Relevant strategies

- Transformation Programme
- Digital Strategy 2014-17
- Asset Management Strategy

Priority 5:

Making Islington a place where our residents have a good quality of life

Improving people's quality of life is key to achieving our vision of a Fairer Islington. Evidence tells us that those who are poorest are also most likely to experience poor physical and mental health, lower educational attainment, and be engaged in or be a victim of crime. We'll work with our partners to provide services to improve quality of life for all.

To achieve this we will:

Improve community safety

- Reduce youth crime and support victims of crime, especially those who are vulnerable
- Provide an effective response to reports of anti-social behaviour
- Tackle hate crime, violence against women and girls, and child sexual exploitation through raising awareness, encouraging reporting of crimes, and supporting victims

Help children to achieve their potential

- Improve the lives of children from birth to 19 through all Islington schools and nurseries being good or outstanding
- Strengthen early help for vulnerable children and families through programmes such as Stronger Families
- Support our most vulnerable children – especially those who are looked after or are in need – to be safe and to thrive

Help residents to live healthy independent lives

- Maximise take up of preventative programmes such as MMR immunisation, school dental health checks
- Promote healthy lifestyles and provide treatment programmes to tackle the causes of ill health
- Increase take up of early diagnosis of and support services
- Support disabled people and those with mental health issues

Support vulnerable residents and carers

- Integrate Islington's health and social care services to maximise resources and ensure a joined up service
- Implement 'Making it Real' to provide more personalised care and support, increase take up of Direct Payments to provide people with more control over their care, and develop the market for care support
- Implement the requirements of the Care Act 2015 – introducing a carer's assessment and new support for carers
- Support elderly and disabled people to live independently, and provide good quality care for those no longer able to do so

Key measures of success

- Outstanding GCES results for all pupils
- Narrowing the early years development and educational attainment gaps for low income families
- Increase in access to and success of key programmes e.g. Stop Smoking Service, IAPT, Drug and Alcohol Treatment
- Increased take up of Direct Payments
- Increased satisfaction of adult social services users and carers
- Reduction in youth offending and repeat offending
- Timely response to ASB reports
- Identification of / support to vulnerable victims
- Reduction in hate crime

Relevant strategies

- Children and Families Early intervention and Prevention Strategy 2015-2025
- Joint Strategic Needs Assessment
- Safer Islington Partnership Strategic Assessment
- Islington Core Strategy

Partnership working through

- Making it Real Board
- Health & Wellbeing Board
- Islington Children & Families Partnership
- Safeguarding Adults / Safeguarding Children Boards
- Safer Islington Partnership