

# BUILDING A FAIRER ISLINGTON

Our Commitment 2018-22



ISLINGTON

## Foreword

Since our pioneering Fairness Commission in 2010, Islington has been a borough with one clear vision:

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

Despite massive national government cuts to our core funding, we've made some great progress towards making Islington a fairer place for all by tackling inequality and poverty.

### **In the last 4 years we've:**

- supported over 4,000 local people into work
- built the most new council homes in over 30 years
- helped thousands of people out of fuel poverty and set up Angelic Energy - London's first municipal energy provider in more than a century
- our schools continue to improve and 9 out of 10 are rated Good or Outstanding
- worked with the police to keep residents safe and invested in targeted support for young people at risk of turning to crime

All this has been achieved whilst protecting the vital frontline services people rely on, such as support for older people, keeping all our libraries open and maintaining weekly bin collections.

However, there is so much more still to do and our commitment to creating a fairer borough is stronger now than ever.

Islington is a wonderful place, but it's also a borough of contrasts. A thriving area at the centre of a world city, with more than enough jobs for every person of working age, and a place where our diverse community pulls together and is incredibly strong. Yet, it is also a place where the gap between the 'haves' and 'have nots' is stark, and where one in three children are growing up in poverty. Where there is still too big a gap between those with secure, good-quality housing and those without; between those with the confidence, networks and qualifications to seize opportunities and those who feel those opportunities are out of reach.

Many local residents also face both complex and multiple challenges, such as housing, employment, offending, domestic violence, mental health and substance abuse and so have repeated contact with our services and those of our partners.

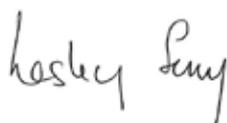
Tackling these deeper challenges is not only fundamental to improving the quality of local people's lives, it is also essential if we're to continue to be able to meet their needs in the face of significant budget cuts. We strongly believe that prevention and early intervention is the key to building a fairer Islington - and it's that guiding principle that will underpin how we work. We also want to ensure the Council works in a way that meets people's needs in a way that works for them, with services designed through their eyes and reflecting how people want to receive support.

There will be inevitable challenges ahead, with more national government cuts to come, at the same time as an increased demand for services. But we know what residents want us to focus on - the things that affect their everyday lives - safety, housing, jobs, health and opportunities for our children and young people. These are reflected in our key objectives alongside a commitment to keeping the borough welcoming and attractive, running the council efficiently and well and remaining an open and listening council that works with local people.

We look forward to working with residents, partners and our committed workforce to achieve our shared vision of building a fairer Islington for all.



Richard Watts  
**Leader of the Council**



Lesley Seary  
**Chief Executive**

## Our Vision

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.**

## Our Approach

Communities in Islington face deep social challenges, driven by deprivation and inequality. Many local residents face both complex and multiple challenges, such as housing, employment, offending, domestic violence, mental health and substance abuse and so have repeated contact with our services and those of our partners – health services, jobcentres, the criminal justice system and housing providers.

Tackling these deeper challenges is not only fundamental to improving the quality of our residents' lives, it is also essential if we're to continue to be able to meet their needs in the face of significant budget cuts. Far too much public money in our borough is spent managing the high level of social challenges we face, when more could be done to prevent problems earlier.

We want to create the conditions which lower the chances of problems arising in the first place and intervene early where they do - taking positive action as quickly as possible to stop problems taking root. That's why we've adopted a **consistent strategic approach to work with people, families and communities and to build resilience through prevention and early intervention.**

## Our Objectives

As a council we have seven clear objectives:

- **Homes** - Delivering decent and genuinely affordable homes for all
- **Jobs and money** - Delivering an inclusive economy, supporting people into work and helping them with the cost of living
- **Safety** - Creating a safe and cohesive borough for all
- **Children and Young People** - Making Islington the best place for all young people to grow up
- **Place and environment** - Making Islington a welcoming and attractive borough and creating a healthier environment for all
- **Health and independence** - Ensuring our residents can lead healthy and independent lives
- **Well run council** - Continuing to be a well-run council and making a difference despite reduced resources

## Our Values

Our overriding approach is to help people to build resilience through prevention and early intervention, but we know we can't do this in isolation – and nor do we want to. Islington is a vibrant and cohesive community, with strong partnership working across the public sector and a valued and dynamic voluntary sector. We want to harness the energy and commitment of everyone who makes Islington what it is – pulling together as a team where everyone plays their part.

We want to work in a way which is **collaborative, empowering and efficient** and these are the three corporate values that we'll be focusing on as an organisation.



## Homes

### Delivering decent and genuinely affordable homes for all

Over the last four years we have delivered over 800 new genuinely affordable homes for local people and built the largest number of council homes in Islington for 30 years. However, our recent Residents' Survey tells us that the shortage of genuinely affordable housing continues to be a real concern for Islington residents and we share those concerns.

In the next four years, we will continue to strive for decent, secure and genuinely affordable homes for all. We will continue our ambitious building programme, ensuring that new council homes and other new affordable homes are prioritised for local people. We will also crack down on rogue landlords and ensure residents living in our own housing receive a top class service.

## We will...

### Increase the supply and choice of genuinely affordable homes

- Build a further 550 new council homes as we deliver 1,900 new genuinely affordable homes by 2022
- Ensure at least 50% of new homes on all eligible sites in the borough are genuinely affordable homes, including at the Holloway Prison site
- Deliver more genuinely affordable homes for key workers
- Develop ways to consult people on the housing waiting list on new developments and young people on major new developments
- Make it easier for families to find a property that meets their needs, helping people to down-size when they no longer need a large property and supporting those in overcrowded conditions to move to a more suitable home

### Ensure effective management of council housing

- Deliver a high quality, responsive repairs service, encouraging residents to report issues online and get repairs fixed first time
- Deliver improvements to address damp problems
- Ensure that major works are carried out in a timely and transparent manner
- Work with the London Fire Brigade to continue our programme of fire safety improvements and comply with all the recommendations from the national public inquiry into the Grenfell Tower fire
- Encourage and support council tenants and residents in housing association properties to set up residents' groups and to have more say over how their estates are run

### Prevent homelessness and support rough sleepers

- Provide tailored support and advice for people who are homeless to help them find secure accommodation, including through No Recourse to Public Funds (NRPF) services
- Extend homelessness outreach services with council led co-ordination

### Improve housing conditions for private tenants

- Introduce a new landlord licensing scheme in Finsbury Park and Seven Sisters Road and investigate the feasibility of a borough wide landlord licensing scheme
- Take action against rogue landlords and letting agents who treat tenants unfairly, and offer advice to private tenants



## Jobs and money

Delivering an inclusive economy, supporting people into work and helping them with the cost of living

Islington has a thriving, diverse and growing economy, but we want more local people to enjoy its benefits.

Over the last four years we have supported over 4,000 local unemployed people into work, including 1,200 young people. But we still have high numbers of families who are out of work, or in low paid jobs, and are struggling to get by. We want to support residents to gain the skills they need to get a good job and to tackle in work poverty. We will work with partners as one Islington team to reduce worklessness, particularly long term unemployment. We also want to support local small businesses, town centres and business clusters to thrive.

Many people continue to struggle with rising bills and we will provide support and advice for those affected by the rising cost of living, particularly on energy costs and by tackling fuel poverty.

### We will...

#### Reduce levels of long term unemployment and worklessness

- Support another 4,000 local people into good quality jobs, and support those in low paid work to gain the skills to progress
- Help more people into decent, secure jobs through our iWork service; coordinating employment support across the borough in a 'Team Islington approach'
- Support more adults with Mental Health Needs and Learning Disabilities into work through voluntary programmes

#### Help residents get the skills they need to secure a good job

- Make lifelong learning more accessible, including through 'night schools'
- Develop an Employment and Skills Strategy to ensure local people benefit from emerging industries, conditions and opportunities within existing low-paid sectors improve and to address the impacts of Brexit

#### Create an inclusive economy and support local businesses

- Develop and deliver a new Inclusive Economic Development Strategy to ensure that Islington has an economy that works for everyone
- Secure new affordable workspaces for local people
- Continue to support local traders to get a fairer deal on their business rates, putting pressure on the government to rethink its approach
- Work with partners to ensure local spending remains within the local economy, and that procurement decisions secure jobs, training and other opportunities for local residents
- Provide workshops and support for small businesses, support local markets and coordinate town centre groups

#### Work with local businesses and our contractors to ensure they're fair employers

- Pay all council staff at least the real London Living Wage and demand the same from those we do business with
- Encourage even more local businesses and voluntary organisations to pay the real London Living Wage
- Ensure no companies in our supply chains practice modern slavery

#### Provide practical support to help residents cope with the cost of living

- Help residents save money on their energy bills through Angelic Energy and by delivering more local energy centres across the borough
- Deliver practical support for people to help tackle fuel poverty through our award-winning Seasonal Health Interventions Network (SHINE) service
- Maintain the Council's Income Maximisation (IMAX) service, support free advice services and work with people struggling with multiple debts
- Protect the £100 Older Person's Council Tax discount



## Safety

### Creating a safe and cohesive borough for all

We are proud that our community is strong and cohesive. Our recent Residents' Survey told us that 92% of Islington residents agree that their local area is a place where people from different backgrounds get on well together. We are clear that Islington is no place for hate and we will work with our communities and the police to tackle hate crime in all its forms. We will also work with voluntary and community sector groups to help foster resilient communities, building on the fact that Islington is a place where people are there for each other.

However, that same survey also told us that crime is the number one concern for Islington residents. Over the past few years - like many other boroughs - we've had issues with violent youth crime and we are determined to tackle it.

We want Islington to be a safe and cohesive borough. To achieve this, we will work closely with the police, partners and communities to deal with crime through prevention and to tackle anti-social behaviour. In particular, we want to build on our Integrated Gangs Team approach and work with young people so that fewer are involved in crime – as victims or as perpetrators.

## We will...

### Make sure fewer young people are victims or perpetrators of crime

- Build on our Integrated Gangs Team approach to reach and help more young people at risk of involvement in gangs and criminal activity
- Invest £1m in targeted support for young people at risk of being drawn into crime by providing mentor and independent caseworkers
- Lead local and national efforts to tackle 'county lines' drug dealing

### Reduce levels of crime and anti-social behaviour

- Reduce the level of crime and ASB in partnership with the police and the local community
- Maintain our anti-social behaviour hotline, working with the police and using tenant action to address local issues
- Fully implement our strategy to tackle violence against women and girls, including working with men and boys to prevent domestic violence and abuse
- Gain the Domestic Abuse Housing Alliance accreditation and take stronger action to exclude perpetrators from their victims' homes

### Celebrate and protect our diverse and integrated communities

- Work with the police to show we will not tolerate hate crime, taking tough action where it does take place
- Engage with local communities to promote cohesion and encourage people to sign up to the Islington Hate Crime Pledge
- Celebrate our diverse community through a broad range of events and by working with schools to support young people to grow up respecting difference

### Keep consumers informed and safe

- Use our licensing powers to take action against businesses who fail to follow the rules
- Clamping down on those shops who sell alcohol, tobacco and knives to under 18s



# Children and Young People

Making Islington the best place for all young people to grow up

Our efforts to support children and young people to get the best start in life have been effective. Educational attainment is improving and the borough is now one of the best in boosting social mobility for disadvantaged young people.

However, giving all children and young people in Islington the best start in life is at the heart of making our borough a fairer place for all and we know there is more to do. We want young people growing up in Islington to feel they have a future here, and a sense of ownership over the changes they see around them. We want Islington to be a place where they can achieve their full potential, regardless of their background, with the best schools and the best services to support children and families in those early years. Implementing the recommendations of the pioneering Fair Futures Commission will help us to achieve this.

## We will...

**Always keep children and young people safe and secure and reduce the number of children growing up in poverty**

- Transform care for children and young people by establishing a strategic approach to health, education and care within Islington
- Design a single point of access for children and young people with social, emotional and mental health needs
- Work with our NHS partners to develop paediatric care closer to home
- Develop a new model for responding to domestic abuse
- Protect Free School Meals for all primary and nursery school pupils and address 'holiday hunger' through genuinely affordable holiday clubs

**Make sure young children get the best start**

- Provide a range of accessible services for families with young children delivered in children's centres, libraries and other community venues
- Keep all children's centres and council-run youth centres open
- Deliver 30 hours of free childcare per week for parents of 3 & 4 year olds

**Ensure our schools are places where all young people can learn and thrive**

- Give all Islington young people the opportunity to benefit from at least 100 hours of work-related experience by the time they reach the age of 16
- Enable all young people to experience 11 cultural experiences in the borough by Year 11, and give every child chances to engage with music
- Work with schools to increase primary school attendance to at least the inner London average
- Work with schools, colleges and employers to develop industry led careers advice, tailored to the needs of young people
- Broker more apprenticeships and guarantee support to any young person wanting to gain a high quality apprenticeship
- Support local schools to further improve results, so that they are above the London average, and narrow the attainment gap between different groups
- Maintain a 'Family of Schools' approach to deliver the best education possible, intervening quickly when issues arise, and ensuring all schools provide an inclusive curriculum that reflects the views of LGBTQI+ young people
- Support Islington Youth Council to be involved in the work of the council



## Place and environment

### Making Islington a welcoming and attractive borough and creating a healthy environment for all

We believe that helping to make our borough a fairer place for all must include action to improve the environment, by tackling poor air quality and by encouraging more people to walk and cycle. With space in short supply in Islington, we need to protect and promote space for recreational activities and continue to cherish our parks and open spaces.

We also want to ensure that the borough is clean and tidy, with high levels of recycling, to help build sustainable communities that are attractive and welcoming.

## We will...

### Keep the streets clean and promote recycling

- Provide weekly bin and recycling collections, and remodel our street cleansing services to ensure a cleansing visit after refuse collections
- Introduce three new rapid-response crews to respond to reports of fly tipping
- Work with the Council's new Recycling Champion and local volunteers to raise awareness across the borough of the benefits of recycling

### Make it easier and safer for people to travel through the borough and beyond

- Improve air quality across the borough, especially near schools by closing streets at opening and closing times and install air quality monitors at every school
- Deliver at least one cycling improvement in every ward over the next four years, install 400 more bike storage facilities on streets and seek TfL support for more protected cycle routes
- Install 400 new electric vehicle charging points across the borough
- Convert all 11,350 streetlights in the borough to LED by March 2019
- Work towards banning lorries (HGVs) from driving on residential roads
- Work with TfL to remodel gyratories at Highbury Corner, Nags Head, Old Street and King's Cross

### Make sure residents have access to high quality parks, leisure facilities and cultural opportunities

- Continue to provide safe and welcoming parks, leisure and sports centres for all residents
- Develop a new Physical Activity Strategy to increase opportunities for sports and recreation and to engage more people in activity and improved health and wellbeing
- Promote and develop the Islington in Bloom campaign to encourage community participation in urban greening.
- Use the Arts on Estates programme to increase access to cultural institutions
- Work with Better, the social enterprise that runs our leisure centres, to ensure our services remain accessible for all



# Health and independence

## Ensuring our residents can lead healthy and independent lives

Making Islington a fairer place for all must include valuing all of our residents. We need to work with our partners to tackle health inequalities and help residents to stay fit and healthy, both physically and mentally, for as long as possible.

We want to work with the NHS to deliver more joined up health and care services, arranged around people's lives, and focusing on early intervention before problems become worse.

We will ensure that older and vulnerable residents are cared for and safeguarded and that residents are supported to live independently where possible and well supported if not. We will work to ensure that residents are socially active and connected to their communities.

## We will...

### Support people to live healthy lives

- Tackle key public health issues such as smoking, obesity, and drug and alcohol misuse through commissioned services
- Work with our partners to fully integrate health and social care services, so that residents receive a holistic and joined up service to meet their health needs
- Work with the NHS and other partners to deliver community based preventative services
- Develop integrated support for people with complex and multiple needs
- Improve access to mental health services for all, especially BAME residents, and seek a genuine parity of esteem between physical and mental health services

### Help residents to feel socially active and connected to their community

- Make it a requirement of all relevant council-provided and commissioned services to reduce loneliness
- Work with local voluntary and community sector groups to raise awareness of local activities and clubs to help tackle social isolation
- Promote volunteering as a way to tackle social isolation and as a means to bring communities together

### Safeguard and protect older and vulnerable residents

- Implement the Adult Social Plan 2018 -2021 by working with providers to develop a market of care in Islington that is best suited to the needs of our residents
- Continue to develop joined-up health, care and support services with NHS partners, including the CCG, Whittington Health and Camden and Islington NHS Trust
- Ensure that family carers are supported and improve outcomes for family carers in Islington
- Work with VCS organisations to empower residents and to provide services people want in community settings

### Help residents to live independently

- Ensure that we have the right range of housing options to meet people's needs and support their independence, including through sheltered and sheltered plus options
- Increase the number of adults with Mental Health Needs and Learning Disabilities who are supported to live independently
- Continue to promote the take-up of personal budgets as a means to help people make decisions about their own care



## A well run council

Continuing to be a well-run council, making a difference despite reduced resources

Despite year on year national government cuts to the council that will see us lose 70 per cent of our core funding by 2020, we have continued to provide good quality services on a tight budget. A recent peer review by the Local Government Association described Islington as a well-run council with a strong sense of values and a commitment to fairness that runs through everything we do.

Over the next four years, we will ensure that our 'back office' services continue to support the organisation to achieve its goals. We'll ensure that we have robust and responsive legal and democratic processes in place, that we have a diverse, skilled and motivated workforce and that our buildings and IT infrastructure help us to deliver our goals.

We'll make sure that our finance and resources are managed effectively and that every penny of public money is used wisely. We will also use the council's role as an economic agent to ensure that public sector expenditure remains within the local economy and provides opportunities for local people and businesses.

## We will...

**Manage our budget effectively and efficiently**

- Keep council tax below the London average and maximise collection of council tax and business rates, including recovery of old debts
- Introduce a voluntary council tax supplement which would be used to support additional prevention and early intervention services for local people to create a more connected community
- Ensure effective budget setting and financial monitoring
- Maximise opportunities to use buildings to work with partners and to reduce costs while delivering a more joined-up service for our residents

**Harness digital technology for the benefit of residents and staff**

- Improve and expand our online services making it easier for residents to interact with us in ways that best suit them, whilst addressing digital exclusion
- Drive through digital solutions which support our staff to deliver a better service

**Make sure our workforce is diverse, skilled and highly motivated**

- Develop a People Strategy to attract, develop and retain the best staff and ensure that all staff have the opportunity to progress so that we improve diversity rates at all levels
- Carry out annual comprehensive equality pay audits and work to ensure pay equality at all levels amongst our staff
- Continue to deliver apprenticeship opportunities in the council for our residents

**Be open and accountable**

- Manage data both securely and strategically to help deliver services that meet our residents' needs
- Support the public to take part in consultations and to influence decision-making

## Keeping you informed

We've got big ambitions for a fairer Islington, but we also have a plan to make those ambitions a reality. We'll be open and transparent in letting residents know how we're getting on through a published annual report and regular updates in Islington Life. If you have any questions about this document, or just want to find out more, email [communications@islington.gov.uk](mailto:communications@islington.gov.uk)