

## Council Report

June 2016

The clock is ticking in the EU referendum. It's vital that we remain in Europe or risk huge damage to our economy. With fears of Brexit wiping £30bn off the stock markets - which harms pension funds and risks jobs - in just one day, it's clear that a vote to leave will cause real pain for those who can least afford it.

### Council business

The meeting of Full Council on 7th June was mostly uneventful - we approved a new licensing policy for the borough, but the bulk of the meeting were debates. We discussed Heller House again: everyone agrees that the site is unsuitable and better respite care can be provided. We are looking at the 'third option' of redeveloping the site to provide respite care in borough, but those currently receiving it would still need to access care elsewhere in the interim. We are working closely with families to ensure they have the care they need.

I had hoped to speak on our motion about our fantastic local schools and against forced academisation, but last minute advice was that my wife's employment as a teacher in the borough meant I could have a pecuniary interest and should leave the chamber.

At Health Scrutiny we heard early plans for transformation of mental health services, including a new 'single point of access' that makes it easier to access care. The project is a collaboration between the CCG, WLHMT and the Council, and I was pleased to hear in response to my question that on our side we are being open and contributing well to the development of the plans. I did stress the need to work with all parts of the Council and not just Adults Services - others on the committee pointed out the excellent work that special schools do, so it's about joining up as many dots as possible.

Our regular Planning training covered recent updates to legislation and neighbourhood planning. The new 'starter homes' - which could cost up to £450,000 in London - are particularly worrying, as we will have a duty to promote them as part of the affordable housing component of new schemes. We currently make sure that developers provide homes for social rent and some for part-ownership, but this new category makes a mockery of the 'affordable' label and will in practice mean far fewer homes that ordinary working families can afford to live in.

Finally, we recently had a 'peer review' of the Council by the Local Government Association. The headline finding is that, despite the enormous pressure on our budget from Tory austerity, "Ealing is a high performing council...The council is doing great things for its community."



I'm supporting LabourIN - our campaign to stay in the EU for jobs, rights and security

## **South Acton news**

We had a tour of some of the new homes being built as part of the South Acton estate regeneration, after one of the regular Community Board meetings. These are high quality new homes, and the latest planning application included more affordable homes than originally envisaged in the master plan.

The problems we've had with HMOs in the Avenue Road area have returned with a number of complaints about fly tipping, but we're following up with enforcement officers to sort this out. I'm also dealing with a dumping problem on Fordhook Avenue which has been going on for some time.

Overall the introduction of the new collection scheme has gone very well. There have been a few glitches but the number of problems we've had to intervene to sort out has been minimal. Please do remember that food waste is still collected weekly from your brown caddy - this is the best way to minimise waste and ensure the system works smoothly.

Our next ward forum is on Weds 22nd June at the Armenian centre on Mill Hill Road, starting at 7pm. There's plenty on the agenda and as always it would be good to see you there - the ward forum can suggest ideas for spending some of our budget on local projects.

With best wishes,  
Josh, Yvonne and Mik

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