

Council Report July 2016

A strong local result to Remain last month was overshadowed by the national picture - something to remind us of last May, I suppose!

It's clear that many of the economic warnings before the vote about the risks of leaving the EU are coming true: a friend of mine runs a small business that is now at risk, and in my day job we face uncertainty about future EU research funding and EU student recruitment.

As a Council we receive grant funding from the EU - and it's obviously unclear if some of the infamous "£350m a week" will make its way back to Ealing: we may face further cuts to our budget. And as you know from my previous reports, by opening the borough to business and building new homes we've managed to freeze council tax and invest new money in services: this growth is now at risk, too, from the economic uncertainty.

On a sad note, I would like to pay a warm tribute to Jo Cox. I was in Tooting campaigning in the by-election on 16 June and the news as it came through was utterly heart breaking. She was a fantastic new MP, and will be much missed.

Council business

With the referendum purdah period disrupting council business, there's not been as much happening for me this month as usual.

At Overview and Scrutiny Committee we discussed the call-in of the Parking Strategy and CPZ Consultation papers. As usual, the Tories were unhappy that we intend to ask residents their views.

The new CPZ programme will actively identify areas where there is high parking stress, through surveys of usage. Currently, we consult residents on an ad hoc basis as a result of requests. The new process will ensure limited resources are targeted effectively where a CPZ can make a real difference.

The Tory councillor who'd called in these items, however, left the meeting before we reached our conclusion - which was to reject the call-in.

Cabinet have agreed a developer for Ealing Town Hall, which will create a hotel in the unused and unloved spaces of the building while preserving the civic areas for future generations. Some parts of the interior are in quite a state, so to have someone other than residents pay for the work is a real bonus!



Referendum polling day overlooking Brouncker Road from Barwick House - the weather presaging the result?

It was also agreed to implement the private rented licensing scheme that I've mentioned before. This will secure better quality of accommodation for renters, and ensure that some of the problems associated with HMOs can be more effectively tackled.

Next week, full Council debates the updated 'corporate plan' - essentially, the detailed implementation of our manifesto. We've made excellent progress in the last two years at fulfilling our political priorities even while the Tory government has tried to frustrate us.

In 2015/16, we built 158 council homes with 198 more on site or in contract; we helped hundreds of residents into employment, helped nearly a thousand gain qualifications and delivered 126 apprenticeships. The full report is [here](#) (PDF), and I hope to speak in the debate on Tuesday 19th. Having a Labour Council makes a real difference to people's lives, and we must never shy away from emphasising that.

South Acton news

The ward is just as busy as ever, with good turnout at the ward forum the evening before the referendum vote. We inevitably discussed the wheelie-bin roll-out, which despite some teething problems as residents and collection crews get used to the new system is working well overall.

We met the local police team to discuss what's been going on in the ward and updates on previous incidents. Theft from motor vehicles continues to be a problem, and the police have launched Operation Titan to combat it. Please make sure you keep valuables out of sight to reduce opportunistic smash-and-grab.

Drugs and anti-social behaviour continue to be a major focus of our neighbourhood team; recently they've supported the Council in evicting a household who had been causing misery for their neighbours.

Finally, we will soon be saying goodbye to Sgt Snaith who's led the Safer Neighbourhood Team so successfully. He'll be tough to replace, but we'll be making sure his successor is as committed to the ward as he has been.

We continue to press the developer to move forward with the old library cinema plans; the old Town Hall development is progressing nicely; after Waitrose pulled out of the Oaks due to uncertainty in the retail market we're waiting confirmation of the new anchor tenant(s) - a retailer of a similar profile is promised.

As ever, do get in touch with myself, Yvonne or Mik if you have any questions, problems or just want to chat!

With best wishes,
Josh, Yvonne and Mik

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