

Cllr Josh Blacker

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Council Report October 2017

There has been widespread coverage of this week's Full Council, which debated how best to protect women from intimidation and harassment as they access the Marie Stopes clinic on Mattock Lane.

The evidence presented to us by Sister Supporter was clear: the actions of anti-choice, anti-abortion protestors go far beyond what is reasonable and justifiable free speech. The right to express a view on the legality or morality of abortion cannot be allowed to cause distress and real harm to women making a legal choice.

The Council will now explore all the options available to us to create a safe space around the clinic. This will take time, will undoubtedly be challenged, and will not be easy. But it is the right thing to do - and I was pleased that, aside from two abstentions, councillors from all parties voted unanimously for the proposals.

Council business

Once again Ealing Tories fail to grasp the nature of the challenges facing us. [At Full Council I responded](#) to Tory calls to water down the Mayor of London's proposals to tackle air quality by kicking measures into the long grass and focus only on limited interventions.

With 10,000 premature deaths in London every year related to air pollution, delay and tinkering at the edges isn't enough. The Tory Government have been defeated several times in the High Court over their own inadequate plans to deal with what is recognised by the WHO as a public health emergency - Sadiq is pressing ahead as quickly as he can with measures that will make a difference, and we have to support him.

Scrutiny, chaired by my colleague Mik, rejected another call-in by the Tories about the relocation of Ealing Central Library. This will eventually move to a brand new facility on the current Council offices site, alongside new offices, resident-facing services and homes. Whether it's air pollution, the housing



Speaking on air quality and opposing Tory proposals to water down Sadiq Khan's anti-pollution measures

crisis or the financial pressures we find ourselves facing - Ealing's Tories have no answers and certainly no vision for our borough.

Meanwhile at the Scrutiny Panel that I chair, we heard about the positive impact of *Brighter Futures*, a programme to reduce the number of looked-after children in the borough. The focus on outcomes has led to a rethink of how our social workers, clinical psychologists, foster carers and others work together to make a real difference to young people's lives.

South Acton news

Mik, Yvonne and I have had a meeting with those involved in plans for a new high school on the Acton College site to get an update on emerging proposals and timelines. With a growing population, new high school places are a pressing need - the site was identified in the Council's *Planning for Schools* policy. Public consultation will begin before too long, and engagement with Mill Hill Park Residents' Association has already started.

The Ward Forum heard updates about various projects in the area, but also gave thanks to PC Dave Young who is leaving the South Acton SNT after many years of dedicated service. PC Young has been a fantastic officer and will be missed; a new team is taking shape under a new Sergeant - do get in touch with any local concerns if you'd like us to take them up with the police.

Planning issues have been more prominent, with two applications for converting properties into flats coming before the last committee meeting. Yvonne spoke against both proposals, and although one was approved, the rejection of the application in Hillcrest Road should send a message to developers that the local community will not put up with overdevelopment in the pursuit of profit at the expense of quality of life.

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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