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London Borough of Hackney Council  
Municipal Year 2021/22

Meeting held at Hackney Town Hall, Mare Street, London E8 1EA  
Wednesday, 30 June 2021 at 7.00pm

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**Councillors in Attendance:**

Mayor Glanville,  
Cllr Michael Desmond - Speaker  
(Chair)

Cllr Kam Adams, Cllr Brian Bell, Cllr  
Polly Billington, Deputy Mayor  
Anntoinette Bramble, Cllr Sophie  
Cameron, Cllr Ajay Chauhan, Cllr  
Mete Coban, Cllr Kofo David, Cllr  
Sade Etti, Cllr Susan Fajana-Thomas,  
Cllr Margaret Gordon, Cllr Katie  
Hanson, Cllr Christopher Kennedy,  
Cllr Hershy Lisser, Cllr Anna Lynch,  
Cllr Yvonne Maxwell, Cllr Clayeon  
McKenzie, Cllr Guy Nicholson,

Cllr Harvey Odze, Cllr M Can  
Ozsen, Cllr Benzion Papier, Cllr  
Sharon Patrick, Cllr Clare Potter,  
Cllr Steve Race, Cllr Ian  
Rathbone, Cllr Nick Sharman, Cllr  
Anya Sizer, Cllr Peter Snell, Cllr  
Patrick Spence, Cllr Simche  
Steinberger, Cllr Vincent Stops,  
Cllr Lynne Troughton, Cllr Caroline  
Woodley, Cllr Penny Wrout, and  
Cllr Sarah Young.

**Officer Contact:** Andrew Spragg, Governance Services Team Leader

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This meeting was live streamed and can be viewed at:  
<https://youtu.be/XOn3sXQQFbl>

### Councillor Michael Desmond (The Speaker) in the Chair

#### **1. Apologies**

- 1.1 Apologies for absence were received from or on behalf of Councillors: Levy, McMahon, Oguzkanli, Pallis, Peters and Plouviez.
- 1.2 Apologies for lateness were received from or on behalf of Councillors: Lisser, Papier and Steinberger.
- 1.3 The following Councillors joined the meeting remotely: Adejare, Chapman, Conway, Garasia, Gregory, Hayhurst, Joseph, Moema, Smyth, Webb and Williams.

#### **2. Speaker's Announcements**

- 2.1 The Speaker welcomed all present to the meeting, Councillors who had joined remotely and members of the public watching on the live stream. He addressed Council as follows:
  - Congratulations and welcome were extended to new Councillors: Lisser, Sizer, Troughton and Young, who were elected at the by-elections held on 6th May 2021.
  - Congratulations were extended to Dame Meg Hillier, MP for Hackney South and Shoreditch, who had been awarded a Damehood in the Queen's Birthday Honours List.
  - Best wishes were conveyed to the Secretary General of the Haifa Municipality (Hackney's twinned city in Israel) who was retiring after 24 years of service. The Speaker stated that he would write to her on behalf of the Council to extend well wishes to her and her successor.
  - Condolences were offered to the family of Gerald Stroh, a prominent public figure within Stamford Hill who had died earlier in June.
  - An overview of events and activities organised by the Speaker's Office included dinners, a football match on 22 August and a bike ride to Brighton.
  - There had been an anonymous donation of £1000 from a former Councillor to the Speakers' charity fund. It was noted that donations could be made via Virgin Money Giving and his two chosen charities were St Joseph's and Hackney Empire.

#### **3. Declarations of Interest**

- 3.1 There were no interests declared.

#### 4. Minutes of the Previous Meeting: 27 April 2021

**RESOLVED:** That the minutes of the Annual General Meeting of Council be agreed as a true and correct record of proceedings.

In accordance with Rule 2.2 of the Council Procedure Rules, the Speaker decided to vary the order of business and take agenda item 8 - Appointment of Independent Person at this point in proceedings.

#### 8. Appointment of Independent Person

8.1 On behalf of the Council, Mayor Glanville offered a vote of thanks to Mr Stopes-Roe for his term in office.

**Unanimously RESOLVED:** To approve the appointment of Feryal Ertan to serve as the Independent Person for a term of 4 years from the start of the 2021/2022 municipal year until the end of the 2024/2025 municipal year.

#### 5. Questions from Members of the Council

5.1 Questions from Members of the Council and the responses given at the meeting are attached at **Appendix 1**.

5.2 Questions that were not taken at the meeting due to time constraints, and where a written response was provided are attached at **Appendix 2**.

#### 6. The Elected Mayor's Statement

6.1 Mayor Glanville addressed Council as follows:

- Congratulations were offered to Dame Meg Hillier on her appointment as a Dame and well wishes were extended to the Secretary General of Haifa.
- A welcome was offered to Ian Williams as this was his first Council meeting as Acting Chief Executive.
- Newly elected Councillors: Lisser, Sizer, Troughton and Young were welcomed to the Chamber and to the Council.
- Reference was made to this being the first Full Council meeting in person since the start of the pandemic. The Mayor requested that it be on public record that he was not in support of the Government's decision to force Councillors back to meeting in person, following the end of remote participation and decision making.
- Thanks and appreciation were relayed to the various teams and staff members who had assisted in organising and facilitating the Council meeting.

- Tribute was paid to Bernadette Kelly, who had recently passed away. Bernadette had worked for Hackney for over 10 years and had most recently supported the Director of Legal and Governance Services. It was noted that Bernadette would be greatly missed not only by staff within Legal and Governance Services but across other directorates. Condolences were offered to her family.
- Cases of Coronavirus within the borough had dramatically increased in recent weeks and were up by 25%. The Mayor relayed his thanks to all those involved in the recent surge testing in Shoreditch and Dalston. It was noted that there had not been any new deaths in the borough from the virus since the last week in April.
- Concerns were expressed about the Government's initial response to the emergence of the Delta Variant which he believed to be lagging. The extension to the road map was welcomed. However, he was not in agreement with the removal of all social distancing measures and offered a word of caution to residents and visitors to the borough to consider maintaining social distancing beyond 19 July.
- The vaccine roll out throughout the borough was applauded, especially the contribution of the volunteers organised by Volunteer Centre Hackney, as well as the mass vaccination joint event with neighbouring East London boroughs at the London Stadium which took place in June. He condemned those protesting against the vaccine programme and signaled further mass vaccination events including at the Town Hall Campus.
- The Council's communication team was given a special mention and specifically La Braya Buffong Richmond who was recognised for her innovative engagement with young people on public health campaigns through use of various social media platforms. This work was considered to be best practice across London.
- Reminded the Council of the origin of the Britannia project, including historic underinvestment in Hoxton and Shoreditch. He was extremely proud of the re-opening of Britannia Leisure Centre and highlighted its significance to the local community as well as the challenges in delivering such a large and complex project. Thanks were relayed to ward councillors past and present, and the partners, staff and user groups involved in the project. It was announced that investment would continue in the surrounding locality, specifically in the area of housing, Shoreditch Park and the Adventure Playground. He referenced the inclusive nature of the project and the offer of a free summer programme for young people. In July, long term plans for Kings Hall Leisure Centre would be brought to Cabinet.
- He was pleased to have joined Deputy Mayor Bramble and Councillor Mete Coban on the launch of the Rebuilding a Greener Hackney Strategy, which brought together all of the Council's work on climate change.

6.2 In the absence of the Opposition Group Leader, Cllr Steinberger addressed the Council as follows:

- Congratulations were offered to Cllr Desmond on his Speakership.
- He commended the protest outside Hackney Town Hall on the Lower Traffic Neighbourhoods (LTNs), which he had joined earlier.

- He stated his support for the Horrendous Hackney Road Closures campaign and forthcoming court case and cited that he believed there to be a lack of democracy and accountability relating to the implementation of LTNs. Concerns were raised about emergency services being able to access school streets, which had limited access due to bollards.
- He congratulated and welcomed the newly elected Councillors.
- Well wishes were offered to Ed Sheridan, a local journalist, who was considered to be instrumental in supporting and reporting on local democracy. It was noted that he was moving on to work in the House of Commons.
- There was disbelief and unease that enforcement functions were being carried out whilst residents were having difficulty accessing what he considered to be basic Council functions and services such as housing benefit and Council housing.
- Concerns were raised about the impact of the cyber-attack on the vulnerable, with specific reference to residents being taken off the housing register and the bands in which they were placed.
- He welcomed the completion of the Britannia Leisure Centre, however concerns were raised about the efficacy of the build, citing Clissold Leisure Centre and the Lido as previous examples of poor quality builds.
- Thanks were relayed to all officers involved in organising the first in-person Council meeting since the outbreak of the pandemic.
- He echoed sentiments expressed by the Mayor on the passing of Bernadette Kelly.

6.3 Cllr Lynch congratulated Catherine Pelley - Chief Nurse and Director of Clinical Governance at Homerton Hospital, who was made a Member of the Order of the British Empire (MBE) for nursing leadership in the NHS.

6.4 In response to Cllr Steinberger's address, the Mayor stated that:

- The issue of car dominance within Stamford Hill was taken seriously, including Controlled Parking Zones (CPZs), transport infrastructure and supporting the newly implemented school streets. The administration was committed to reducing pollution outside schools. Reference was also made to the health risks associated with car dominant areas.
- Claims there were access issues for Hatzola, wider emergency service vehicles and school bus services to school streets were disingenuous as these streets were mostly enforced by cameras only.
- Dialogue with the school community, councillors and local residents had been going on since September 2020 and would continue.
- The Council would continue to lead on climate change, reducing air pollution and vehicle dominance in the borough.
- The impact of the criminal cyber-attack on the Council was far reaching, however assurances were given that work was continuing on all of the services severely impacted. He apologised for that and stated that the Council would work with and for the most vulnerable to restore services.

- Ed Sheridan had been a significant contributor to local democracy through his reporting. Tribute was paid to him and also to the Hackney Citizen and Hackney Gazette for continuing publication throughout the pandemic and their use of online reporting.

## 7. The Results of the By-Elections 2021

**RESOLVED:** To note the persons elected as Councillors on 6 May 2021 as set out at Appendix A of the report.

## 9. Annual Report of the Audit Committee 2020/21

9.1 Cllr Sharman, Chair of the Audit Committee, introduced the report outlining the Committee's response to the profound impact of the cyber-attack and COVID-19. He outlined risk management in specific service areas highlighting areas of ongoing risk, and reported that the Council's risk management approach remained sound. He welcomed the monthly meetings between Scrutiny Chairs and the Cabinet Member for Finance, which he believed would be beneficial in overseeing the Council's overall financial planning and resources.

9.2 Contributing to the debate, the Mayor and Cllr Odze welcomed the report, the work of the Committee under Cllr Sharman's Chairmanship, the additional scrutiny provided by the Audit Committee and the role of officers. Cllr Odze stated that he believed it was not possible for the majority party to scrutinise itself.

**RESOLVED:** To note the Annual Report of the Audit Committee set out in Appendix 1 of the report.

## 10. Members' Allowances Scheme 2021/22

10.1 Cllr Odze stated his opposition to the report and believed it was invidious for Councillors to vote on their own remuneration which he felt should be decided independently.

10.2 Councillors Odze, Papier and Steinberger objected to the recommendations.

**RESOLVED:** To agree the report and the Members' Allowances Scheme for 2021/22 attached at Appendix 1 of the report.

## 11. Use of Special Urgency Provisions in Executive Decision Making

**RESOLVED:** To note the following decisions taken under the Council's Special Urgency Provisions as detailed at paragraph 2.1 of the report:

- i) 22 February 2021 (Cabinet) - Grant Award Acceptance and Spend Approval for the Department For Work and Pensions - Kickstart Scheme.
- ii) 11 June 2021 (Chief Executive) - School Cleaning Service Framework Contract Award.

## **12. Confirmation of Political Proportionality and Appointments to Committees and Commissions**

### **RESOLVED to:**

- i) Note the review of proportionality that has been carried out following the by-elections held on 6 May 2021.
- ii) Note that there are no changes to the allocation of seats on Committees and Commissions between the political groups represented as set out at paragraphs 3.3 and 3.4 of the report.
- iii) Approve the further and amended nominations to committees and commissions as set out at Appendix 1 and Appendix 2 of this report.

## **13. Dates of Future Meetings**

**RESOLVED:** To note that all meetings of Full Council will commence at 7.00pm and are scheduled as follows:

- 21 July 2021
- 20 October 2021
- 26 January 2022
- 23 February 2022

At the close of the meeting, Cllr Steinberger and the Mayor paid tribute to David Umney, Head of Revenues, who had recently retired and who had been awarded a Hackney Star 2020/21 Lifetime Achievement Award. His personal and professional approach and contribution to the borough was commended.

**End of Meeting.**

**Duration of the meeting:** 7pm - 8.52pm

**Contact:**

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**Chair of the meeting:**

Cllr Michael Desmond - Speaker of the London Borough of Hackney



## **APPENDIX 1 - Questions from Members of the Council Taken at the Meeting.**

### **5.1 Question from Cllr Anya Sizer to the Cabinet Member for Health, Adult Social Care and Leisure**

The COVID-19 Delta variant was recently detected in Shoreditch and Dalston, and residents responded admirably by increasing their regular testing. However vaccinations are our route back to normality, and vaccination rates in Hackney remain lower than in the rest of London. Could the Cabinet Member outline what measures above and beyond those provided by the two local vaccination sites at Bocking Street and John Scott are being taken?

Cllr Kennedy outlined the measures to be taken to ensure everyone over 18 would be vaccinated in the run up to 19 July, when it was anticipated that the majority of the remaining restrictions would be lifted. These measures included: prioritising the most vulnerable in the borough in cohorts 1-9 and targeting people having their second dose of the vaccine. The plan was to deliver approx 20,000 vaccinations per week at various locations throughout the borough in the run up to 19 July. There would be dedicated vaccine events to target specific communities, an additional vaccine clinic had been operating from the St Leonard's site in Hoxton and there were ongoing discussions about surge vaccination events being hosted there throughout July. A variety of vaccination sites across the borough had been used with the purpose of targeting diverse under-vaccinated communities. There had been pop-up vaccination sites at Gillette Square, a vaccination bus, and local community venues had also been used as vaccination centres with further pop-up events planned. There would be continued targeted engagement to maximise attendance. Hackney residents were also able to access mass vaccination sites outside of the borough. Councillor Kennedy was pleased to announce the Council's own mass vaccination event on 10 and 11 July at the Hackney Service Centre, which would deliver 4,000 further doses of the vaccine to residents. The Council would continue to promote all of the opportunities and events on a variety of platforms.

In response to a supplementary question from Cllr Sizer, Cllr Kennedy confirmed that the Council's Communications Team were using a variety of social media platforms to engage young people in the 18+ demographic to increase vaccine take-up.

In response to a further supplementary question asked by Cllr Odze about applauding the Government's roll out of the vaccination programme, Cllr Kennedy stated that he would like to congratulate and offer a sincere vote of thanks to vaccination volunteers and the Council's NHS partners for their efforts in the roll out of the vaccine within the borough.

### **5.2 Question from Cllr Humaira Garasia to the Cabinet Member for Families, Early Years, Parks and Play**

Haggerston Park is one of the Borough's finest green spaces and has benefited from the planting of new trees. Can I ask the Cabinet Member whether she is confident that the Council will meet its tree planting targets, what obstacles have been encountered and how resilient the tree planting programme will be, given changing climate conditions?

Cllr Woodley reported that she had recently visited Haggerston Park with ward councillors the day before the meeting to look at tree planting and assess areas where additional care and attention may be required. Haggerston Park was one of four areas currently being consulted on with a view to making improvements. Councillor Woodley was pleased to report that 182 street trees had been planted within Haggerston ward during 2020/21 and 184 in the previous year. This was on-track with the street tree planting programme which had seen a total of 2,500 trees planted, with a view to planting 5,000 street trees, in the borough by 2022. Dalston, Shacklewell, Haggerston, Hackney Central, Hoxton East & Shoreditch, Hoxton West and Hackney Wick wards had seen a full complement of street trees planted as part of this programme. It was noted that the cyber-attack and the pandemic had presented challenges to the tree planting programme and to the Streetscene's Arboricultural Team. Work would be undertaken over the summer in preparation for tree planting to commence in some of the remaining wards in the autumn. In reference to parks and open spaces it was reported that 11,761 trees had been planted of the 30,000 target. Cllr Woodley proceeded to highlight the species, type and composition of the trees planted.

### **5.3 Question from Cllr Margaret Gordon to the Cabinet Member for Families, Early Years, Parks and Play**

There is widespread concern about the ethos and quality of education provided by some private providers who have been commissioned by Hackney Education to educate some of our children with Special Educational Needs. What efforts are being made to provide additional places within Hackney schools for this group of children with specific needs?

Cllr Woodley stated that she was aware of concerns relating to the location, quality and costs of externally commissioned Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND) provision and particularly where settings carried high fees and were located outside of the borough, leading to additional pressures of extended travel times for children. A series of local evaluations and reviews had been undertaken to inform a SEND improvement strategy. The priority was to provide good quality education within Hackney to improve the outcome of children with Special Educational Needs. It was acknowledged that a range of stakeholders including parents, carers, partner agencies and young people would be required to feed into this strategy. The purpose of the strategy was to ensure that children and young people with SEND could be educated close to home, with the right support to enable them to live, learn and grow up locally. At the end of May 2021, there were 474 children and young people with Education and Health Care Plans attending 100

independent and non maintained special schools within and outside Hackney. Whilst the needs of these children and young people were predominantly met in day provisions within these settings, there were five children within the borough who required specialist residential school settings to meet their needs. It was reported that the current trend analysis suggested that these figures would significantly increase over the next five years. In response to this, Hackney Education was considering, as part of the development of the Education Sufficiency and Estates Strategy, how more local places could be delivered. The main proposals were: attaching Additional Resource Provisions (ARPs) to existing mainstream school buildings and expanding the three maintained special schools within the borough. It remained a key priority to ensure improved quality assurance and management of all provisions was in place to enable more young people with SEN to be educated locally with improved outcomes.

In response to a supplementary question from Cllr Gordon, Cllr Woodley stated that it was a key priority to make sure that co-production was a part of the expansion process. Visits had been made to schools where ARPs would be built, to take on board the views of Special Educational Needs Coordinators (SENCOs) and Parent Governors. There was ongoing engagement with the specialist teacher team on improving access to pupil voice and to ensure the voice of parents, carers and teachers would be captured to help inform expansion plans.

#### **5.4 Question from Cllr Kam Adams to the Mayoral Adviser for Homelessness, Housing Needs and Rough Sleeping**

Could the Cabinet Member share with us the number of people who have been made homeless in Hackney despite the eviction ban and what the council has been doing to support them?

Cllr Etti acknowledged that whilst the Government's eviction ban had safeguarded the majority of residents from homelessness, not all residents had been protected. It had been made easier to evict specific groups of tenants, including those with more than six months rent arrears, individuals causing anti-social behaviour and perpetrators of domestic abuse. Since the start of the eviction ban in April 2020 to 31 May 2021 when it ceased, a total of 4,363 households, comprising 3,256 single individuals and 1,107 families, approached the Council at imminent risk of homelessness. During this period, 1,513 households were placed in temporary accommodation due to becoming homeless. Cllr Etti outlined the process undertaken by the Benefits and Housing Needs Service when someone is identified at risk of homelessness under the Homelessness Reduction Act. For non priority single individuals who would not be owed a homeless duty, Hackney funded the Single Homeless Prevention Service (SHPS). SHPS worked intensively with singles who were homeless, sofa surfing, or faced a housing issue that could see the end of their accommodation. The procedures in place for dealing with such individuals were outlined. Individuals and families were also signposted to other relevant support services including employment services and specialist housing advisors who were able to assist with a trauma informed approach. Services that may be offered include: assistance to find alternative accommodation, affordability assessments, mediating with the landlord to

resolve disputes and assistance in tackling rent arrears or rent shortfalls. The most vulnerable individuals received holistic wrap-around assistance and intensive multidisciplinary support, from professionals and services across the Council, public and third sector. It was acknowledged that Hackney was facing a housing crisis with almost 13,500 households on the housing register seeking Social Housing. With an average of 640 social lets a year, the vast majority of people who join the register would not receive a social rented home. Those at risk of homelessness were strongly recommended to consider all available housing options including renting in the private sector.

### **5.5 Question from Cllr Kofo David to the Cabinet Member for Community Safety**

Could the Cabinet Member please give a summary of Hackney Council's work since the beginning of lockdown, to assist victims of domestic violence and specifically the services that exist for women of African-Caribbean heritage in Hackney?

Cllr Fajana-Thomas stated that the Stay at Home Order put in place in March 2020 as a result of the pandemic gave perpetrators of domestic abuse the opportunity to use coercion, manipulation and induce fear. Subsequently, there was a rise in domestic abuse cases reported locally and nationally. The Council's Domestic Abuse Intervention Service, continued to operate during the lock-down, in spite of reductions and alterations to the service. Councillor Fajana-Thomas gave details of a range of measures taken by the service during the lockdown period. It was noted that during the first lockdown (23 March-5 July 2020, the Council's Domestic Abuse Intervention Service (DAIS) saw an increase in referrals of at times 60% to around 40 per week. After some fluctuations the referral rate returned, on average to slightly above the weekly pre-pandemic rate of 25 cases per week to 27 per week between January - March 2021. During 2020/21 DAIS received 1,354 referrals. In reference to specialist services for women of African-Caribbean heritage, it was noted that Hackney had an extensive and diverse domestic abuse sector supported by the Council. This included: The Claudia Jones Organisation, an established local organisation that specialises in working with women of African and Caribbean heritage who have experienced domestic abuse and other forms of violence and Sistah Space Against Domestic Abuse who work with African heritage women & girls who have experienced domestic or sexual abuse or who have lost a loved one to domestic violence. In addition, there were other third sector specialist domestic abuse agencies, supported by the Council. Cllr Fajana-Thomas stated that the Council's DAIS is the largest service providing case work for victims / survivors of domestic abuse in Hackney. Women of all ages, ethnicity and languages are helped by the service regardless of their 'level' of risk, their immigration status or whether the perpetrator is a partner, ex-partner or family member. Due to the cyber-attack, it was not possible to access ethnicity data across the 2020-21 financial year. Referring to the last quarter of the financial year, it was reported that 44% of clients were from Black and Minority groups with 30% identified as Black (of these, 9% identified as Black African; 6% as Black Caribbean, 15% as Black Other). Assurances were given that the service was reaching a large number of victims and survivors of abuse of African and Caribbean heritage.

**5.6 Question from Cllr Sophie Cameron to the Cabinet Member for Health, Adult Social Care and Leisure**

Could the Cabinet Member please provide an update on leisure facilities and the provision of activities within Hackney?

Cllr Kennedy was pleased to announce the re-opening of the Britannia Leisure Centre earlier that day and proceeded to highlight the various facilities on offer. These included: 3 swimming pools, a sports hall, a spin studio, a fitness studio, a gym with over 100 stations, 4 squash courts, soft play, 2 tennis courts, 2 football pitches and a cafe. There were also public accessible toilets for the users of Shoreditch Park. This was the biggest investment by the Council in sport and physical activity infrastructure in a generation. This investment was made in recognition of the benefits of being physically active on residents' health and wellbeing. The impact of COVID-19 on the well being of residents was noted. Cllr Kennedy reported that, at Cabinet in May, the Mayor announced funding for: a new learner pool to be developed at London Fields Lido, refurbishment of the sports hall and swimming pool tiling at Clissold Leisure Centre and improvements to West Reservoir. In July, plans for the refurbishment of Kings Hall Leisure Centre would be considered by Cabinet.

## **APPENDIX 2 - Questions from Members of the Council Not Taken at the Meeting Due to Time Constraints.**

### **5.7 Question from Cllr Ian Rathbone to Mayor Glanville**

Along with councillors, including myself, you recently helped a group of volunteers with some clearance of rubbish from the River Lea. Could you please let us know what is the outcome of recent engagement with the Environment Agency and Thames Water concerning cleaning up the river, particularly the continuing leakage of sewage from Deephams, and what is the programme for turning the most polluted river in the UK into one of the cleanest?

### **Written response to Cllr Rathbone**

Dear Cllr Rathbone

Thank you for raising a question on the River Lea at the June Full Council meeting, and I am sorry that we did not have the opportunity to hear it on the night. I also apologise for the lengthy delay in this formal follow up response, however notwithstanding this as you know the Council, myself and indeed yourself have been very active on this issue since you tabled this question

At the river clean-up session organised by the Hackney Marshes Park User Group we attended in June, alongside Councillors Woodley, Gordon and Troughton, we all saw the dire state of the River Lea.

As the Environment Agency report states, pollution into the River Lea comes from multiple sources, including: drain misconnections, litter, and sewage, particularly from the Deephams Sewage Treatment Works.

Sadly, pollution in the River Lea is not new. The first question asked by Herbert Morrison MP in Parliament in 1924 was on the state of the river. Following our visit, and a meeting with local Friends of the Earth activists, we are restarting the 100 year-old campaign to #LoveLea.

After attending the clean-up session, we held an initial meeting with the Environment Agency (EA) after writing to them earlier in the year about the state of the river. We made it clear that the River Lea is an important water course in Hackney, its use by our residents is higher than ever, and that the Council was willing to work with them to take action and improve its quality.

Most of the problems regarding pollution come from upstream of Hackney and the EA have been working with those local authorities upstream to address this. Deephams Sewage Treatment Works has been improved and refurbished, and the Lea tunnel has alleviated some of the storm overflow issues.

But we made it clear that this has clearly not entirely resolved the issue. We saw with our own eyes the waste and sewage going into the Lea – everything from tyres to sanitary products. We expressed our concerns for the ecology of the area, for users of the River, and for those that volunteer to clean up the pollution.

The EA noted that they would reiterate our concerns in their next meeting with Thames Water which Council officers now attend. The issue of which sewage ‘outfalls’ are responsible for discharging this pollution has been raised with the Environment Agency and with Thames Water. The number and locations of all the outfalls is still unknown. Thames Water are working on this to improve the information they hold and will provide updates at future meetings. However, ways in which partners and the community can assist with gathering this information are also being looked at.

Hackney recently submitted evidence to the Environmental Audit Committee’s inquiry on the Water Quality in Rivers to make the case for more resources for the Environment Agency to tackle river pollution and for stronger monitoring and sanctions for polluters. Under the Tories they have had their budget cut by more than half since 2010.

With regards to next steps, officers from Hackney will continue to attend the Thames 21 partnership meetings, which includes Thames Water and the EA, and will keep pushing for the necessary information to be gathered. Officers have put together an Options Paper which sets out a range of approaches to tackling the issue of pollution in the River Lea. However, the preferred option is a multi-pronged approach where we continue to work with partners and seek to ensure that there is more data sharing, more public messaging around the pollution levels in the river, and one where we promote work that is being undertaken to improve the quality of the water.

We will also continue to lobby Thames Water to end sewage overflow into the river from the Deephams Sewage Treatment Works, and look forward to working with local activists and councillors on this campaign.

I have also asked for a further update on progress on this important issue and will away from this formal response provide you a further update.

Yours sincerely

Philip Glanville  
**Mayor of Hackney**

#### **5.8 Question from Cllr Penny Wrout to Mayor Glanville**

Effective local journalism is one of the pillars of local democracy. Could the Mayor therefore please pass on this chamber’s thanks and congratulations to Ed Sheridan, an

exceptional local reporter who has kept the public informed about important issues in Hackney and who is now moving on to work at the House of Commons. Could the Mayor also reiterate how important it is to have good coverage of local government issues in the press, and what lengths the Council goes to in supporting robust local reporting.

**Written response to Cllr Wrouth**

Dear Cllr Wrouth

I am writing to you following your question at the June Full Council meeting. Whilst I was able to use my speech at Full Council to pass on my thanks and congratulations to Ed Sherdian for his excellent local reporting, I did also want to write to formally respond to your question which we ran out of time to answer. I apologise for the lengthy delay in doing so.

Ed was an important addition to the political life in Hackney and he will be missed, but I am pleased that the post funded by the Local Democracy Report Service (LDRS) continues with Julia Gregory already making an impact..

While Ed was working in Hackney he has submitted 321 inquiries to the Council's press team since May 2018. His first inquiry was on why the May 2018 election count had not started on time – a question I was also interested in hearing the answer to!

Local press is vital to local democracy – journalists hold us to account, but also help inform local residents about events in our Borough.

That is why I regularly engage with the two main local newspapers, the Hackney Gazette and the Hackney Citizen, as well as other local, smaller outlets, radio stations, bloggers and student journalists too.

I have held Q&A sessions, hustings, and interviews since becoming Mayor. At every budget, both the Citizen and the Gazette are invited to scrutinise the budget before interviewing me and senior officers.

I was also proud that this year's Mayor's Question Time, held virtually for the first time, was chaired by the former Editor of the Gazette, Ramzy Alwakeel.

My hope is that the Local Democracy Reporting Service funded by the BBC will continue to be supported, so our local, independent media outlets can continue their service to the people of Hackney.

I think we can also all agree that the recent win for the Hackney Citizen at the 2021 News Awards where the team received Independent Community Newspaper of the Year was also a testament to both the LDRS and Ed's work.

Yours sincerely



Philip Glanville  
**Mayor of Hackney**

**5.9 Question from Cllr Sarah Young to the Cabinet Member for Housing Services**

Could the Cabinet Member please provide an update on the long-standing major repairs needed at Lincoln Court, including:

1. repairs to prevent water from flooding off the play decks/car park rooves into the lower floors of the building; and
2. replacement of the pipe work from stack pipes running down the height of the blocks and into each flat, causing long-term damp and disrepair problems within homes?

**Written Response to Cllr Young**

I would like to start by congratulating my colleague, Cllr Young, on her successful election as a Councillor for Woodberry Down.

I know she will work hard to represent her residents, and it is good to see she is wasting no time with this question tonight.

Cllr Young is right to raise the repairs issues at Lincoln Court Mr Speaker. I personally met with residents from Lincoln Court in April this year and was shocked by the videos I saw of both the flooding off the car park roofs and the stack pipes in the blocks.

I am determined to see the Council tackle both of these issues once and for all, which in the case of the stack pipes, has been a long-running project for the last two years that was unfortunately impacted by the coronavirus pandemic.

I can only apologise for the delays in the Council's response Mr Speaker, but that is why improving the performance of housing repairs and dealing with any backlogs as we recover from the pandemic was highlighted as a priority to rebuild a better borough – highlighted in the corporate plan refresh last year.

Every Lincoln Court resident has the right to a well managed and maintained environment, and that is why I am pleased to report that following an investigation, council DLO staff have identified and tackled the cause of the flooding from the car parks which has involved the clearance of the car park gullies that were blocked by debris.

It became apparent that the recent gully clearance regime was not regular enough considering the size and level of detritus which landed on the podiums. The DLO were on site in May and cleared the gullies and are now attending twice a month to ensure all drainage is running clear. Housing Services are also liaising with Environmental Operations to ensure the cleaners avoid accidentally brushing debris into the gullies. This should prevent any recurrence of the problem.

The problems of water penetration in Lincoln Court are very serious but significant ongoing reactive repair work has been undertaken to address leaks within the three blocks and

currently there are 14 flats out of 198 where leaks are still evident or a flat is affected by a leak from above.

A full replacement of pipes from the stack and into flats – which were identified as causing the majority of the leaks – was agreed in 2019 as part of the planned kitchen and bathroom replacements for tenants. Unfortunately the pandemic delayed this programme of work due to government restrictions preventing access to people's homes.

However this programme of work is due to start again in September this year, and once contractors are on site they will also replace any pipes necessary where tenants are not receiving a new kitchen or bathroom.

Housing Services are also providing an information leaflet which will advise leaseholders of the need for them to check these pipes and to replace them as required, and we are offering for any necessary repairs to be organised by the Council.

Whilst I'm delighted that we are now well on our way to resolving this problem, and many of the delays in implementing a solution have been due to factors outside of our control, I'd like to say a sincere sorry on behalf of the Council to all those residents that have suffered from this problem for far too long.

Claydon McKenzie, Cabinet Member for Housing Services

Labour Councillor for Hoxton West Ward