

Appendix A - Questions from Members of the Council not answered due to time constraints

6.6 Question from Cllr Alastair Binnie-Lubbock to the Mayor

Following strong support of many members of this Council for recent RMT industrial action, what role do you see unions playing in the borough?

Response from the Cabinet Member for Employment, Human Resources and Equalities

Dear Cllr Binnie-Lubbock

As there was insufficient time to respond to your question at last week's full council meeting, here is the response I would have given.

This administration's support of trade unionism is clear.

Trade unions are a vital part of a fair and inclusive local economy, as well as a part of the collective struggle against inequality.

To quote Francis O'Grady, the outgoing TUC General Secretary:

"If you are a member of a trade union you are likely to get better pay, more equal pay, better health and safety, more chance to get training, more chance to have conditions of work that help if you have caring responsibilities ... the list goes on!"

This administration has evidenced that belief with action – by embedding good working relationships with the trade unions in the Council, and promoting trade unions across the Borough.

Members on the labour benches have supported Heart Unions Week every year, promoting the good work that trade unions do to our residents.

Since 2020, we have worked with the trade unions to commemorate the staff we lost during the pandemic, and commemorated all lives lost at work on International Workers Memorial Day.

The Mayor and I, and our colleagues, supported the RMT strikes.

We've not just been there for the RMT this year, but in previous years also, supporting their campaigns to save ticket offices along the Overground services – writing to both TfL and national government in support.

Across the Council's services and strategies, we have also embedded our belief in collective organising, bargaining and workplace representation.

We maintain a close working relationship with council trade unions, with both formal and informal engagement:

- Council Joint Committee meetings are held quarterly, chaired by myself, where the unions are represented alongside members and senior officers.
- These are backed up by LJs in service areas, and regular informal meetings between council and trade union leadership.

Since 2016, the number of CJC meetings has increased from three to four meetings a year, and we introduced quarterly meetings with the unions, Mayor Glanville and I.

We also set out clear expectations on the organisations we procure about collective representation in our Sustainable Procurement Strategy, which includes trade union recognition and an established staff whistleblowing process.

But we've also worked with the trade unions to build a better Hackney:

- Working with them to insource £12m of contracted council services, bringing in over 350 members of staff.
- Working with them to pay the London Living Wage as a minimum to all our staff AND contracted staff.

More broadly, we've also been there for the trade unions and their members on local and national campaigns:

- Supporting the TUC campaign to save the Union Learning Fund.
- Supporting striking BECTU members and Picturehouse staff.
- Supporting PCS members to keep DWP offices open in Hackney, and supporting striking government cleaners.
- Supporting striking UCU members against cuts to pay and pensions in HE and FE.
- Supporting NEU campaigns against school cuts and in favour of better SEND funding.
- Supporting the CWU campaign to save the Clapton Sorting Office.
- Supporting UNITE bus and transport workers in 2020.
- Supporting the UNISON and GMB campaigns to see a fairer deal for Homerton Hospital cleaners and facility staff.
- Supporting the IWGB and their members in Dalston, lobbying the delivery companies and restaurants to better support their members

The Labour Mayor and Councillors believe by the strengths of our common endeavours, we achieve more than we achieve alone.

All the best,

Carole

Councillor Carole Williams
Cabinet member for Employment, Human Resources and Equalities

6.7 Question from Cllr Margaret Gordon to the Cabinet Member for Employment, Human Resources and Equalities

Would the Cabinet Member with responsibility for migrants and refugees tell me how the Council is responding to the Ukrainian refugee crisis, detailing how many Ukrainian nationals have settled into family homes under the Homes for Ukraine Scheme and what support they are receiving from the Council?

Response Cabinet Member for Employment, Human Resources and Equalities

Dear Cllr Gordon

As there was insufficient time to respond to your question at this week's full council meeting, I'm providing the response in writing.

Hackney has a long-standing reputation of being open and welcoming to migrants and refugees and has always been prepared to support its residents and those affected by conflict. Hackney has been welcoming those arriving from Ukraine and has established a team supporting both the refugee guests and our Hackney residents that have opened their homes.

To date, we have had 198 resident households in our Borough submit an application under the Homes for Ukraine scheme supporting a total of 365 Ukrainian refugees. So far, 234 people have arrived and settled into family homes.

The Council are undertaking the required DBS, property and safeguarding checks and have developed information packs in English and Ukrainian to help navigate the Borough and our services. Support Workers are meeting guests and providing help and advice using a trauma-informed and strengths-based approach which is adapted depending on the individual circumstances. A dedicated email address and telephone number has been set up and in-person meet and greet events are being held every other month to support establishing a local community whilst also offering information, advice and guidance.

We are building additional capacity into services as we identify needs which has included developing a bespoke English to Speakers of Other Language (ESOL) offer jointly with our employment support service: [Employment & Skills Refugee Project Briefing](#)

As relationships continue to develop between hosts and guests, we are working with the voluntary sector to offer some support sessions for hosts and have also been supporting groups where their placement has been unable to continue to find a rematch with another resident. A call for other residents that are interested in hosting to come forward has gone out in this edition of the Love Hackney magazine.

As a Council, we are also planning for the next steps after hosting arrangements come to an end so that the right support is in place for Ukrainian guests to find their own accommodation.

Other specific information

- Mental Health; our local Mental Health services are outlined in the Information Pack and the team are working with CAMHS, ELFT and Mind (as the lead of the MH Network) to ensure pathways are accessible to Ukrainian refugees
- Health; our Health colleagues have created a directory of services for refugees, migrants and people fleeing Ukraine which is included in the information pack
- Employment; Hackney Works are supporting people to find employment and the English to Speakers of Other Language offer has embedded a focus on employment and self-employment in their classes.

Please let me know if you have any further questions.

Best wishes,

Carole

Councillor Carole Williams
Cabinet Member for Employment, Human Resources and Equalities

6.8 Question from Cllr Alastair Binnie-Lubbock to the Mayor

A recent report found that Hackney has 87 fire-risk buildings, this in the top three in London. What is the council doing to promote and ensure fire safety of residents living in these buildings with minimum disruption?

Response from the Mayor

Dear Alastair,

Thank you for your question at the last Full Council meeting regarding fire-risk buildings in Hackney and I'm sorry there wasn't time to answer it on that night.

Clearly, your question was timely given the tower block fire that happened in Newham on the day of Full Council. Thankfully no one was hurt in the fire, thanks to the hard work of the London Fire Brigade.

Keeping our residents safe is one of our key priorities as a Council, and we continue to do everything we can to ensure residents are safe in their homes.

Since the tragic Grenfell Tower fire, we have invested in our own extensive programme of fire safety improvements across our homes and estates.

We were the first council to publish our fire risk assessments from across all our estates and have established a dedicated Resident Safety Team to focus on ensuring the safety of residents living in council-owned homes. They complete hundreds of FRAs every year, liaise with the London Fire Brigade and direct

actions to teams across the Council, including our in-house Direct Labour Organisation (DLO) as well as specialist contractors.

A lot of work has already been done since the terrible Grenfell fire and the blocks at the highest risk of fire have been remediated. This includes the three tower blocks at Lincoln Court as well as the work that is currently ongoing at Seaton Point.

Seaton Point is also another example of the Council taking the fire safety of residents very seriously and temporary measures such as waking watch and interlinked fire alarms have been in place since the works started on site in Autumn 2021.

We're also replacing thousands of fire safety doors, installing missing fire stoppers across estates, and a significant programme of dry riser installations.

When considering the cost of fire safety works, the council has also agreed to not pass on costs to leaseholders for any fire safety works arising from a fire risk assessment.

But of course, as you highlighted, there are still privately-owned, problem blocks across the borough that the Council does not control.

The figure of 87 that you refer to includes buildings that (in May 2022) had interim fire safety measures in place such as waking watches or suspension of stay put advice. While this number may appear concerning, it is indicative of the relatively larger number of blocks of flats and taller buildings in Hackney and other inner London boroughs – but more importantly of the Council's work to ensure that any fire safety issues in these types of buildings are quickly and transparently identified so that they can be fully addressed.

Since the Grenfell fire, we have investigated more than 250 tall buildings across the borough to ensure developers and building owners address dangerous cladding and other fire safety issues. As a result of this work, there are:

- eight buildings where remediation work has been completed and approved by building control.
- 27 'green' rated buildings with work underway or a firm commitment from the owner to undertake remediation work. 15 of these have work on site, with three of these expected to be completed in August and September.
- 11 'amber' rated buildings where owners are continuing to undertake surveys or we are waiting for a firm commitment around remediation
- 14 'grey' rated buildings that are less than 18m high but which we are continuing to monitor

In all these cases we have ensured owners have interim measures in place to ensure no immediate risk to residents, and crucially there are now no 'red' rated blocks in Hackney which would indicate serious issues without any remediation plans in place. This is thanks to the scale of intervention undertaken by the council's Private Sector Housing Team, whose interventions have ranged from

providing support and advice to owners and agents to threatening enforcement – in one case serving a legal notice.

Finally, you may now have seen that the government has reopened the Building Safety Fund, which owners can apply for to fund the remediation of cladding on buildings over 18 metres, and we will be encouraging building owners who have remediation plans but no funding in place to apply to this.

Since Grenfell, we have pushed the government to ensure leaseholders and shared owners are not forced to pay the cost of making buildings with dangerous cladding safe, including giving evidence at an [influential parliamentary committee](#).

There are significant barriers to helping residents in these blocks including:

- Landlords not willing to cooperate
- The Government not assisting with buildings below 18m
- The Government's delay in reopening the Building Safety Fund
- And a Building Safety Act which still allows owners to pass on certain costs to blameless residents, up to £15,000.

It's just another area where this zombie government's inertia is having real-world consequences for our residents.

So where there are delays, we've been using every avenue possible to enforce and encourage landlords to do the right thing and make every building in Hackney as safe as possible, while lobbying the government to provide more assistance.

Because despite promises after the Grenfell fire that councils would be financially assisted to pay for fire safety works, not a penny has been made available.

But that has not stopped us from taking action across the private sector. The Private Sector Housing Team would be more than happy to meet with you and take you through the current cases, priorities, and areas for action, in detail. Do contact Mayoral Adviser Cllr Sem Moema and/or James Goddard, Interim Director Regeneration (james.goddard@hackney.gov.uk) if you wish to take up this offer.

I hope this answers your initial questions.

Yours sincerely

Philip Glanville
Mayor of Hackney

6.9 Question from Cllr Polly Billington to the Cabinet Member for Environment and Transport

The Council's Cycling Plan sets out a vision for the borough with 'the most attractive and safest roads for cycling in the UK.' But for many of our residents, having access to secure and suitable bike storage is also a significant barrier to cycling. The Council has already responded to this issue by installing more cycle hangers. Can the Cabinet Member for Environment and Transport outline what more this administration will do to improve cycle storage across Hackney, and meet its manifesto commitment to help another 4,000 households who may lack the storage space at home to keep a bike.

Response from the Cabinet Member for Environment and Transport

Dear Cllr Billington,

I'm sorry that we were not able to hear your question at Full Council on Wednesday 20th July. I am following up in writing to answer your question regarding bike storage.

Hackney Council has installed nearly 650 cycle hangars across the borough, providing secure cycle parking for 3,900 cyclists. However, despite this work – which has seen the number of hangars increase by a third in the last two years – demand for the spaces has continued to far outstrip supply, and consequently, the waiting list for a space stands at over 5,000 residents.

The calculated waiting time for those on the waiting list today now stands at over 11 years, with many cycle hangars having a waiting list of over 40 residents, and space turnover averaging between one and two spaces per hangar per year

To meet the 2022 Labour manifesto commitment will require the installation of a further 675 hangars. At its meeting on 18th July, Cabinet approved a capital investment of £2,835k over a 3-year period (2023/24 - 2025/26).

This level of investment will help 4,000 residents currently awaiting space on street and on estates obtain a space in secure cycle storage, reduce the resident waiting lists from 11 years to less than 2 years unlock significant cycling potential by removing a major obstacle to cycling more (the lack of storage for a bike in many people's homes) and enable significant income growth that will ensure that future investment in new cycle hangars can be self-funded.

Hackney already leads the way for such secure on-street storage and this investment represents a doubling of existing capacity in the borough and three times what we promised in our recent Manifesto.

It is encouraging that in response to the climate emergency, residents are more and more choosing cycling as their preferred way to travel. As a consequence, the demand for cycling spaces has continued to far outstrip supply – and this proposal will substantially reduce the waiting time for a cycle parking space.

We will ensure that these new hangers are installed in an equitable way, matched to demand and the current waiting list, but also ensure all parts of the borough and that homes on our streets and estates are equally served. We will also audit our existing hangers to ensure that they are being used as efficiently as possible and explore provisions for a more diverse range of bikes.

I hope this answers your question.

Best,

Cllr Mete Coban MBE
Councillor for Stoke Newington
Cabinet Member for Environment and Transport