

# Leader's Column

August-September 2021

Haringey has always been a borough that unites people and brings communities together.

So, as we reflect on ten-years since the riots took place in Tottenham and other parts of the country, I know this will bring back a lot of memories for our residents.

I was in Cyprus when the riots happened and I could not believe the events that unfolded.

This was not the first time, but I have to say it felt a lot different from what happened in 1985. It was obvious that tensions were building ahead of the Broadwater Farm riots and that institutional racism was a big factor.

The striking thing for me about the 2011 riots was the way young people were spoken about and I remember the images of young people who were looting in Tottenham Hale. You could not condone what was happening and people were scared, but you have to pause as professionals and think what is driving these kids to do this.

There has always been a strong community in places like Tottenham. I live there now and there is a sense of people saying 'we don't want this for ourselves' and a concern that children and young people are missing out on jobs, education and having the best opportunities.

I have worked with young people for a long time and there have always been stories about young people applying for jobs, and somehow being at a disadvantage if they put a Tottenham post-code down.

It is about acknowledging the role that institutional racism plays in all of this and taking responsibility. As a community we can't just sit back and accept this.

That is why co-production and listening to our residents is such a big factor. The authorities have to consider all voices around the table because they are the people who are affected.

That is the work that we need to build on – the resident's voice. Tottenham has always been a resilient community and the council has worked hard with partners to improve people's lives.

But we have to be honest and say there is still much to do. There are still high levels of youth unemployment and high levels of youth violence, so we have to give people hope.

Eleven years of austerity has not helped, and we have seen youth services slashed. It is going to have an impact.

I am thankful that we have got a number of positive programmes taking place including funding from the Mayor's Office to support Haringey Community Gold which helps young people fulfil their potential. This has been a big success but we need sustainable long-term projects.

The pandemic has hit the people of Tottenham hard, but we need to continue building that capacity and make a real difference for our youngsters.

**Cllr Peray Ahmet**  
Leader, Haringey Council

## Contact details

Councillor Ahmet's ward surgery and contact details are shown on her [councillor web page](#).

