



## Rabbi Criticises Council's Response

Rabbi Aryeh Sufrin, MBE, Executive Director of Chabad Lubavitch NE London and Essex, has lived and worked in Ilford for several decades. During that time, he has built up relationships with many organisations and individuals, in local politics and across faith communities. Hence his disappointment with the level of support offered by Redbridge Council in the wake of Hamas' murderous attack.

Rabbi Sufrin told *Hamodia* that he felt the statement issued by the council

failed to condemn the perpetrators and did not adequately address the needs of the Jewish community. He said, "*Baruch Hashem*, there have been no incidents locally, but people are concerned."

Rabbi Sufrin acknowledged that there had been an increased police and CST presence in the area, and said that he had increased security at the Chabad Centre.

He met with the leader of the

Council, Councillor Jas Athwal, this week, to express his concerns in person, that the Jewish community had been let down by the council, and said that Councillor Athwal was receptive to his comments. In general, said Rabbi Sufrin, while Ilford as a whole is a very diverse community, everyone is generally very supportive of each other, regardless of religion or ethnicity. On this occasion, though, he said that the Jewish community felt "very alone."

Rabbi Sufrin praised local MP Wes Streeting for his response and said he had been very supportive. He also commended neighbouring Havering Council, which is home to a small Jewish community. He said that previous to the attacks, they had already been in contact to discuss hosting a public menorah lighting, and following the attacks, they contacted him to request an Israeli flag, to hang from the town hall as a gesture of support.