

CITY OF WESTMINSTER

MINUTES OF PROCEEDINGS

At the Meeting of the Council of the City of Westminster held at 7.00 pm on Wednesday 2nd March, 2022 at Westminster Council House, 97-113 Marylebone Road, London, NW1 5PT.

PRESENT

The Lord Mayor, Councillor Andrew Smith

COUNCILLORS

Heather Acton	David Harvey
Ian Adams	Elizabeth Hitchcock
Barbara Arzymanow	Adam Hug
Timothy Barnes	Aicha Less
Geoff Barraclough	Pancho Lewis
Richard Beddoe	Patricia McAllister
Liza Begum	Guthrie McKie
Rita Begum	Tim Mitchell
David Boothroyd	Gotz Mohindra
Iain Bott	Eoghain Murphy
Susie Burbridge	Matt Noble
Ruth Bush	Emily Payne
Nafsika Butler-Thalassis	Robert Rigby
Melvyn Caplan	Rachael Robathan
Danny Chalkley	Tim Roca
Antonia Cox	Ian Rowley
Lorraine Dean	Karen Scarborough
Tony Devenish	Mark Shearer
Richard Elcho	Selina Short
Christabel Flight	James Spencer
Murad Gassanly	Paul Swaddle
Jonathan Glanz	Shamim Talukder
Jim Glen	Hamza Taouzzale
Matthew Green	Aziz Toki
Lindsey Hall	Jacqui Wilkinson
Angela Harvey	

APOLOGIES: Councillors Nickie Aiken, Margot Bright, Maggie Carman, Paul Dimoldenberg, Peter Freeman, Louise Hyams, Papyia Qureshi and Judith Warner.

1 APPOINTMENT OF RELIEF CHAIRMAN

- 1.1 Motion moved by the Lord Mayor and seconded by Councillor Paul Swaddle, that Councillor Angela Harvey be elected as Relief Chairman.

1.2 Motion put, and on a show of hands, declared **CARRIED**.

2 MINUTES

2.1 The minutes of the proceedings at the Council meeting held on Wednesday 19 January 2022 were, with the assent of the Members present, signed by the Lord Mayor as a true record of the proceedings.

3 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

3.1 There were no declarations of interest.

4 CABINET REPORT

4.1 The report of the Cabinet on 17 February 2022 was submitted.

4.2 Following debate, to which Councillor Robathan replied, the Lord Mayor put the following amendments to the recommendations in paragraph 1 of the Cabinet report moved by Councillor Adam Hug and seconded by Councillor David Boothroyd to a vote. A recorded vote was then taken:

Amendment 1 - Paragraph 1: Text of amendment (1) to be moved by Councillor Adam Hug and seconded by Councillor David Boothroyd

Add an additional paragraph after the end of paragraph 9, which reads “That the Council commits to a target of reducing spending on Temporary and Agency Staff by at least £1.5m over existing plans during the course of 2022/23 and instructs officers to prepare the 2023/24 budget on a basis of freezing Council Tax for a Band D property at £468.54 for general needs purposes.

Vote 1 – Amendment 1

For amendment one: Councillors Barraclough, Boothroyd, Toki, Noble, Hug, Bush, Lewis, Less, Roca, McKie, Butler-Thalassis, Taouzzale, Liza Begum, McAllister and Talukder.

Against amendment one: Councillors Swaddle, Mitchell, Scarborough, Mohindra, Spencer, Robathan, Glen, Beddoe, Adams, Caplan, Gassanly, Green, Rigby, Dean, Short, Payne, Hall, Glanz, Wilkinson, Barnes, Flight, Elcho, Burbridge, Acton, Shearer, Devenish, Murphy, Bott, Hitchcock, Arzymanow, David Harvey, Angela Harvey, Chalkley, Rowley and Cox.

Absence or not voting: The Lord Mayor and Councillors Nickie Aiken, Rita Begum, Margot Bright, Maggie Carman, Paul Dimoldenberg, Peter Freeman, Louise Hyams, Papy Qureshi and Judith Warner.

4.3 The Lord Mayor declared Amendment one to be **LOST**.

Amendment 2 - Paragraph 1: Text of amendment (2) to be moved by Councillor Adam Hug and seconded by Councillor David Boothroyd

Add an additional paragraph after the end of paragraph 14, which reads “That the Council resolves to take further steps to improve the budgeting process, contribute to savings and safeguard community priorities, including:

- a) Commencing a zero-based budgeting review in the new term of the council, ensuring every penny spent by the council is directed towards local community needs.
- b) Establishing a ‘critical friends board’ of independent local government experts who have not previously worked at Westminster, to seek new savings and tackle waste.
- c) Beginning a trial of participatory budgeting, so that residents can be more involved in the process of deciding council spending priorities in their area.

Vote 2 – Amendment 2

For amendment two: Councillors Barraclough, Boothroyd, Toki, Noble, Hug, Bush, Lewis, Less, Roca, McKie, Butler-Thalassis, Taouzzale, Liza Begum, McAllister and Talukder.

Against amendment two: Councillors Swaddle, Mitchell, Scarborough, Mohindra, Spencer, Robathan, Glen, Beddoe, Adams, Caplan, Gassanly, Green, Rigby, Dean, Short, Payne, Hall, Glanz, Wilkinson, Barnes, Flight, Elcho, Burbridge, Acton, Shearer, Devenish, Murphy, Bott, Hitchcock, Arzymanow, David Harvey, Angela Harvey, Chalkley, Rowley and Cox.

Absence or not voting: The Lord Mayor and Councillors Nickie Aiken, Rita Begum, Margot Bright, Maggie Carman, Paul Dimoldenberg, Peter Freeman, Louise Hyams, Papya Qureshi and Judith Warner.

4.4 The Lord Mayor declared Amendment two to be **LOST**.

4.5 The Lord Mayor then put the recommendations in paragraph 1 of the Cabinet report as unamended to a vote. A recorded vote was then taken:

Vote 3 – Unamended

For the recommendations: Councillors Swaddle, Mitchell, Scarborough, Mohindra, Spencer, Robathan, Glen, Beddoe, Adams, Caplan, Gassanly, Green, Rigby, Dean, Short, Payne, Hall, Glanz, Wilkinson, Barnes, Flight, Elcho, Burbridge, Acton, Shearer, Devenish, Murphy, Bott, Hitchcock, Arzymanow, David Harvey, Angela Harvey, Chalkley, Rowley and Cox.

Against the recommendations: Councillors Barraclough, Boothroyd, Toki, Noble, Hug, Bush, Lewis, Less, Roca, McKie, Butler-Thalassis, Taouzzale, Liza Begum, McAllister and Talukder.

Absence or not voting: The Lord Mayor and Councillors Nickie Aiken, Rita Begum, Margot Bright, Maggie Carman, Paul Dimoldenberg, Peter Freeman, Louise Hyams, Papy Qureshi and Judith Warner.

4.5 The Lord Mayor declared the recommendations in paragraph 1 of the Cabinet report as unamended **ADOPTED**.

RESOLVED:

Council Tax

- 1) That the council tax for a Band D property be agreed at £468.54 for 2022/23, an increase of £4.64 (1%) for the Social Care precept and a freeze in the council tax for general purposes;
- 2) That, subject to the consideration of the previous recommendation, the council tax for the City of Westminster, excluding the Montpelier Square area and Queen's Park Community Council, for the year ending 31 March 2023, be as specified in the Council Tax Resolution in Appendix 5 to the Section 151 officer's report.
- 3) That the Precepts and Special Expenses be as also specified in Appendix 5 to the Section 151 officer's report for properties in Montpelier Square and the Queen's Park Community Council;
- 4) That the formal resolution for 2022/23 attached at Appendix 5 to the Section 151 officer's report including the council tax requirement of £63.279m be agreed;
- 5) To note the proposed Greater London Authority precept (Band D) of £395.59, an increase of £31.93 (8.8%) rise in the adjusted Band D Precept;
- 6) That the Council continues the Westminster Community Contribution to allow the most expensive properties in the City to voluntarily contribute towards supporting discretionary services that support the three priorities of youth services, helping rough sleepers off the streets and supporting people who are lonely and isolated;

Revenue Budget

- 7) Note the views of the Scrutiny Budget Task Group set out in Appendix 7 to the Section 151 officer's report;
- 8) That the proposed General Fund net budget requirement of £184.861m summarised in Appendix 4 to the Section 151 officer's report.

- 9) That the savings and investment proposals for 2022/23 to 2024/25 set out in Appendix 1, 2 and 3 to the Section 151 officer's report is approved;
- 10) That the Equality Impact Assessments included in Appendix 6 to the Section 151 officer's report be received and noted to inform the consideration of the budget;
- 11) Note the Housing Revenue Account Business Plan 2022/23 and 30-Year Housing Investment Plan presented concurrently to Cabinet on 17 February 2022 that recommends the HRA budget and rent levels for 2022/23;

Capital Programme

- 12) Note the Capital Strategy 2022/23 to 2026/27, forecast position for 2021/22 and future years' forecasts summarised up to 2035/36 report also presented to Cabinet on 17 February 2022 that recommends the Council's capital programme and financing; Reserves, Balances and Budget Estimates
- 13) Agree the reserves policy as set out in section 10 of the Section 151 officer's report;
- 14) Note the opinion of the Section 151 Officer with regards to the robustness of the budget process, the estimates underpinning the budget and the adequacy of the reserves in section 10;

Treasury Management and Investment Framework

- 15) Note the Treasury Management Strategy for 2022/23 including the annual investment strategy, borrowing limits and prudential indicators summarised in this report and set out detail in a concurrent report on this agenda;
- 16) Note the 2022/23 Integrated Investment Framework report also concurrently on this agenda, which sets out the policies and framework for future investment decisions for the Council.

- 4.6 The Lord Mayor put the recommendations in paragraph 2 of the Cabinet report, Capital Strategy Report 2022-2023 to 2026-2027, Forecast position for 2021-2022 and Future Years' summarised up to 2035-2036 to the vote and on a show of hands declared the recommendations **ADOPTED**.

RESOLVED

That full Council:

- 1) Approve the capital strategy as set out in Appendix 2 to this report.
- 2) Approve the capital expenditure for the General Fund as set out in Appendix A for 2022/23 to 2026/27 and future years to 2035/36.

- 3) Approve that all development and investment projects, along with all significant projects follow the previously approved business case governance process as set out in section 8 of Appendix 2 to this report.
 - 4) Approve that no financing sources, unless stipulated in regulations or necessary agreements, are ring fenced.
 - 5) Approve the proposed financing of the capital programme and revenue implications as set out in section 13 of Appendix 2 to this report.
- 4.7 The Lord Mayor put the Amendment to the recommendation to paragraph 3 of the Cabinet report to the vote by show of hands and declared the amendment **LOST**.
- 4.8 The Lord Mayor put the unamended recommendations in paragraph 3 of the Cabinet report, Housing Revenue Account Business Plan 2022/23 and 30-Year Housing Investment Plan to the vote and on a show of hands declared the recommendations **ADOPTED**.

RESOLVED

That full Council:

- 1) Approve the HRA revenue budget for 2022-23 (Table 2 and Appendix 2 to the report we considered).
 - 2) Note the HRA 5-year revenue budgets for 2022-23 to 2026-27 (Table 2 and Appendix 2 to the report we considered) and HRA 30-year revenue budgets for 2022-23 to 2051-52 (Appendix 3 to the report we considered)
 - 3) Approve the HRA 5-year Capital Programme for a total of £858.11m (Appendix 4 to the report we considered)
 - 4) Note the 30-year Capital Programme for 2022-23 to 2051-52 totalling £2.215bn (Appendix 4 to the report we considered)
 - 5) Approve the creation of a £575k Hardship Fund in 2022/23 that is earmarked to support tenants experiencing financial difficulty due to increases in household bills.
 - 6) Note a rent increase of 4.1% from April 2022 as applicable under the Welfare Reform and Work Act 2016.
 - 7) Note the HRA reserves and balances for the 5-year Business Plan (Table 6 to the report we considered).
- 4.9 The Lord Mayor put the recommendations in paragraph 4 of the Cabinet report, Treasury Management Strategy Statement for 2022/23 to 2026/27 to the vote and on a show of hands declared the recommendations **ADOPTED**.

RESOLVED:

That full Council:

- 1) Approve the Treasury Management Strategy Statement;
- 2) Approve the borrowing strategy and borrowing limits for 2022/23 to 2026/27 set out in section 6 to Appendix 4.
- 3) Approve the prudential Indicators set out in section 8 to Appendix 4.
- 4) Approve the Annual Investment Strategy and approved investments set out in Appendix 1 to Appendix 4.
- 5) Approve the Minimum Revenue Provision Policy set out in Appendix 2 to Appendix 4.

4.10 The Lord Mayor put the recommendations in paragraph 5 of the Cabinet report, Integrated Investment Framework 2022-2023 to the vote and upon a show of hands declared the recommendations **ADOPTED**.

RESOLVED:

That full Council:

- 1) Approve and implement the Integrated Investment Framework set out in Appendix 5.
- 2) Approve that the target for the overall return on Council investments should aspire to at least match inflation over the medium term;
- 3) Approve that the benefits of investing in the Pension Fund should be used as a benchmark when evaluating other investments;
- 4) Adopt the asset allocation percentages set out in the Framework and work towards achieving these;
- 5) Agree that the overarching objective of this Framework is to achieve an overall return on Council investments aspiring to match inflation and to reduce costs and liabilities, whilst maintaining adequate cash balances for operational purposes, and not exposing the capital value of investments to unnecessary risk;
- 6) Approve those strategic investments allocated to out-of-borough property developments should be considered individually and should outweigh the benefits of investing in-borough (which can have a number of non-commercial benefits, e.g., place making) and in a diversified property portfolio acquisitions will be made out of borough only on an exceptional basis.

- 7) Approve the Investment Executive to implement, monitor and report on the investment strategy.
- 4.11 The Lord Mayor put the recommendations in paragraph 6 of the Cabinet report, Pay Policy 2022-2023 to the vote and upon a show of hands declared the recommendations **ADOPTED**.

RESOLVED:

That the full Council:

Approved the Pay Policy for 2022 – 2023 attached under Appendix 6, as Appendix 1.

5 AUDIT AND PERFORMANCE COMMITTEE REPORT: 16 FEBRUARY 2022

Appointment of External Auditors for 2022/23 Onwards

- 5.1 The Lord Mayor put the recommendations in paragraph 1 of the Audit and Performance Committee report to the vote and on a show of hands declared the recommendations adopted.

RESOLVED:

- 1) That the Public Sector Audit Appointments (PSAA) invitation to 'opt in' to the sector-led option for the appointment of external auditors for the five financial years commencing on 1 April 2023 be approved; and
- 2) That authority be delegated to the Executive Director of Finance and Resources to respond to the invitation and take the necessary steps to finalise the appointment itself following the PSAA procurement process.

6 GENERAL PURPOSES COMMITTEE REPORT: 22 FEBRUARY 2022

Members' Allowances Scheme 2022-2023

- 6.1 The Lord Mayor put the recommendations in paragraph 1 of the General Purposes Committee report to the vote and on a show of hands declared the recommendations adopted.

RESOLVED:

- 1) That the Members' Allowances Scheme for 2022-2023 be approved with effect from 1 April 2022.
- 2) That the Members' Allowances (Basis and SRA) for 2022-2023 be agreed in line with any salary increase for Council staff that may be agreed by the National Joint Council for Local Government Services.

The Meeting ended at 9.07pm.

CHAIRMAN: _____

DATE _____