

# CITY OF WESTMINSTER

## MINUTES OF PROCEEDINGS

At the Meeting of the Council of the City of Westminster held at 7.00 pm on Wednesday 25th January, 2023 at Westminster Council House, 97-113 Marylebone Road, London, NW1 5PT.

### PRESENT

The Lord Mayor, Councillor Hamza Taouzzale

### COUNCILLORS

Concia Albert	Aicha Less
Gillian Arrindell	Iman Less
Barbara Arzymanow	Patrick Lilley
Geoff Barraclough	Patricia McAllister
Liza Begum	Alan Mendoza
David Boothroyd	Tim Mitchell
Ruth Bush	Ellie Ormsby
Nafsika Butler-Thalassis	Ralu Oteh-Osoka
Melvyn Caplan	Angela Piddock
Maggie Carman	Ed Pitt Ford
Md Shamsed Chowdhury	Robert Rigby
Laila Cunningham	Rachael Robathan
Lorraine Dean	Tim Roca
Tony Devenish	Ian Rowley
Paul Dimoldenberg	Cara Sanquest
Robert Eagleton	Caroline Sargent
Paul Fisher	Karen Scarborough
Jim Glen	Selina Short
David Harvey	James Small-Edwards
Sara Hassan	Judith Southern
Elizabeth Hitchcock	Max Sullivan
Adam Hug	Paul Swaddle
Louise Hyams	Jessica Toale
Ryan Jude	Aziz Toki
Amanda Langford	Jacqui Wilkinson
	Jason Williams

**APOLOGIES:** Councillors Matt Noble and Mark Shearer

#### **1 APPOINTMENT OF RELIEF CHAIR**

- 1.1 Motion moved by the Lord Mayor and seconded by Councillor Paul Swaddle, that Councillor Louise Hyams be elected as Relief Chair.
- 1.2 Motion put, and on a show of hands, declared **CARRIED**.

## **2 MINUTES**

- 2.1 The minutes of the proceedings at the Council meetings held on Wednesday 9 November 2022 were, with the assent of the Members present, signed by the Lord Mayor as a true record of the proceedings.

## **3 LORD MAYOR'S COMMUNICATIONS**

- 3.1 The Lord Mayor referred to these as set out on the agenda.
- 3.2 The Lord Mayor invited the Council to join him in observing a minute's silence in memory of Phillipa Roe, former Leader of the Council, who had sadly passed away, following which Councillor Robathan and Councillor Hug spoke in tribute.

## **4 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

- 4.1 There were no declarations of interest.

## **5 STATEMENT ON URGENT MATTERS**

- 5.1 There were no urgent matters.

## **6 PETITIONS AND DEPUTATIONS, IF ANY**

- 6.1 There were no petitions or deputations received.

## **7 QUESTIONS**

- 7.1 The questions, supplementary questions and replies are included as a recording on the Council's website.

## **8 COUNCILLOR ISSUES**

### **8.1 End of Life Care**

Councillor Judith Southern spoke and Councillor Nafsika Butler-Thalassis replied.

### **ASB, Community and Abbey Road Ward**

Councillor Amanda Langford spoke and Councillor Aicha Less replied.

## **9 FUTURE POLICY PLAN**

- 9.1 The meeting debated the items chosen for debate from the Future Policy Plan by the Majority Party.

### **School Meals**

- 9.2 The Majority Party selected item number 83 on the Future Policy Plan, School Meals. The debate would be referred to the relevant Executive Director for consideration when reporting on the subject.

### **City Management**

- 9.3 The Majority Party selected item number 105 on the Future Policy Plan, City Management. The debate would be referred to the relevant Executive Director for consideration when reporting on the subject.
- 9.4 The meeting debated the item chosen for debate from the Future Policy Plan by the Opposition Party.

### **Public Health**

- 9.5 The Opposition Party selected item number 49 on the Future Policy Plan, Public Health. The debate would be referred to the relevant Executive Director for consideration when reporting on the subject.

## **10 REPORT FOR FULL COUNCIL: COUNCIL TAX DISCOUNTS (INCLUDING COUNCIL TAX LOCAL REDUCTION SCHEME) AND COUNCIL TAX BASE**

### **10.1 RESOLVED:**

- 1) That the Council accepted the recommendations of the Cabinet and that the Council approved the following recommendations for the financial year 2023/24:-
  - (i) that the Council Tax discount for second homes remained at 0% unless the government brought forward legislation to enable a Second Home Premium to be charged for the 2023/24 financial year. If this was the case, the premium should be set at the highest level allowed for by the legislation.
  - (ii) the Council Tax discounts for empty properties, including the discounts that replaced the previous Class A and C Council Tax exemptions, remain at 0%.
  - (iii) that a Long-Term Empty Property Premium continued at the maximum percentage allowed for by the current legislation for the 2023/24 financial year. and to charge the said premium a year after a property had been empty if the government brought forward legislation to allow this.

- (iv) that the Director of Revenues & Benefits be given delegated authority to determine any individual local discount applications received from Council Taxpayers during the 2023/24 financial year under section 13A(1)(c) of the Local Government Finance Act 1992.
- 2) That the Council approved the same Council Tax Reduction Scheme for 2023/24 which had operated successfully since 2013/14. The scheme was based on the Default Scheme Regulations, updated to reflect changes made via the Prescribed Requirements Amendment Regulations and with War Disabled Pensions, War Widow, Pensions and Armed Forces Compensation scheme payments disregarded in full when calculating a claimant's income. The same disregards should also apply to Housing Benefit and claims for Discretionary Housing Payment (DHP).
- 3) That the Council resolved that the Council Tax Base for 2023/24 for the Whole City is 135,955.46 equivalent Band D properties, for Montpelier Square alone 91.68 equivalent Band D properties and for Queen's Park 3,637.83 equivalent Band D properties.
- 4) That the Council resolved that the figures set out in paragraph 3 above for the Council Tax Base for 2023/24 be used by the Council to make a determination pursuant to the requirements of the Local Government Finance Act 1992.

The Meeting ended at 9.30pm.

**CHAIRMAN:** \_\_\_\_\_

**DATE** \_\_\_\_\_