

# CITY OF WESTMINSTER

## MINUTES OF PROCEEDINGS

At the Meeting of the Council of the City of Westminster held at 7.00 pm on Wednesday 28th June, 2023 at Westminster Council House, 97-113 Marylebone Road, London, NW1 5PT.

### PRESENT

The Lord Mayor, Councillor Patricia McAllister

### COUNCILLORS

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

**APOLOGIES:** Councillors Liza Begum, Md Shamsed Chowdhury, Tony Devenish, Amanda Langford, Aziz Toki and Jacqui Wilkinson

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

1.1 Motion moved by the Lord Mayor and seconded by Councillor Ellie Ormsby, that Councillor Patrick Lilley be elected as Relief Chair.

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

## **2 PRESENTATION OF PAST LORD MAYOR'S BADGE AND VOTE OF THANKS**

- 2.1 Councillor Tim Roca moved the Vote of Thanks to Councillor Hamza Taouzzale and his Consort, Ms Soad El-Gharras. Councillor Iman Less spoke to second the motion.
- 2.2 Motion put, and on a show of hands, the Lord Mayor Declared the motion **CARRIED** following which Councillor Taouzzale replied.

### **RESOLVED:**

1. That the Council resolved to record a Vote of Thanks to Councillor Hamza Taouzzale for the distinguished service rendered by him as Lord Mayor and to his Consort, Ms Soad El-Gharras for the constant and invaluable help given by her as the Lord Mayor's Consort.
2. We assure them of our gratitude for, and high appreciation of, the dignity and ability with which they have carried out their many duties in accordance with the highest traditions of the City and this Vote of Thanks be inscribed under the Common Seal and presented to them.

## **3 MINUTES**

- 3.1 The minutes of the proceedings at the Council meeting held on Wednesday 17 May 2023 were, with the assent of the Members present, signed by the Lord Mayor as a true record of the proceedings.

## **4 LORD MAYOR'S COMMUNICATIONS**

- 4.1 The Lord Mayor referred to these as set out on the agenda.

## **5 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

- 5.1 There were no declarations of interest.

## **6 STATEMENT ON URGENT MATTERS**

- 6.1 There were no urgent matters.

## **7 COUNCILLOR PRESENTED PETITIONS OR DEPUTATIONS, IF ANY**

- 7.1 Councillor Paul Swaddle presented a petition from local residents requesting that Labour Cabinet Members donate their recent 45% increase in allowances

to charity. The petition was referred to the relevant Chief Officer for reporting to the Cabinet Member for Finance and Council Reform.

- 7.2 Councillor Ed Pitt Ford presented a petition from local residents to support the Sussex Street playground in Pimlico. The petition was referred to the relevant Chief Officer for reporting to the Cabinet Member for City Management and Air Quality.

## **8 PUBLIC PARTICIPATION**

- 8.1 Members of the public presented two petitions and asked three questions which were responded to by the relevant Cabinet Members. The questions and responses are available on the Council's website.

## **9 QUESTIONS**

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

## **10 COUNCILLOR ISSUE**

### **10.1 Preserving the Character of the West End**

Councillor Jessica Toale spoke, and Councillor Geoff Barraclough replied.

## **11 PARTY BUSINESS**

- 11.1 No items were selected for debate.

## **12 REPORT OF THE GENERAL PURPOSES COMMITTEE: MEMBER ALLOWANCE SCHEME 2023-2024: AMENDMENT**

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

### **RESOLVED:**

That Full Council approved the Amended Members' Allowances Scheme for 2023-2024 which included amending the number of SRAs payable to Cabinet Members from six to seven and Deputy Leaders of the Opposition from one to two.

## 13 NOTICES OF MOTION

### Motion 13a – Fairer Westminster

- 13.1 The Majority Party had selected for debate the notice of motion as set out on the agenda. The notice of motion was moved by Councillor Ellie Ormsby and seconded by Councillor James Small-Edwards.
- 13.3 During the debate it was noted that Councillor Lorraine Dean raised a point of personal explanation and Councillors Selina Short and Ralu Oteh-Osaka raised points of order.
- 13.2 Following the debate, The Lord Mayor put the motion to the vote and following a show of hands declared the motion **CARRIED**.

### RESOLVED:

That this Council notes that:

- This administration was elected with a commitment to build a Fairer Westminster. Creating a more equitable economy and society in Westminster, which puts our residents and communities first. It notes the principles and plans set out in the 2023/24 Fairer Westminster Delivery Plan.
- The Council has recently become a signatory to the Unison Ethical Care Charter, making a commitment to improving protections for care workers and improving outcomes for service users. It has also created a unique Dirty Money Charter with the New West End Company (NVEC), the Heart of London Business Alliance (HOLBA), the Fair Tax Foundation and others to call for national change to tackle economic crime and corruption, whilst doing what we can here in Westminster.
- Westminster is proud of its vibrancy and diversity, and its history of welcoming refugees and displaced people from around the world fleeing conflict, climate change, inequality, discrimination and violence. On the latest published figures, Westminster is home to 763 people who are here on the Homes for Ukraine scheme, 997 asylum seekers of which 851 are in Home Office Contingency hotels, 7 refugee families resettled through the UK Resettlement and Afghan Resettlement pledge, and we are responsible for 54 unaccompanied asylum-seeking children and 212 former unaccompanied asylum-seeking children care leavers.
- Council of Sanctuary designation is awarded by the City of Sanctuary Local Authority Network to institutions that are welcoming to those fleeing violence and persecution in their own countries, and protecting the rights of all migrants, asylum-seekers and refugees. There are 33 members in total (10 in London, including recently in Camden where this designation was adopted unanimously) and 11 that have achieved the full award (1 in London).
- Councils can have a significant impact on their local area by promoting better mental health. Westminster takes its responsibility to care for its

residents' mental health seriously and recognises the impact it can have.

- Councillors represent their community and where possible Councillors, as a whole, should reflect the diversity of their community, particularly those with protected characteristics (age, disability, gender reassignment, marriage and civil partnership, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief, sex, sexual orientation). The Co-operative Party's Diverse Councils Declaration sets out ideas for increasing diversity in local government by suggesting ways to remove barriers standing in the way of a more diverse and inclusive democracy.

This Council believes that:

- Our vision for a Fairer Westminster must extend to the most vulnerable in the borough, including our refugee, asylum seeking and migrant communities.
  - We have a duty of care towards children, and vulnerable and trafficked adults in our borough.
  - We must continue to go above and beyond business as usual to support migrant communities. The journey to become a Council of Sanctuary will solidify this commitment.
- As a local authority we have a crucial role to play in improving the mental health of everyone in our community and tackling some of the widest and most entrenched inequalities in mental health.
  - Mental health should be a priority across all the local authority's areas of responsibility.
  - All councillors, whether members of the Cabinet or Scrutiny, and in our community and casework roles, can play a positive role in championing mental health on an individual and strategic basis.
- We should seek to take proactive steps to ensure our councillors are representative of the diverse communities they serve. A more representative democracy is a more inclusive democracy, which enables increased participation and more informed decision-making.

This Council resolves to:

- Launch the journey to become a Council of Sanctuary by joining City of Sanctuary's local authority network and demonstrate its values of 'Inclusive, Openness, Participation, Inspire, and Integrity'.
  - Continue to welcome and support refugees and migrants in the borough and stand in solidarity with them.
  - Challenge anti-migrant sentiment where we find it.
  - Work to ensure that Central Government provides adequate resources to local government to properly support refugees and displaced people in our City including funding for care, advice, housing and skills and employment support.
  - Find more opportunities across the Council to celebrate our refugee and migrant communities, tell their stories, and promote their voices.

- Work with local community, voluntary sector, health, and education partners, including those with lived experience, to shape Westminster's borough of sanctuary ambition.
- Sign the Local Authorities' Mental Health Challenge run by Centre for Mental Health.
  - Continue to support the Mental Health Member Champion in their role.
  - Support positive mental health in our community, including in local schools, neighbourhoods and workplaces.
  - Work to reduce inequalities in mental health in our community.
  - Work with local partners to offer effective support for people with mental health needs.
  - Tackle discrimination on the grounds of mental health in our community.
  - Proactively listen to people of all ages and backgrounds about what they need for better mental health.
- Commit to being a Diverse Council:
  - Provide a clear public commitment to improving diversity in democracy.
  - Demonstrate an open and welcoming culture to all, promoting the highest standards of behaviour and conduct.
  - Recommend a Diverse Council Action Plan to political groups for adoption ahead of the next local elections.
  - Work towards the standards for member support and development as set out in the LGA Councillor Development Charter and Charter Plus.
  - Demonstrate a commitment to a duty of care for councillors by:
    - Providing access to counselling services for all councillors;
    - Having regard for the safety and wellbeing of councillors whenever they are performing their role as councillors; and
    - Taking a zero-tolerance approach to bullying and harassment of members including through social networks.
  - Provide flexibility in Council business by regularly reviewing and staggering meeting times where appropriate and feasible.
  - Ensure that all members are able to take up the support to which they are entitled, particularly any reimbursement for costs of care, so the role of member is not limited to those who can afford it or those reliant on the support of others to fulfil their duties.
  - Review the Council's parental leave policy setting out members' entitlement to maternity, paternity, shared parental and adoption leave and relevant allowances to ensure it as inclusive and fair as possible.
- Support the delivery of our commitments under Westminster's Dirty Money and the Unison Ethical Care Charter.

## **Motion 13b – Restoring the 75% cut of new build intermediate housing for key workers**

- 13.3 The Opposition Party had selected for debate the notice of motion as set out on the agenda. The notice of motion was moved by Councillor David Harvey and seconded by Councillor Robert Rigby.
- 13.4 Councillor Matt Noble moved and it was seconded by Councillor Geoff Barraclough that the notice of motion be amended, as follows:

### **Provision of Restoring the 75% cut of new build intermediate housing for Key Workers Motion**

~~This Council deplores the absence of ambition or results from the previous administration on cut of up to 75% in new build intermediate housing aimed at key workers in the City of Westminster. This includes allowing developers on numerous schemes to contribute less than policy-compliant numbers or payments towards affordable housing. since this Administration took charge, and seeks for the Cabinet to reinstate the key worker homes to the build programme.~~

The Council welcomes therefore the review and actions undertaken by the new administration which has resulted in 337 council homes at social rent being added to the Council's development pipeline while still delivering 378 homes for intermediate rent. Together with partners this means 561 new intermediate homes for Westminster.

This Council also welcomes upcoming reforms to the City Plan and the new Affordable Housing SPD that will help support the delivery of more truly affordable housing by the private sector, such as reforming intermediate rent levels to make them more affordable to those on lower household incomes than under the previous administration.

This council notes that Grosvenor and Peabody will be converting 193 social rent units in Mayfair and Belgravia to intermediate rent over the coming years, expanding the number of intermediate homes to which the Council has nomination rights but reducing access to social rent homes.

This Council also notes that according to the latest figures there are 100 key workers on the waiting list for an intermediate rent home, with the new administration taking steps to improve priority for key workers within the system and improving marketing to them.

We want a Fairer Westminster "city for all" that builds not just homes but communities. That has to include our hard-pressed key workers who will benefit from the Council's provision of both seldom qualify for social rent housing and intermediate rent homes ~~or otherwise be able to afford to live in Westminster.~~ Without our key workers living here, this is not a fairer Westminster.

13.5 Following debate, The Lord Mayor put the amendment to the motion to the vote and following a show of hands declared the amendment to the motion **CARRIED**.

12.4 The Lord Mayor then put the substantive motion as amended to the vote and following a show of hands declared the substantive motion as amended **CARRIED**.

**RESOLVED:**

**Provision of new build intermediate housing for Key Workers Motion**

This Council deplores the absence of ambition or results from the previous administration on housing aimed at key workers in the City of Westminster. This includes allowing developers on numerous schemes to contribute less than policy-compliant numbers or payments towards affordable housing.

The Council welcomes therefore the review and actions undertaken by the new administration which has resulted in 337 council homes at social rent being added to the Council's development pipeline while still delivering 378 homes for intermediate rent. Together with partners this means 561 new intermediate homes for Westminster.-

This Council also welcomes upcoming reforms to the City Plan and the new Affordable Housing SPD that will help support the delivery of more truly affordable housing by the private sector, such as reforming intermediate rent levels to make them more affordable to those on lower household incomes than under the previous administration.

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This Council also notes that according to the latest figures there are 100 key workers on the waiting list for an intermediate rent home, with the new administration taking steps to improve priority for key workers within the system and improving marketing to them.

We want a Fairer Westminster-that builds not just homes but communities. That has to include our hard-pressed key workers who will benefit from the Council's provision of both social rent housing and intermediate rent homes-in Westminster. Without our key workers living here, this is not a fairer Westminster.

The Meeting ended at 9.40 pm

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

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