

CITY OF WESTMINSTER

MINUTES OF PROCEEDINGS

At the Meeting of the Council of the City of Westminster held at 7.00 pm on Wednesday 22nd January, 2020 at Westminster Council House, 97-113 Marylebone Road, London, NW1 5PT.

PRESENT

The Lord Mayor, Councillor Ruth Bush

COUNCILLORS

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

1 APPOINTMENT OF RELIEF CHAIRMAN

1.1 Motion moved by the Lord Mayor and seconded by Councillor Paul Swaddle, that Councillor Lindsey Hall 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 13 November 2019 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 reminded the council that Holocaust Memorial Day would fall on 27 January, and that this year would commemorate 75 years since the liberation of Auschwitz-Birkenau.
- 3.3 The council observed a moment of reflection bearing witness to those who had endured genocide and continue to do so and to honour the survivors and all those whose lives have been changed beyond recognition.

4 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

- 4.1 There were no declarations.

5 ELECTION OF THE LEADER OF THE COUNCIL

- 5.1 It was **MOVED** by Councillor Tony Devenish and **SECONDED** by Councillor Melvyn Caplan that Councillor Rachael Robathan be elected Leader of the Council.

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

- 5.2 Councillor Robathan replied and in doing so **MOVED** the vote of thanks to the former Leader Councillor Nickie Aiken. Councillor Matthew Green formally seconded the vote of thanks which on a show of hands was declared **CARRIED**.

RESOLVED:

That the Council places on record its appreciation of the service rendered by Councillor Nickie Aiken as Leader of the Council for the period from 25 January 2017 to 22 January 2020 and note the many achievements of the City Council during this period.

The Council thanks Councillor Nickie Aiken for all her hard work, effort and leadership in ensuring Westminster City Council takes the lead in tackling challenges experienced by communities and ensuring neighbourhoods are supported to grow and develop.

Under the leadership of Councillor Nickie Aiken more residents will be able to put down roots in Westminster with over 1850 new homes set to be built by 2023; the largest council home building programme for a generation.

As Leader, Councillor Nickie Aiken has listened closely to residents and taken steps to reform the planning system, making it more open and transparent; ultimately giving communities a stronger voice on the issues that directly affect their city.

From the first months of her Leadership, Councillor Nickie Aiken championed the Council's drive to be cleaner and greener. The #dontbeidle campaign is working to eliminate engine idling from the areas of highest pollution in the city, while the Clean Air Fund is giving schools the resources they need to tackle poor air quality.

Through the introduction of the Community Contribution Councillor Nickie Aiken has given Westminster's residents the opportunity to give more to their local community with over £900,000 raised to support the most vulnerable people in the city.

Supporting vulnerable communities has been a hallmark of Councillor Nickie Aiken's leadership. From being one of the first community leaders to demand the reclassification of former legal high, Spice, to bringing partners together to rethink how we tackle rough sleeping council in the country and most recently championing the launch of the Hidden Network campaign to give people to right support to get off the streets for good.

These and her many other achievements will be remembered as valued service to the people of Westminster and those elected to this Council.

6 STATEMENT ON URGENT MATTERS

6.1 There were none.

7 PETITIONS AND DEPUTATIONS, IF ANY

7.1 There were none.

8 QUESTIONS

8. The questions, supplementary questions and replies are included as an audio recording on the Council's website

9 COUNCILLOR ISSUES

Homelessness vs Intentionally Homelessness

Councillor Aicha Less and Councillor Murad Gassanly replied

Air Quality in Westminster

Councillor Elizabeth Hitchcock spoke and Councillor Tim Mitchell replied.

11 REPORT OF THE CABINET: 21 OCTOBER 2019 - WESTMINSTER CITY COUNCIL CORPORATE PARENTING STRATEGY

11.1 The meeting accordingly debated this item that had been selected by the Majority Party.

11.2 Prior to the start of the debate the Council heard from guest speaker, Lucia Fyre, who suggested renaming the strategy to Westminster City Council Guardians Strategy.

11.3 The debate will be referred to the Executive Director for consideration when reporting on the subject.

11.4 The Lord Mayor, at the conclusion of the debate, then put the recommendation of the Cabinet to the vote and on a show of hands then declared the recommendation **ADOPTED**.

11.5 RESOLVED:

1. That the Strategy be adopted.
2. That the corporate parenting plan is reviewed and refreshed annually to drive the council's corporate responsibility to ensure looked after children and care leavers get the very best experiences in life.

12 REPORT OF THE STANDARDS COMMITTEE: 14 NOVEMBER 2019 - UPDATE ON THE USE OF SOCIAL MEDIA BY MEMBERS

12.1 RESOLVED:

That the revised Guidance on use of social media by Members be adopted.

13 REPORT OF THE CABINET MEMBER FOR FINANCE, PROPERTY AND REGENERATION - COUNCIL TAX DISCOUNTS AND COUNCIL TAX BASE: 2 JANUARY 2020

13.1 RESOLVED:

1. That the Council approved the following recommendations to be made to the Council for the financial year 2020/21:-
 - (i) that the Council Tax discount for second homes remains at 0%
 - (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 continues at the maximum percentage allowed for by the current legislation, which is for 2020/21:

- Properties empty between 2 years - 5 years: 100% Increase
- Properties empty over 5 years: 200% Increase

(iv) That the Head of Revenues and Benefits be given delegated authority to determine any individual local discount applications received from Council Taxpayers during the 2020/21 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 2020/21 which has operated successfully since 2013/14 and that the following be noted: The scheme is 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. A minor change is proposed for 2020/21. The current scheme applies a capital cut off limit of £16,000, so that anyone with savings of £16,000 or more is not entitled to Council Tax Support. It is proposed that any capital and income received as a result of a charitable or support payment connected with the Grenfell Tower fire is fully disregarded when deciding eligibility for Council Tax Support. This is expected to only apply to a small number of households who have been permanently rehoused in Westminster after losing their homes in the Grenfell Tower and Grenfell Walk. This is a change recommended by central government to all local authorities.
3. That the Council agreed that the Council Tax Base for 2020/21 for the Whole City is 132,698.31 equivalent Band D properties, for Montpelier Square alone 97.08 equivalent Band D properties and for Queen's Park 3,554.14 equivalent Band D properties.
4. That the Council agreed that the figures as set out in 3. above for the Council Tax Base for 2020/21 be used by the Council to make a determination pursuant to the requirements of the Local Government Finance Act 1992.

14 NOTICE OF MOTION

- 14.1 The Minority Party had selected for debate the Notice of Motion as set out on the agenda. The Notice of Motion was moved by Councillor Adam Hug and seconded by Councillor David Boothroyd.
- 14.2 Following debate, the Lord Mayor put the Motion to the vote and on a show of hands declared the Motion **LOST**.

The Meeting ended at 9.50 pm

CHAIRMAN: _____

DATE _____