



City of Westminster

# Council Agenda

Title: **Council Meeting**

Meeting Date: **Wednesday 21st January, 2015**

Time: **7.00 pm**

Venue: **Porchester Hall, Porchester Road, Bayswater, London, W2 5DU**

Members: **All Councillors are hereby summoned to attend the Meeting for the transaction of the business set out.**

**Admission to the public gallery is available from 6.30pm.**

**Please telephone if you are attending the meeting in a wheelchair or have difficulty walking up steps. There is wheelchair access by a side entrance.**



**An Induction loop operates to enhance sound for anyone wearing a hearing aid or using a transmitter. If you require any further information, please contact the Committee Officer, Mick Steward, Head of Committee and Governance Services**

**Email: [msteward@westminster.gov.uk](mailto:msteward@westminster.gov.uk) Tel: 020 7641 3134  
Corporate Website: [www.westminster.gov.uk](http://www.westminster.gov.uk)**

**1. APPOINTMENT OF RELIEF CHAIRMAN**

To appoint a relief Chairman.

**2. MINUTES**

To sign the Minutes of the Meetings of the Council held on 12 November 2014.

**3. LORD MAYOR'S COMMUNICATIONS**

- (a) The Lord Mayor to report that on Thursday 30 October she attended the Westminster Looked After Children and Care Leavers Service Annual Awards Ceremony at Tate Britain.
- (b) The Lord Mayor to report that on Thursday 4 November she hosted, with Councillor Christabel Flight, a reception to thank the organisers of events that took place in Westminster on 'Silver Sunday'.
- (c) The Lord Mayor to report that on Wednesday 5 November she attended the Catholic Police Guild 92<sup>nd</sup> Annual Solemn Requiem Mass for Deceased Police Officers at Westminster Cathedral.
- (d) The Lord Mayor to report that on Thursday 6 November she laid a wreath at the Fields of Remembrance at Westminster Abbey.
- (e) The Lord Mayor to report that on Saturday 8 November she attended the annual Royal British Legion Festival of Remembrance at the Royal Albert Hall in the presence of HM The Queen.
- (f) The Lord Mayor to report that on Sunday 9 November she attended in Civic State the Remembrance Day Service at Westminster Abbey.
- (g) The Lord Mayor to report that on Tuesday 11 November she jointly unveiled with the French Ambassador a plaque to commemorate the re-dedication of the Marshal Foch statue in Grosvenor Gardens.
- (h) The Lord Mayor to report that on Thursday 13 November she attended the Annual Marylebone Service held in the Church of Annunciation which also marked the Centenary of the church.

- (i) The Lord Mayor to report that on Sunday 16 November she attended the AJEX Parade and Service at the Cenotaph and Horseguards Parade Ground.
- (j) The Lord Mayor to report that on Wednesday 19 November she was Guest of Honour of the Mayor of Oslo at the Ceremony of the cutting down of the Oslo Christmas Tree in a forest outside Oslo.
- (k) The Lord Mayor to report that on Monday 24 November she presided at the tenth anniversary of British Citizenship ceremonies held in Westminster. The ceremony took place in the Jerusalem Chamber, Westminster Abbey and the Dean of Westminster gave an address.
- (l) The Lord Mayor to report that on Tuesday 25 November she jointly unveiled with Lt Col Kitson (a descendent of Lt de Pass) an engraved paving stone in Victoria Gardens Embankment in honour of Lt Frank de Pass VC, a resident of Westminster and the first person from the borough to be awarded the Victoria cross in the First World War. The Secretary of State for Communities and Local Government also attended.
- (m) The Lord Mayor to report that on Thursday 27 November she switched on the Christmas tree lights in Churchill Ward in an event organised by the Churchill Ward Councillors.
- (n) The Lord Mayor to report that on Friday 28 November she attended the Active Westminster Annual Awards Ceremony at the MCC at Lords.
- (o) The Lord Mayor to report that on Saturday 29 November she attended ceremonies to switch lights on Christmas Trees in Westbourne Ward and then Harrow Road Ward.
- (p) The Lord Mayor to report that on Monday 1 December, accompanied by Councilor Ed Argar, she visited the Veolia depot at 211 Harrow Road and met members of the waste collection team, and she then met members of the street cleaning team at the Westway Street Cleaning depot.
- (q) The Lord Mayor to report that on Tuesday 2 December she attended the Annual Diplomatic Corp reception given by HM The Queen at Buckingham Palace.

- (r) The Lord Mayor to report that on Wednesday 3 December she attended the unveiling of the Korean War Memorial in Victoria Embankment gardens in the presence of HRH the Duke of Gloucester.
- (s) The Lord Mayor to report that on Thursday 4 December she hosted the Ceremony to mark the switching on by the Governing Mayor of Oslo of the lights on the Oslo Christmas Tree in Trafalgar Square.
- (t) The Lord Mayor to report that on Friday 5 December she switched on the lights on a Christmas tree in the Warwick Ward in an event attended by the Ward Councillors.
- (u) The Lord Mayor to report that on Friday 12 December she hosted jointly with the Society of London Theatres a fund raising event for the Sir Simon Milton Foundation in Leicester Square.
- (v) The Lord Mayor to report that on Saturday 13 December she attended the Queen's Park Winter Festival lunch with Councillor Barrie Taylor.
- (w) The Lord Mayor to report that on Sunday 14 December she attended the Tea Dance for Older Residents in Westminster held at the Grosvenor House Hotel.
- (x) The Lord Mayor to report that on Tuesday 16 December she hosted a reception for The Passage charity in the Lord Mayor's Rooms.
- (y) The Lord Mayor to report that on Thursday 18 December she attended the Westminster Cathedral Christmas celebration.
- (z) The Lord Mayor to report that on Thursday 1 January 2015 she attended the annual London New Year's day Parade, and gave the welcome address.

**4. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

**5. PETITIONS AND DEPUTATIONS (IF ANY)**

**6. QUESTIONS**

Standing Order 9 limits the questions to matters relevant to the general work or procedure of the Council.

A list setting out the order of questions is attached.

**7. COUNCILLOR ISSUES**

- (a) Councillor Tom Crockett – Border Country Maida Vale: Development, Business and Community
- (b) Councillor Robert Rigby – Lords, More than just a Cricket Ground.

**8. STATEMENT ON URGENT MATTERS**

With the approval of the Chairman of the meeting, the Leader of the Council may make a statement on an urgent matter and the Leader of the Opposition will have an equivalent right of reply.

**9. FUTURE POLICY PLAN**

To consider items chosen for debate from the attached Future Policy Plan.

**10. CABINET REPORT**

To receive, consider and debate (if chosen) the following report which contains a recommendation for decision:

Cabinet Meeting	Date of Decision/Meeting
Cabinet Meeting – Council Tax Base 2015-2016	15 December 2014

**11. NOTICE OF MOTION**

- (a) Private Rented Sector in Westminster

To be moved by Councillor Vincenzo Rampulla and seconded by Councillor Murad Gassanly:

This council notes:

- The enormous growth in the private rented sector, with more than 4 out of 10 households in Westminster now renting from private landlords;
- The high cost of the sector, with households paying around 40 per cent of their income on rents, in Westminster 3 out of 4 private renters rely on benefits to pay their rent;

**(Pages 1 - 4)**

- The council has this year subsidised private landlords, through housing benefit, paying out an enormous £75 million - partly explained by average rents in Westminster in 2011-12 increasing by around £744 whilst wages decreased by 13 per cent;
- The poor standards within the sector compared to other tenures, with figures showing 4 out of 10 homes still failing to meet Decent Homes standards. In 2011/12 one in 8 homes the council inspected received a legal notice;
- That only 52 per cent of private renters thought renting privately was a 'good' tenure, as opposed to 93 per cent owner occupiers and 82 per cent of social renters;

This council resolves to:

- Support a better private rented sector in Westminster, one that is well-run, well-regulated and offers value for money to both renters and taxpayers;
- Play an active role in ensuring a well-run, sufficiently regulated private rental market, producing a dedicated council private rented sector strategy that will focus on:
  - Identifying those areas that represent the worst standards in the borough;
  - Using all legal powers currently available to address poor standards in the private rented sector, including proactively taking enforcement measures;
  - Encouraging the use of longer-term tenancies to add stability for renters;
  - Encouraging institutional investment to increase the supply of new, well-run and affordable rented accommodation in Westminster;
  - Ensuring renters and landlords in Westminster know about the Mayor's Rental Standard and making sure it is actively championed by the council;
- Support the principle of a borough-wide licensing scheme to champion the better standards in Westminster's private rented market, commissioning a working group of equal political representation, to report the possible development and implementation of such a scheme within six months;

- Continue to lobby central Government to ensure local authorities are given stronger powers to intervene in the private rented sector for the benefit of Westminster renters and taxpayers.

(b) Health Care

To be moved by Councillor Barrie Taylor and seconded by Councillor Adam Hug

This Council notes that the winter months are producing severe pressures on our local A&E service at St Mary's hospital – which is subject to the 'Shaping a Healthier Future' plan as approved by the Secretary of State and covering nine local authority areas in North West London.

It is also noted that the physical infrastructure of local primary health care services in Westminster is not adequate to provide integrated care, due to the poor state of many GPs practices and land prices in Westminster.

The Council acknowledges the national intention of major political parties to integrate health with social care services and will use every power / opportunity of the local authority to assist in its implementation, including:

- In respect of St Mary's A&E services we call upon NHS England to sell the Samaritan ex-Hospital site to provide immediate capital resources to implement changes to the hospital infrastructure, as required by the Shaping a Healthier Future plan;
- In respect of the chronic state of much of the infrastructure for primary care services we will use our Section 106 and Community Infrastructure Levy powers to develop a £20m capital fund, in partnership with NHS England, to introduce community facilities for the provision of integrated health and social care services and to attract the highest quality of GPs to work in our area.

**Westminster City Hall  
64 Victoria Street  
London SW1  
9 January 2015**

**Head of Legal & Democratic Services**

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## REPORT OF THE CABINET MEETING HELD ON 15 DECEMBER 2014

**Present:** Councillor Philippa Roe (Chairman), Heather Acton, Nickie Aiken, Edward Argar, Daniel Astaire, Melvyn Caplan, Danny Chalkley, Rachael Robathan and Steve Summers

**Also Present:** Councillor Tim Mitchell

### 1. COUNCIL TAX DISCOUNTS (INCLUDING COUNCIL TAX LOCAL REDUCTION SCHEME) AND COUNCIL TAX BASE REPORT

- (a) The Local Government 2003 provides local authorities with discretion in relation to the level of Council Tax discount for specific categories of Council Tax properties, namely second homes and long term empty properties. It also makes provision for a local authority to set its own "local" Council Tax discount categories.
- (b) The Local Government Finance Act 2012, with effect from 2013/14, removed several Council Tax exemptions and replaced them with local determined discounts. The Act also enables local authorities to remove the previous statutory minimum 10% discount for second homes and to set a local long term empty premium. We are recommending that the Council Tax discount for empty and second homes remains at 0% and that an Empty Property Premium is not implemented.
- (c) The Welfare Reform Act 2012 and Local Government Finance Act 2012 replaced the previous Council Tax Benefit scheme with a locally determined Council Tax Reduction Scheme (also referred to as Council Tax Support scheme), which is effectively a new type of Council Tax discount. We also agreed that the current Council Tax Reduction scheme should continue in its current form in 2015/16. The scheme effectively mirrors the previous Council Tax Benefit scheme and will not result in the Government's 10% benefit funding cut being passed onto the borough's working age claimants. We are recommending that as previously introduced the Council agree a Council Tax Reduction Scheme for 2015/16 based on the Council Tax Reduction Schemes (Default Scheme) Regulations. We are also recommending again that War Disabled pensions, War Widows pensions and Armed Forces Compensation Scheme payments are disregarded in full when calculating a claimant's income.
- (d) The Council Tax Base is calculated in accordance with a nationally prescribed formula and represents the equivalent number of Band D properties within the area. The formula takes account of the number of properties in each band, the number of discounts given for single occupiers, empty dwellings, second homes and other eligible criteria, the prescribed proportions to convert numbers to Band D equivalents and the estimated collection rate. The relevant regulations were changed for 2013/14 so that the tax base calculation includes a deduction for the equivalent number of Band D properties relating to the Council Tax Reduction Scheme. The Council Tax

Base must be determined and be notified to the Greater London Authority (GLA) and the levying bodies. As in the past, these notifications must be made by 31 January.

- (e) The calculations as detailed in Appendices 1 and 2 of the report were considered which confirm a figure of 121,890.83 equivalent Band D properties for the whole city, 3,156.38 Band D equivalent properties for Queens Park and 94.16 Band D equivalent properties for Montpelier Square. The tax base calculation is based on the assumption that the recommendations in the report in relation to the level of Council Tax discounts and in relation to the Council Tax Resolution Scheme are adopted.
- (f) The parish of Queen's Park was created on 1 April 2014 under the Council's Reorganisation of Community Governance Order 2013. The Queen's Park Community Council was elected on 22 May and consequently became a new precepting authority for the purposes of Part 1 of the Local Government Finance Act 1992. The calculations in Appendix 1 and 2 of the report considered by us confirm a tax base for Queen's Park Parish Council of 3156.38 Band D equivalent properties.
- (g) The full report we considered is attached as Appendix A.

**We recommend:**

1. That the Council approve for the financial year 2015/16:
  - (i) that the Council Tax discount for second homes remains at 0%.
  - (ii) that the Council tax discounts for empty properties, including the discounts that replaced the previous Class A and C Council Tax exemptions remains at 0%.
  - (iii) that a long term empty property premium is not introduced.
  - (iv) that no new "local" discounts be introduced at this stage.
  - (v) that the Head of the Shared Service Centre determines any individual local discount applications from vulnerable Council Taxpayers received during the course of the 2015/16 financial year.
2. That the Council approve the same Council Tax Reduction Scheme for 2015/16 as operated in 2014/15 which is based on the Default Scheme Regulations and that War Disabled Pensions, War Widow, Pensions and Armed Forces Compensation Scheme payments are disregarded in full when calculating a claimant's income.

3. That the Council resolve that the Council Tax Base for 2015/16 for the whole city is 121,890.83 equivalent Band D properties, for Montpelier Square alone 94.16 equivalent Band D properties and for Queen's Park 3,156.38 equivalent Band D properties.
4. That the Council resolve that the figures set out in Recommendation 3 above for the Council Tax Base for 2015/16 be used by the Council to make a determination pursuant to the requirements of the Local Government Finance Act 1992.

Philippa Roe, Leader of the Council

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Local Government Act 1972 (Background Papers)

None

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