



City of Westminster

# Council Agenda

Title: **Council Meeting**

Meeting Date: **Wednesday 8th March, 2023**

Time: **7.00 pm**

Venue: **Westminster Council House, 97-113 Marylebone Road,  
London, NW1 5PT**

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

**In line with legislation Committee members will attend the meeting in person. This meeting will be live streamed through the Council's website.**

**Limited 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 via the Sammy Ofer Centre.**

**If you require any further information, please contact the Committee Officer, Janis Best, Committee and Councillor Support Manager.**

**Email: [jb主@westminster.gov.uk](mailto:jb主@westminster.gov.uk) Tel: 07971 920521  
Corporate Website: [www.westminster.gov.uk](http://www.westminster.gov.uk)**

**1. APPOINTMENT OF RELIEF CHAIR**

To appoint a Relief Chair.

**2. MINUTES**

To sign the Minutes of the Meeting of the Council meeting held on 25 January 2023.

**(Pages 5 - 10)**

**3. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

To receive declarations by Members and Officers of the existence and nature of any pecuniary interests or any other significant interest in matters on this agenda.

**4. CABINET REPORT**

To receive and consider the following Cabinet report:  
13 February 2023

**(Pages 11 - 20)**

**Appendix 1:**

Business and Financial Planning 2023/24 to 2026/27

[Report](#)

[Appendix 1](#)

[Appendix 2](#)

[Appendix 3](#)

[Appendix 4](#)

[Appendix 5](#)

[Appendix 6](#)

[Appendix 7](#)

[Appendix 8](#)

**Appendix 2:**

Capital Strategy 2023-24 to 2027-28

[Report](#)

[Appendix A](#)

**Appendix 3:**

Housing Revenue Account Business Plan 2023-24

[Report](#)

[Appendices 1 & 2](#)

[Appendices 3 & 4](#)

[Appendix 5](#)

**Appendix 4:**

Treasury Management Strategy 2023/24

[Report and Appendices 1 to 4](#)

**Appendix 5:**

Integrated Investment Statement 2023/24

[Report and Appendices A to C](#)

**Appendix 6:**

Pay Policy 2023-2024

[Report](#)

[Appendix 1](#)

**5. GENERAL PURPOSES COMMITTEE REPORT - MEMBER ALLOWANCES SCHEME 2023 - 2024**

**(Pages 21 - 22)**

To receive, consider and debate, if chosen, the following General Purposes Committee report:

[Appendix 1](#)

**6. GENERAL PURPOSES COMMITTEE REPORT - CONSTITUTIONAL CHANGES**

**(Pages 23 - 24)**

To receive, consider and debate, if chosen, the following General Purposes Committee report:

[Appendix 1](#)

**64 Victoria Street  
London, SW1E 6QP  
28 February 2023**

**Chief Executive**

## 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** \_\_\_\_\_

This page is intentionally left blank

## Report of the Cabinet meeting held on Monday 13 February 2023

**Present:** Councillors Adam Hug (Chair), Tim Roca (attended virtually), Aicha Less Nafsika Butler-Thalassis (attended virtually), Geoff Barraclough, David Boothroyd, Paul Dimoldenberg (attended virtually), Liza Begum Matt Noble

### 1. Business and Financial Planning 2023/24 to 2026/27

- (a) This report from the Section 151 officer brings together the Council's business and financial planning and looks forward over the next four years to set out how it will support the Council's objectives under the new administration's Fairer Westminster strategy, supported by a medium-term financial plan.
- (b) This report proposes a balanced budget for 2023/24, but still forecasts a gap of £56.8m over the following three years. Recognising the inflationary pressures and on-going cost of living crisis residents are experiencing it is proposed that for next year the budget includes a freeze in the general element of council tax and an increase of 2% for the Adult Social Care precept element. At Band D this will result in an annual increase of £9.37 or an equivalent weekly amount of 18p per week. When combined, the general element of council tax and adult social care precept, for Westminster, will rise from £468.54 to £477.91 at Band D.
- (c) The recommended General Fund budget of £193.611m is a net increase of £8.75m against last year. In broad term this includes significant inflation pressures of £32.2m (including a base increase rolled forward from the current year), Fairer Westminster/Cost of Living policy investments of £7.8m, service cost and income pressures of £19.5m, additional resources for adult social care of £6.8m and other changes of £9.9m; offset by net increased government funding of £14.0m, savings proposals of £25.9m and additional interest earnings of £20.8m. The balance is funded from the increase in the social care precept of council tax of £1.2m and £6.6m from earmarked reserves.
- (d) This report proposes a balanced budget for 2023/24 and shows a remaining forecast gap of £56.8m over the following three years.
- (e) We have noted that this year has seen significant economic instability within the UK and global markets driven by high rates of inflation created by the war in the Ukraine and the lingering challenges in the global supply chain post-pandemic and Brexit.
- (f) The challenges above have seen economic recovery stall following the pandemic and a requirement for additional government support for people and some businesses as the cost of living is now having an impact.
- (g) With inflation remaining at a 40-year high, the impact on resident households has been challenging. An estimated 31,000 households in Westminster are especially impacted as they spend greater shares of their income on fuel and food.

- (h) Data analysis suggests that the cohorts of residents most affected are:
- Single people on low incomes (on benefits or in work)
  - Families with children
  - Pensioners
  - Those with disabilities
  - Residents in the most deprived wards in Church Street, Queen's Park and Harrow Road, although residents in all wards are affected
- (i) In July 2022 the Council launched a Cost-of-Living Strategy setting out a plan to help residents through the crisis. This was followed by the Council declaring the cost-of-living crisis an emergency in September 2022. In response a total package of £9m of support has been made available to date with an extra £1m proposed for 2023/24 giving a total of £10m. This support is funded from a variety of sources; both from Government and the Council.
- (j) At our meeting we heard from the Chair of the Budget Scrutiny Task Group who outlined the work undertaken this year to increase the transparency of the scrutiny process by choosing to livestream all the sessions on the Council website and by inviting members of the public to sit in the public gallery. The Chair concluded that the proposed Budget is financially robust with the potential to deliver on the strategic ambitions being pursued by the new administration.

**We recommend to full Council:**

**Council Tax**

- 1) That the council tax for a Band D be agreed at £477.91 for 2023/24.
- 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 2024, be as specified in the Council Tax Resolution in Appendix 6.
- 3) That the Precepts and Special Expenses be as also specified in Appendix 6 for properties in Montpelier Square and the Queen's Park Community Council.
- 4) That the formal resolution for 2023/34 attached at Appendix 6 including the council tax requirement of £64.974m be agreed.
- 5) Note the proposed Greater London Authority precept (Band D) of £434.14, an increase of £38.55 in the adjusted Band D precept.
- 6) That the Council continues the Westminster Community Contribution scheme to allow residents 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) To note the views of the Scrutiny Budget Task Group set out in Appendix 8.
- 8) That the proposed General Fund net budget requirement of £193.611m summarised in Appendix 4 is approved.
- 9) That the savings, pressures and investments for 2023/24 to 2026/27 set out in Appendix 1, 2 and 3, are approved.
- 10) That the Equality Impact Assessments included in Appendix 7 are noted to inform the consideration of the budget.
- 11) Note the Housing Revenue Account (HRA) Business Plan 2023/24 and 30-Year Housing Investment Plan presented concurrently to Cabinet on 13 February 2023 that recommends the HRA budget and rent levels for 2023/24.

### **Capital Programme**

- 12) Note the Capital Strategy 2023/24 to 2027/28, forecast position for 2022/23 and future years' forecasts summarised up to 2036/37 report also presented to Cabinet on 13 February 2023 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 2023/24 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 2023/24 Integrated Investment Framework report also concurrently on this agenda, which sets out the policies and framework for future investment decisions for the Council.

## **2. Capital Strategy 2023/24 to 2027/28, Forecast Position for 2022/23 and Future Years Forecast to 2036/37**

- (a) The report from the Section 151 officer, which we considered and which is attached as Appendix 2 sets out the Council's capital strategy from 2023/24 to 2027/28 and summarises the position up to 2036/37.
- (b) Westminster City Council's policy objectives are set out in the Fairer Westminster Strategy, which was launched in October 2022. This creates the overarching strategic direction that this Capital Strategy supports.
- (c) The general fund capital programme as detailed in Appendix A, proposes a gross budget of £2.740bn and a net budget of £1.377bn (after taking into account income from grants and capital receipts). The capital programme of the Housing Revenue Account is set out separately in the HRA Business Plan which accompanies this report as part of the Council's annual budget setting process.
- (d) This year all existing projects within the programme were reviewed, with a view to ensuring that all the projects within the capital programme are affordable and in line with the Council's new Fairer Westminster objectives.
- (e) The report sets out an ambitious yet realistic capital programme with a plan to invest up to £2.740bn (general fund) over the next 15 years. The investment in capital and assets on this scale is a foundation in enabling the Council to achieve its Fairer Westminster ambitions.
- (f) Examples of Fairer Westminster ambitions supported by the Capital Strategy include:
  - 1) Reviewing and changing the proportion of affordable housing in our developments in progress, as part of our efforts to increase the availability of affordable housing and reduce housing waiting list times.
  - 2) An additional £85m to support the Temporary Accommodation Acquisitions Programme which will fund the purchase of 270 properties from 2023/24 to 2026/27. This is a crucial supply of accommodation to enable Westminster to mitigate some of the demand pressures faced in this area.
  - 3) The review process supports the Council in making decisions about which projects to progress, especially in an environment of challenging financial and officer resource. The process will continue to be developed and refined to ensure that projects and programmes are efficient and effective from a financial and strategic perspective.

## **We recommend:**

That the full Council:

- 1) Approve the capital strategy as set out in this report.
- 2) Approve the capital expenditure for the General Fund as set out in Appendix A for 2023/24 to 2027/28 and future years to 2036/37.
- 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 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 12 of this report.
- 6) Delegate to the Executive Director of Finance and Resources the decisions surrounding financing of the capital programme to provide sufficient flexibility to allow for the most effective use of the Council's resources

### **3. 2023/24 Housing Revenue Account 30-Year Business Plan and Housing Investment Plan**

- (a) We considered a report (Appendix 3) which updates the Housing Revenue Account Business Plan and Housing Investment Plan agreed last year. The report addressed all income and expenditure associated with the Council's existing social housing stock, as well as investment in new housing and estate regeneration. This underpins multiple elements that support the delivery of the Council's Fairer Westminster Strategy.
- (b) The report presented the 30-year Business Plan for the Housing Revenue Account (HRA) covering the spending plans for both capital and revenue over that period. The 5-year outlook for the HRA revenue budget projects gross income of £701.87m and gross expenditure of £675.73m. The business plan includes total capital investment of £794.51m over the next 5 years and a total of £2.359bn over the full 30 years.
- (c) Despite a volatile economic backdrop that has presented the HRA with significant financial challenges, the proposed HRA Business Plan is sustainable from 2023/24 onwards. In working to produce a sustainable Business Plan all planned housing investment has been maintained whilst also increasing the delivery of social homes by 318 across its development programme. This is a significant achievement in the context of delivering the Council's Fairer Westminster vision.

- (d) As well as maximising the delivery of social housing, the plan supports investment in several other important objectives, including; increasing frontline staff and creating estate offices to ensure tenants can easily access the support that they need; improving the condition and safety of existing stock to ensure tenants live in homes maintained to a decent standard; and the provision of funding for a £218 million programme to retrofit existing homes and help the Council to achieve its ambition of net zero emissions by 2030.
- (e) The report also seeks approval for the HRA revenue budget for 2023/24 which includes a proposed rent increase as well as charges for garages and sheds. Given the current pressure on household incomes, the report also proposes to increase the Rent Support Fund from £0.575m to £1.010m to provide targeted support to tenants. Based on these proposals, the HRA will generate £126.17m across a range of income streams in 2023/24 (of which £85.23m comes from tenant rents). The 2023/24 expenditure budget is £123.48m, which leaves an operating surplus of £2.69m (which will be used to fund the capital programme)

**We recommend:**

That the full Council:

- 1) Approve the HRA revenue budget for 2023/24.
- 2) Note the HRA 5-year revenue budgets for 2023/24 to 2027/28 and HRA 30-year revenue budgets for 2023/24 to 2052/53.
- 3) Approve the HRA 5-year Capital Programme totalling £794.51m.
- 4) Note the 30-year Capital Programme for 2023/24 to 2052/53 totalling £2.359bn.
- 5) Approve the inclusion of all Fairer Westminster investments, including the expansion of the HRA Rent Support Fund to £1.010m in 2023/24 (to be earmarked to support tenants experiencing financial difficulty during the cost-of-living crisis).
- 6) Approve a rent increase of 7% from 3<sup>rd</sup> April 2023 in line with the social rent cap introduced by government for 2023/24, whilst noting that the Council continues to exercise its discretion under the rent restructuring policy to set rents for re-lets (both new tenants and transfers) up to formula target rent.
- 7) Approve an increase of 10.1% to the fees charged for garages and sheds (in line with CPI at September 2022) from 3<sup>rd</sup> April 2023.
- 8) Approve that tenant service charges be varied in line with estimated actual costs for 2023/24 from 3<sup>rd</sup> April 2023.
- 9) Note the HRA reserves and balances for the 5-year Business Plan.



#### **4. Treasury Management Strategy Statement for 2023/24 to 2027/28**

- (a) The Local Government Act 2003 (“the Act”) and the Regulations made under the Act require the Council to have regard to the Prudential Code for Capital Finance in Local Authorities and to set Prudential Indicators for the next three years to ensure that the Council’s capital investment plans are affordable, prudent and sustainable. These are contained within the report we considered which is attached as Appendix 4.
- (b) The Act also requires the Council to set out a statement of its treasury management strategy for borrowing and to prepare an Annual Investment Strategy (as shown in Appendix 1 of the report). This sets out the Council’s policies for managing its investments and for giving priority to the security and liquidity of those investments. The Treasury Management Strategy Statement and Annual Investment Strategy must both have regard to guidance issued by the Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities (DLUHC) and must be agreed by Full Council.
- (c) The report proposes an updated Treasury Management Strategy Statement (TMSS) for the period 2023/24 to 2027/28, and Annual Investment Strategy (AIS) for the year ended 31 March 2024, together with supporting information.

#### **We therefore recommend:**

That the full Council:

- 1) Approve the Treasury Management Strategy Statement.
- 2) Approve the borrowing strategy and borrowing limits for 2023/24 to 2027/28 set out in section.
- 3) Approve the Prudential Indicators set out in section 8 of the report.
- 4) Approve the Annual Investment Strategy and approved investments set out in Appendix 1 of the report.
- 5) Approve the Minimum Revenue Provision Policy set out in Appendix 2 of the report.

## 5. Integrated Investment Framework 2023-2024

(a) On 2 March 2022, Full Council gave approval to its previous comprehensive strategic integrated investment framework for bringing together and managing its investments with the approval of an Integrated Investment Framework.

(b) The complexity of the Council and its funding requirements mean that there is a need for all assets held by the Council to be considered collectively and holistically as, in the aggregate, they represent a very significant pool of resources. More specifically, in view of:

- the significant value of investments held by the Council;
- their increasing importance in terms of generating income which supports revenue budgets and capital investment;
- their potential to add value and contribute towards corporate objectives in their own right;

it was felt appropriate to give this aspect of financial management more detailed consideration and to develop a more integrated approach to investment decision making.

(c) We received a report attached as Appendix 5 to this report which provided an update on the current range of Council assets. In summary, the Council holds total assets valued at around £3.725bn, comprising £1.780bn pension fund (as at 30 November 2022), £1.263bn short-term cash investments, £38m in Westminster Housing Investments Ltd, £28.5m in a property fund partnership and £463m of investment commercial property.

(d) The treasury investment portfolio is currently generating a return of 3.00% in the current financial year 2022/23. The investment properties are currently generating around 4.33%, net of direct costs (based on the final accounts for 2021/22). The latest current inflation rate as measured by CPI is 10.7% (as at November 2022), and this must be accounted for alongside the current total portfolio yield.

(e) The report we considered, attached as Appendix 5, sets out:

- the Council's strategic objectives in respect of risk management, and its attitude towards investment risk;
- current levels of investment activity;
- an updated Integrated Investment Framework for the Council going forward which seeks to diversify the risk and thus future proof the Council against possible future economic downturns; and,
- actions to be taken in connection with implementing this framework.

**We recommend:**

That the full Council:

- 1) Approve and implement the Integrated Investment Framework set out in this report.
- 2) Approve that the target for the overall return on Council investments should aspire to at least meet forecasts for 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 percentage ranges 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, matching CPI inflation over the medium term, and to reduce costs and liabilities, while maintaining adequate cash balances for operational purposes, and not exposing the capital value of investments to unnecessary risk.
- 6) Agree that assets must only be acquired for strategic purposes. Such prospective acquisitions must be considered individually, with the reasons for investment limited to regeneration or development of the location, or other strategic purposes in which the asset is established. Out-of-borough acquisitions may also be considered by exception.
- 7) Agree the Investment Executive to implement, monitor and report on the investment strategy

## **6. Pay Policy 2023-2024**

- (a) The Council is required to publish its Pay Policy by 31st March every year.
- (b) The Pay Policy brings together all the Council's existing policies on pay and must include details in relation to all aspects of Chief Officer's remuneration, increases and additions to remuneration, bonuses, termination payments and remuneration on recruitment. It must also include information about the relationship between the remuneration of its highest paid officer (the Chief Executive) and the median salary of all employees (the "pay multiple"). All pay data in the Pay Policy will use the snapshot date of 31st March 2022.
- (c) The report we received (attached as Appendix 6) outlined no major changes compared to last year's policy.

### **We recommend:**

That the full Council:

Approve the Pay Policy for 2023 – 2024 as attached as Appendix 1 to this report.

---

**Cllr Adam Hug, Leader of the Council**

Background Papers

Reports and Minutes of Cabinet Meeting: 13 February 2023

## Report of the General Purposes Committee held on 22 February 2023

**Present:** Councillor David Boothroyd (Chair), Aicha Less and Paul Swaddle

### Members' Allowance Scheme 2023-2024

- (a) The Council is required, if it wishes to pay such allowances, to adopt a Members' Allowances Scheme on an annual basis with effect from 1 April each year.
- (b) Currently, Westminster pay significantly lower allowances than other London boroughs. Therefore, in drawing up the new Members' Allowances Scheme the Committee considered several options in order to update the scheme. In drawing up the options regard had been given to the recommendations of the London-wide Independent Remuneration Panel (IRP) convened by London Councils. The latest IRP report (January 2022) made recommendations based on roles as a percentage of the Leader's overall allowance (basic plus SRA). Currently the Leader and most other roles were substantially below where the IRP recommended and in addition the current scheme has significant structural anomalies within it in terms of the percentages applied to each role.
- (c) As such, the Committee acknowledged that Westminster's allowances scheme required updating to fix the significant structural and historical issues which currently beset it. Various options were explored setting out how the scheme could be amended.
- (d) In considering the proposals we noted the views of both political parties of the council and following discussions the Committee agreed to recommend to Full Council Option 4 as the most appropriate method to update the scheme in this year. This option, as set out in the report, assumed a 4.04% uplift in the basic allowance but took a more targeted approach to increasing SRAs, focusing on those roles which were under most pressure or had unique characteristics in Westminster. The overall annual cost of this option would be £998,834, an increase of £69,802 on the current position. This was higher than the existing spend but within the budget currently available
- (e) Separately, an amendment to the Dependents/Carers Allowance policy was proposed which would allow councillors who claim the allowance to do so for one hour either side of a defined duty. This was a change from half an hour either side and it was proposed in recognition of the fact that it may take Councillors more than half an hour to travel across the city, when allowing for a reasonable buffer time. The Committee considered it would not have a significant financial impact as the allowance was not claimed very often.

**Recommendation:**

That Full Council:

- 1) Be recommended to approve the Member Allowances 2023-2024 Option 4 scheme, as set out in the report, with effect from 1 April 2023.
- 2) Be recommended to approve the amendment to the Dependents/Carers Allowance Policy as set out in Appendix B of the report.

David Boothroyd, Chair

**Background Papers**

Appendix 1 - Report to General Purposes Committee (22.02.23).

## Report of the General Purposes Committee held on 22 February 2023

**Present:** Councillor David Boothroyd (Chair), Aicha Less and Paul Swaddle

### **Constitutional Changes**

- (a) The Committee considered a paper providing an outline of the various sections of the Constitution which Officers had been reviewing and subsequent recommendations for change. These include changes to Full Council Standing Orders to introduce public participation in Full Council meetings, and what format this should take, and amendments to the list of Outside Bodies.
- (b) The Majority and Opposition Groups had been consulted and invited to review and provide comments on the proposals. It was noted that the proposals and options on how the new scheme could be shaped were based on best practice reviews from other councils as well as an informal, cross-party meeting of the General Purposes Committee in December 2022. The proposals were also informed by findings from a small (non-representative) survey of Westminster residents.
- (c) We discussed in detail the various options available and were of the opinion that the proposals set out in Table 4 of the report would best support and facilitate the initiative on introducing resident participation in Full Council. This option would result in a reduction in Councillor Issues and a reduction in time for party business but would allow 30 minutes for resident participation. We also discussed and agreed to recommend a change in how Councillor Issues are selected, dispensing with the current randomly generated system and instead inviting Group nominations for which councillor leads this each meeting. It will be for Groups to determine how councillors are chosen.
- (d) We also agreed that the removal of the Future Policy Plan as a device for party business was appropriate and instead allow Groups to select any policy or operational matter for debate provided it is relevant to the Council or city.
- (e) In terms of Outside Bodies, we considered that a new approach was required as the current list was significantly out of date. This was to reduce the list of officially recognised Outside Bodies to which the Council made a corporate nomination to a much smaller, core group of bodies, and to tighten the criteria and process for accepting bodies on to this list in the future.

### **Recommendation:**

That the Committee recommends to Council for approval of:

- 1) the introduction of a 30-minute public participation item at Full Council meetings in line with the headline proposals set out in section 4 of the report.

- 2) the amendment of the petitions scheme to support public participation at meetings of Full Council as set out in section 4 of the report.
- 3) table 4 as set out in section 4 of the report detailing changes to meeting timings in the Full Council standing orders be adopted.
- 4) the selection of Councillor Issues to be in proportion to the sizes of Groups on the council and to remove the random selection of councillors for this item with this process replaced by nominations made by Groups.
- 5) the removal of the future policy plan as a device for selecting debates (and the accompanying requirement for a briefing note to be produced) and its replacement with a requirement for the Group proposing a subject for debate to give a short descriptive paragraph to frame the debate.
- 6) the delegation of authority to the Monitoring Officer to adopt such changes agreed by Full Council into the Constitution and to update and maintain supporting documents such as the Full Council Public Participation Protocol, including to make changes to public participation rules in consultation with Group Whips and Chair of the General Purposes Committee.
- 7) a review of the Public Participation Protocol be undertaken in Spring 2024.
- 8) the amendments to the scheme of Outside Bodies as set out at section 5 of the report, subject to Imperial College Court being retained on the list of recognised outside bodies.
- 9) the Director of Law to investigate further any issues around the indemnity of members serving on an outside body.

David Boothroyd, Chair

## **Background Papers**

Appendix 1 - Report to General Purposes Committee (22.02.23).