



City of Westminster

# Council Agenda

Title: **Council Meeting**

Meeting Date: **Wednesday 20th September, 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: [jbest@westminster.gov.uk](mailto:jbest@westminster.gov.uk) Tel: 07971 920521  
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 meeting of the Council meeting held on 28 June 2023.

**3. LORD MAYOR'S COMMUNICATIONS**

1. The Lord Mayor to report that, on Saturday 5 August she attended the Jamaican High Commission Annual Independence Service of Praise and Thanksgiving at Westminster Chapel.
2. The Lord Mayor to report that, on Tuesday 8 August she attended the Citizenship Ceremonies at Old Marylebone Town Hall.
3. The Lord Mayor to report that, on Thursday 10 August she attended a Fortnum & Mason Lunch at Fortnum & Marson, Piccadilly
4. The Lord Mayor to report that, on Friday 11 August she attended the Middlesex & NW London Army Cadet Force Final Parade and Presentation at the Royal Air Force Museum.
5. The Lord Mayor to report that, on Thursday 17 August she attended a meeting with the Young Westminster Foundation in the Lord Mayor's Parlour.
6. The Lord Mayor to report that, on Thursday 17 August she attended the UN World Humanitarian Day Evensong at Westminster Abbey.
7. The Lord Mayor to report that, on Thursday 24 August she attended the Westminster City Council Silver Sunday Afternoon Tea in the Lord Mayor's Parlour.
8. The Lord Mayor to report that, on Thursday 24 August she attended the Westminster Youth Council South Asian Heritage Month Celebration in the Lord Mayor's Parlour.
9. The Lord Mayor to report that, on Monday 4 September she attended a meeting with the Carers Network in the Lord Mayor's Parlour.

(Pages 9 - 18)

10. The Lord Mayor to report that, on Monday 4 September she attended a meeting with The Passage in the Lord Mayor's Parlour.

**4. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

**5. STATEMENT ON URGENT MATTERS**

With the approval of the Chair 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.

**6. COUNCILLOR PETITIONS AND DEPUTATIONS, IF ANY**

**7. PUBLIC PARTICIPATION**

The Lord Mayor will invite members of the public who have been chosen to present their question or petition. After which the relevant Cabinet Member or Committee Chair will respond.

**8. QUESTIONS**

The Lord Mayor will call Members who have indicated that they wish to ask a question after the Leader of the Opposition has asked her questions.

**9. COUNCILLOR ISSUE**

Councillor Louise Hyams – 'Social Housing in St. James's'

**10. PARTY BUSINESS**

To consider any items for debate.

**11. REPORT OF THE GENERAL PURPOSES COMMITTEE:  
COUNCILLORS PARENTAL LEAVE POLICY**

To receive, consider and debate, if chosen, the following report which contains recommendations to the Council for approval and adoption.

**(To Follow)**

**12. REPORT OF THE GENERAL PURPOSES COMMITTEE:  
POLICY AND SCRUTINY REVIEW**

(To Follow)

To receive, consider and debate, if chosen, the following report which contains recommendations to the Council for approval and adoption.

**13. NOTICES OF MOTION**

**(a) Majority Party Motion – The Gordon Hospital and a Lack of Acute Mental Health Provision in South Westminster**

To be moved by Councillor Nafsika Butler-Thalassis and seconded by Councillor Lorraine Dean.

The mental wellbeing of our residents is of the utmost importance to this Council. We are concerned about the loss of Westminster's 51 acute mental health beds since the temporary closure of the Gordon Hospital at the beginning of the Covid pandemic and the consequences this has had for our residents and our staff. We are concerned that patients have to wait much longer to access an acute bed, often in unsuitable environments such as in A&E. When a bed is finally found, it is outside Westminster, and sometimes very far from Westminster which contributes to the isolation of mental health patients from their families and communities.

The temporary closure of the Gordon Hospital has put immense pressure on other parts of the system. St Charles, the acute mental health hospital in Kensington & Chelsea is finding that Kensington & Chelsea patients are having to move out of borough to make way for Westminster patients. St Mary's hospital is having to host several mental health patients at a time for up to 24 hours in beds that are needed for patients who are physically ill. The police are finding that their resources are tied up in escorting mental health patients in A&E for up to 24 hours instead of fighting crime.

The closure of the Gordon Hospital affects all our communities both directly and indirectly. However the closure of this acute provision has a particular impact on communities least able to access alternative support, such as those who are street homeless and those households in multiple deprivation.

There is no indication that the need for acute mental health beds is reducing. Our data shows that in 2022/23

our staff assessed 1070 people, 49 people more than in 2021/22. Of those 1070 people, 777 were referred for acute hospital care, which is 103 more people than in 2021/22.

We call on the NHS to reopen acute mental health beds in South Westminster to ensure that the acute mental health needs of our residents are met. We very much value community mental health services but we don't believe that community mental health services should be funded at the expense of acute hospital beds. We need both types of services to support patients with different needs and at different stages of their patient journey. This is the view we will be expressing formally to the NHS when they open their consultation in the Autumn.

**(b) Majority Party Motion – Ecological Emergency**

To be moved by Councillor Ryan Jude and seconded by Councillor Cara Sanquest.

This Council recognises the importance of a healthy and biodiverse environment that ensures the wellbeing of all who live, work and study here and support Westminster's future prosperity. This Council also acknowledges the 2019 State of Nature report, which found that 15% of UK species are classified as threatened with extinction, and 2% are already extinct.

Westminster declared a climate emergency in 2019. The Council notes that the ecological and climate emergencies are intertwined, as burning fossilised carbon places stress on the ecosystems which regulate the climate. If habitats are compromised or destroyed, this has impacts not only on the decline of local species but also on resilience for more extreme weather events such as heatwaves and floods.

In Westminster, there are 33 Sites of Importance for Nature Conservation (SINCs), which cover 22% of the City's land footprint. Some are located on council land, while others are owned by other landowners, such as The Royal Parks. However, the most recent Open Space Audit data that is available found that only 39% of Westminster SINCs demonstrated 'average to rich' or 'rich' species diversity. As well as in our green spaces, there is also significant ability to improve the biodiversity in our built

environment and through our planning system. There is an opportunity to learn more about the state of nature in the City of Westminster, and to improve general awareness of and develop actions to reverse biodiversity loss in our City.

We therefore pledge to provide leadership and work with all organisations, departments, partners and our communities to do all that is within the Council's power to reverse the decline in biodiversity and deliver measurable biodiversity net gain within Westminster.

The Council also notes the importance of the work of the newly instated Climate Assembly and the following Cabinet decision to:

- Note the final recommendations from the Westminster Citizens' Climate Assembly.
- Approve the initiation of a programme of cross-council work, led by individual Cabinet Members, to develop responses to each recommendation of the Climate Assembly, identifying what action is possible or where the Council may need to influence stakeholders to take them forward.
- Agree that all recommendations brought forward for implementation will be subject to further financial and legal consideration and, where necessary, individual Cabinet or Cabinet Member decisions will need be undertaken.

In addition to this, the Council will:

- (1) Declare an ecological emergency, which recognises the global ecological emergency and the local impact this has on the communities and businesses we serve, expanding upon the climate emergency declared in 2019;
- (2) Pledge to act during the first year of the Motion being accepted, to secure future measurable biodiversity net gain for Westminster, building on recent achievements such as the 'Greening Westminster' fund, the 'No Mow May' initiative, local projects which support communities to take action to improve biodiversity, the ban on the use of Glyphosate, the Wild Gardens competition and other initiatives;
- (3) Publish a strategy, within the first year of the Motion being accepted, outlining our approach to improving

biodiversity within Westminster, which will formally bring together and build upon work happening across the council to support biodiversity net gain;

- (4) Undertake and publish a Green Infrastructure Audit, to assess the current condition and quality of green spaces in Westminster, including our 33 SINC locations in the City;
- (5) Proactively look for opportunities to work in partnership with local groups and stakeholders, to ensure we are all working together to address the ecological emergency;
- (6) Pledge to develop plans for further action in the second year of the Motion being accepted and beyond, based on a full assessment of the scientific evidence on how best to achieve this goal;
- (7) Declare its full support for the Climate and Ecology Bill, and to write to all MPs with constituencies that contain Westminster City Council wards, to encourage them to also support the Climate and Ecology Bill.

In recognition of this ecological emergency Westminster City Council will:

- Make Council housing estates, parks and open spaces more hospitable to a wide range of plants and animals.
- Encourage community engagement with habitat creation through community gardens, improving biodiversity in our streets and pocket parks.
- Identify how the City's open spaces function as part of a Westminster ecological network and prioritise areas for protection and enhancement.
- Work in partnership with institutions, schools, businesses and community groups, to raise awareness and encourage wider biodiversity action across the City through public engagement and advice to residents and businesses on how to protect and enhance habitats within their neighbourhoods.
- Ensure the delivery of biodiversity enhancements through our planning policy and development control functions.
- Review and increase ambition on the Council's target to increase tree canopy cover by 10% by 2050, including working with Westminster Tree Trust to make it easier for residents to propose tree planting. Work

with communities to increase tree planting, and where street trees are not appropriate, install green walls, hedges and planters for smaller trees.

- Design new council housing for net gain of biodiversity and opportunities in the form of integral swift boxes and biodiverse green roofs.

**64 Victoria Street  
London, SW1E 6QP  
12 September 2023**

**Chief Executive**