

# CITY OF WESTMINSTER

## MINUTES OF PROCEEDINGS

At the virtual meeting of the Council of the City of Westminster held at 7.00 pm on  
Wednesday 20th January, 2021

### PRESENT

The Lord Mayor, Councillor Jonathan Glanz

### COUNCILLORS

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

**Apologies:** Councillors Margot Bright and Shamim Talukder

## **1 APPOINTMENT OF RELIEF CHAIRMAN**

- 1.1 It was moved by the Lord Mayor and seconded by Councillor Paul Swaddle that Councillor Judith Warner be elected as Relief Chairman.
- 1.2 Motion put, and on a show of hands, declared **CARRIED**.

## **2 MINUTES**

- 2.1 **RESOLVED:** The minutes of the proceedings at the Council meetings on Wednesday 11 November and Wednesday 9 December 2020 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.

## **4 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

- 4.1 There were no declarations.

## **5 STATEMENT ON URGENT MATTERS**

- 5.1 The Leader of the Council, Councillor Rachael Robathan, made an urgent statement and the Council's response to it.
- 5.2 After Councillor Robathan had spoken the Leader of the Opposition, Councillor Adam Hug, replied.

## **6 VOTE OF THANKS TO THE FORMER LORD MAYOR, COUNCILLOR RUTH BUSH**

- 6.1 Councillor Guthrie McKie gave the first speech in thanks to the former Lord Mayor, Councillor Ruth Bush and her Consorts, Dr Hannah Robbins, Thomas Bush and Foluke Gale-Hay for their distinguished service to the city of Westminster in the previous municipal year.
- 6.2 Councillor Rachael Robathan also spoke and thanked the former Lord Mayor and her Consorts.
- 6.3 Councillor Ruth Bush then gave the reply.
- 6.4 The Lord Mayor advised that the various insignia and the Vote of Thanks inscribed under the Common Seal will be presented to Councillor Bush and her Consorts at a future civic event when circumstances allow.

## **7 PETITIONS AND DEPUTATIONS, IF ANY**

- 7.1 There were no petitions or deputations received.

## **8 QUESTIONS**

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

## **9 COUNCILLOR ISSUES**

### **Council 3.0 and Westminster Connects**

- 9.1 Councillor Mark Shearer spoke and Councillor Heather Acton replied.

### **A tale of two Cities; Inequality in Westminster**

Councillor Andrea Mann spoke and Councillor Rachael Robathan replied. .

## **10 FUTURE POLICY PLAN**

- 10.1 The meeting debated the item chosen for debate from the Future Policy Plan by the Majority Party.

### **Climate Emergency**

- 10.2 The Majority Party had selected item number 24 on the Future Policy Plan, Climate Emergency. The debate will be referred to the relevant Executive Director for consideration when reporting on the subject.

## **11 COUNCIL TAX DISCOUNTS (INCLUDING COUNCIL TAX LOCAL REDUCTION SCHEME) AND COUNCIL TAX BASE**

### **RESOLVED:**

1. That the Council approved the following recommendations for the financial year 2021/22:-
  - (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 2021/22:

- Properties empty between 2 years - 5 years:	100% Increase
- Properties empty between 5 years – 10 years:	200% Increase
- Properties empty over 10 years:	300% Increase
  - (iv) that the Director of Revenues & Benefits be given delegated authority to determine any individual local discount applications received from Council Taxpayers during the 2021/22 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 2021/22 which has operated successfully since 2013/14. 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.
3. That the Council resolved that the Council Tax Base for 2021/22 for the Whole City is 133,817.98 equivalent Band D properties, for Montpelier Square alone 100.40 equivalent Band D properties and for Queen's Park 3,514.63 equivalent Band D properties.
4. That the Council resolved that the figures set out in paragraph 2.3 of the report for the Council Tax Base for 2021/22 be used by the Council to make a determination pursuant to the requirements of the Local Government Finance Act 1992.

## **12 PROPOSED CHANGES TO POLICY AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEES**

### **RESOLVED:**

- 12.1 That Council agreed the reorganisation of the Policy and Scrutiny Committees with the terms of reference and proportionality as set out in Appendix A to the report

## **13 NOTICES OF MOTION**

- 13.1 The Labour Party had selected for debate the Notice of Motion (Provision of IT and Connectivity for School Aged Children for Home Schooling) as set out on the agenda. The Notice of Motion was moved by Councillor Tim Roca and seconded by Councillor Butler-Thalassis
- 13.2 Councillor Tim Barnes moved and it was seconded by Councillor Paul Swaddle that the Notice of Motion be amended, as follows:

The education of our children is crucial and therefore this Council resolves to:

1. Ensure proper data is collected across state-funded schools in Westminster to understand the need/gaps for electronic devices and connectivity as soon as possible;
2. ~~Ensure that by whatever means necessary, including a recommendation to Cabinet for direct Council funding, an appropriate electronic device is provided to all pupils eligible for free school meals who require one, and to other children identified at the discretion of the school as being in need, as soon as possible and no later than 1st February 2021.~~  
Ensure that by whatever means necessary, including a recommendation to Cabinet for direct Council funding, an appropriate electronic device is provided to all pupils eligible for free school meals who require one, and to other children identified at the discretion of the school as being in need, as soon as possible and no later than 1st February 2021.

3. ~~Ensure that by whatever means necessary, including a recommendation to Cabinet for direct Council funding~~ adequate internet connectivity is provided to all pupils eligible for free school meals who require it, and to other children identified at the discretion of the school as being in need, as soon as possible and no later than 1st February 2021.
4. ~~Ensure that by whatever means necessary, including a recommendation to Cabinet for direct Council funding,~~ all teaching staff have appropriate electronic devices for classes, as soon as possible and no later than 1st February 2021.

13.3 Following debate, The Lord Mayor put the amendment to the motion to the vote and following an electronic poll declared the amendment to the motion **CARRIED.**

13.4 The Lord Mayor then put the substantive motion as amended to the vote and following an electronic poll declared the substantive motion as amended **CARRIED.**

The education of our children is crucial and therefore this Council resolves to:

1. Ensure proper data is collected across state-funded schools in Westminster to understand the need/gaps for electronic devices and connectivity as soon as possible;
2. Ensure an appropriate electronic device is provided to all children identified as being in need, as soon as possible and no later than 1st February 2021.
3. Ensure adequate internet connectivity is provided to all children identified as being in need, as soon as possible and no later than 1st February 2021.
4. Ensure teaching staff have appropriate electronic devices for classes, as soon as possible and no later than 1st February 2021.

The Meeting ended at 10.01 pm

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

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