

MINUTES OF THE COUNCIL

Wednesday, 18 January 2023 at 7.30 pm

PRESENT: Councillors Damien Egan (Mayor), Yemisi Anifowose, Tauseef Anwar (Chair), Chris Barnham, Paul Bell, Peter Bernards, Chris Best, Andre Bourne, Natasha Burgess, Suzannah Clarke, Will Cooper, Laura Cunningham, Sophie Davis, Amanda De Ryk, Billy Harding, Stephen Hayes, Edison Huynh, Mark Ingleby, Mark Jackson, Eva Kestner, Louise Krupski, Jack Lavery, Aisha Malik-Smith, Joan Millbank, Hilary Moore, John Muldoon, Oana Olaru, Rosie Parry, Jacq Paschoud, John Paschoud, Kim Powell, James Rathbone, James Royston, Rudi Schmidt, Aliya Sheikh, Sakina Sheikh, Liam Shrivastava, Luke Sorba, Eva Stamirowski, Hau-Yu Tam, James-J Walsh, Luke Warner, Carol Webley-Brown and Susan Wise

ALSO PRESENT: Gerald Rose and Rabbie Weisz – Catford and Bromley Synagogue, former councillor Jimi Adefiranye, family and friends of former councillor Alan Till.

Apologies for absence were received from Councillor Liam Curran, Councillor Ese Erheriene, Councillor Liz Johnston-Franklin, Councillor Ayesha Lahai-Taylor, Councillor Rachel Onikosi and Councillor Stephen Penfold

1. Minutes

The Speaker of the Council MOVED, the Deputy Speaker SECONDED and it was RESOLVED that the minutes of the meeting held on 23 November 2022 be confirmed and signed as a true and accurate record.

2. Declaration of Interests

None.

3. Announcements or Communications

The Speaker announced the death of former councillor, Alan Till, whose friends and family were in attendance. A number of councillors, past and present, paid tribute to Alan, before the Council observed a minute's silence in remembrance.

Gerald Rose and Rabbi Weisz from Catford and Bromley Synagogue attended and spoke about Holocaust Memorial Day. They said a prayer for those who perished in the Holocaust. The Mayor and Speaker lit memorial candles. Another minute's silence was observed.

Councillor Brenda Dacres remembered the young people who died in the New Cross Fire and informed the Council about the 42nd annual memorial service which had taken place earlier that day.

The Speaker congratulated those Lewisham residents that had been recognised in the King's New Year Honours list 2023.

Lastly the Speaker announced that the Mayor of Lewisham Community Awards 2023 was open for nominations until Monday 30 January. Nomination forms could be found on the Council's website.

4. Petitions

Councillors Walsh and Sorba presented petitions on behalf of residents.

5. Public Questions

58 questions were received and written answers supplied.

Some questioners that were present at the meeting asked supplementary questions, and these were answered by the relevant Cabinet Members.

6. Member Questions

One Member question was received from Councillor Ingleby. A written reply had been supplied and was included in the published meeting papers.

7. Approval of the Lewisham Local Plan - Regulation 19 Proposed Submission documents for public consultation

It was MOVED by Councillor Royston, SECONDED by Councillor John Paschoud and RESOLVED to:

a. Approve the following 'proposed submission documents' for Regulation 19 statutory public consultation and to authorise officers to proceed to Regulation 22 (i.e. submit to Secretary of State and to notify the public of the submission), subject to no major modifications arising from the Reg 19 statutory public consultation (subject to (d) below):

- i. Lewisham Local Plan: Proposed Submission document (Regulation 19 stage)
- ii. Policies Map
- iii. Integrated Impact Assessment (IIA), IIA Non-technical Summary and Habitats Regulations Assessment
- iv. Consultation Statement (Regulation 18)
- v. Duty to Cooperate Statement

b. Note the contents of the Infrastructure Delivery Plan (IDP);

c. Note the financial and legal implications set out in the report; and

d. Delegate authority to the Director of Planning, in consultation with Councillor Dacres, for the making of any drafting amendments or corrections post Cabinet.

8. Creation of senior level Housing Services capacity

It was MOVED by Councillor Davis, SECONDED by Councillor Cooper and RESOLVED to note the establishment of up to five new Council posts and agree

that they should be paid at a level of remuneration on the JNC1, JNC2 and JNC3 salary scale, as set out in section 5 of the report.

9. Setting the Council Tax Base, the NNDR Tax Base & Discounts for Second Homes and Empty Homes

It was MOVED by Councillor De Ryk, SECONDED by Councillor Rathbone and RESOLVED that the Council:

1. note the Council Tax Base calculation for 2023/24, as set out in the annual Council Tax Base government return, attached at Appendix A of the report;
2. agree a Council Tax Base of 88,848.5 Band D equivalent properties for 2023/24;
3. agree a budgeted Council Tax collection rate of 94.0%;
4. agree no changes be made to the Council Tax Reduction Scheme (CTRS) for 2023/24, that eligible claimants make a minimum contribution of 25% towards their council tax;
5. approve the continuation of the discretionary Council Tax discount of 100% for care leavers up to the age of 25, as set out in section five of this report;
6. agree that the existing policy of a 0% discount for second homes for 2020/21 be continued for 2023/24, as set out in section five of this report;
7. agree that the existing policy of a 0% discount for empty homes Class A (an empty property undergoing structural alteration or major repair to make it habitable) be continued, as set out in section five of this report;
8. agree the amendment to the current policy and removes the 100% discount awarded for a period of four weeks, such that the 0% discount is applied immediately for empty homes – Class C (a substantially empty and unfurnished property), as set out in section five of this report;
9. agree that the existing Long Term Empty Property homes premium of: 100% for properties empty between 2 and 5 years, 200% for those empty for over five years, and 300% for properties that remain empty for 10 years or more continues, as set out in section five of this report;
10. agree the continuation of the existing policy of a 25% 'sanctuary' discount to ensure residents eligible for a single person discount are not financially worse off as a result of housing a refugee, as set out in section five of this report;
11. note the proposed 2023/24 National Non Domestic Rate (NNDR) estimated net yield of £72m, based on current information available.
12. agree to delegate the approval of the final 2023/24 NNDR1 form to the Executive Director for Corporate Resources for submission by the deadline of 31 January 2023.

10. Treasury Management Strategy Mid-Year Review

It was MOVED by Councillor De Ryk, SECONDED by Councillor Rathbone and RESOLVED that Council:

1. Note the report, in particular the macroeconomic updates, performance of investments to date, updates on capital expenditure and borrowing in line with the Chartered Institute of Public Finance and Accountancy's (CIPFA) prudential indicators, and the update of the Council's Treasury Management Strategy.

2. Approve the following changes to our current approved borrowing counterparties
 - i. Individuals lending via a peer-to-peer platform where appropriate counterparty checks are conducted by the platform;
 - ii. Investors in capital market bonds and retail bonds issued by the council
3. Approve the updated Treasury Management Strategy.

11. Members' Allowances

The Mayor MOVED, Councillor Millbank SECONDED and the Council RESOLVED to

1. Note the findings of the Independent Remuneration Panel and agree with the principles of the Panel's report;
2. Note that Lewisham councillors' allowances are well below recommended levels;
3. Implement the recommended basic allowance of £12,014 with effect from May 2022;
4. Agree that all Special Responsibility Allowances (SRAs) for councillors are increased by £1,021 thereby ensuring that no councillor receives an increase in the total allowances received that is greater than the 2022/23 staff pay award of £2,355 and that such increase is to take effect from May 2022;
5. Agree to consider the matter of SRAs again at the 2023 AGM of the Council against the Council structure in place at that time;
6. Instruct the Monitoring Officer to take any steps necessary to implement this decision.

12. Statement of Accounts 2021/22 and Annual Report 2021/22

Councillor De Ryk MOVED, Councillor Schmidt SECONDED and Council RESOLVED to

1. Delegate to the Section 151 Officer, in consultation with the Chair of the Audit Panel, to agree any changes to the agreed audit adjustments and the final Statement of Accounts for publication, alongside the Auditor's Annual Report.
2. Approve the draft Statement of Accounts and Pension Fund Accounts 2021/22 and the agreed audit adjustments.
3. Note the Audit Findings Report 2021/22 and addendum from Grant Thornton following the external audit of the Council's Statement of Accounts and Pension Fund Accounts.
4. Note the Management Representation Letters.
5. Note the Auditor's Annual Report (VFM) 2021/22 from Grant Thornton.

13. Motions

None.