

MINUTES OF THE COUNCIL

Wednesday, 22 November 2023 at 7.30 pm

PRESENT: Councillors Damien Egan (Mayor), Yemisi Anifowose, Tauseef Anwar (Speaker of Council (Chair)), Chris Barnham, Paul Bell, Andre Bourne, Bill Brown, Natasha Burgess, Juliet Campbell, Suzannah Clarke, Will Cooper, Laura Cunningham, Liam Curran, Brenda Dacres, Sophie Davis, Amanda De Ryk, Sian Eiles, Ese Erheriene, Billy Harding, Edison Huynh, Mark Ingleby, Mark Jackson, Liz Johnston-Franklin, Eva Kestner, Louise Krupski, Ayesha Lahai-Taylor, Aisha Malik-Smith, Joan Millbank, Hilary Moore, John Muldoon, Oana Olaru, Rosie Parry, Jacq Paschoud, John Paschoud, Stephen Penfold, Kim Powell, James Rathbone, James Royston, Rudi Schmidt, Aliya Sheikh, Liam Shrivastava, Luke Sorba, Eva Stamirowski, Hau-Yu Tam, James-J Walsh, Luke Warner, Carol Webley-Brown and Susan Wise

MEMBERS PARTICIPATING REMOTELY: Councillors Chris Best and Jack Lavery.

ALSO PRESENT: Jennifer Daothong (Acting Chief Executive); Jeremy Chambers (Monitoring Officer), Jasmine Kassim (Senior Committee Manager), and Clare Weaser (Committee Officer).

Apologies for absence were received from Councillor Coral Howard, Councillor Rachel Onikosi and Councillor Sakina Sheikh.

1. Minutes

The Minutes of the meeting of the Council held on 27 September 2023 were agreed as a true and accurate record.

2. Declaration of Interests

Councillor Natasha Burgess declared a pecuniary interest as an employee for a charity that works in the occupied Palestinian territories in relation to Item 6, "Public Question". Councillor Burgess remained and took part in the meeting.

3. Young Mayor's Budget

This Item was postponed.

4. Announcement or Communications

The Speaker made the following announcements:

(1) **By-election result and Lewisham College Governor's appointment.**

Mayor Damien Egan spoke on these announcements:

- Mayor Egan thanked Councillor Hilary Moore for representing the Council as a Governor's appointee at the College for 9 years, and he congratulated Councillor Kim Powell as the new appointee.

- Mayor Egan also welcomed and congratulated Councillor Dawn Atkinson of the Deptford ward for securing the majority vote at the recent by-election, and he expressed an appreciation to those who supported her towards that victory.
- (2) On behalf of the Council, the Speaker congratulated residents who had received the **King's New Year's Honours** this year:
- A CBE to Rosamund Adoo-Kissi Debrah - Co-Founder and Chair of the Ella Roberta Family Foundation for services to Public Health.
 - A CBE to Eve Coulter Salomon - Chair of Horniman Museum and Gardens for services to the Arts and Heritage.
 - An OBE to Benjamin Lindsay - Chief Executive Officer, of Power the Fight for services to the community in Southeast London.
- (3) **The Mayor of London Adult Learning Award Winner.** Councillor James-J Walsh spoke on this announcement.
- Commenting on an illustrative video presented at the meeting about a young person's journey through the Adult Learning Lewisham Programme, Councillor Walsh thanked officers who had worked with the individual as part of the Council's integrated supported programme to win the Mayor of London Adult Learning Award.
- (4) **High Street Survey.** Councillor Kim Powell spoke on this announcement.
- Councillor Powell thanked the Economies, Jobs and Partnership team, and the South London Business School for the second instalment of the Survey which took place across 9 busy high streets in the borough. It was noted that statistical data from the Survey showed a continued optimism for establishing businesses in the borough.
- (5) **Lewisham All-Age Autism Strategy.** Councillors Paul Bell and Laura Cunningham spoke on this announcement:
- Councillor Bell stated that the Strategy represented the authentic voice of autistic people in the borough towards delivering a positive change, and he thanked officers and Councillor Laura Cunningham for their contributions in the development.
 - Councillor Cunningham acknowledged Councillor Bell's leadership in the work of supporting autistic people to overcome barriers across the spectrum of challenging conditions that they face, particularly when transitioning from childhood to adulthood. Commenting on the relevance of community involvement, Councillor Cunningham stated that the Strategy would be rolled out to users of all ages and their families for feedback with a view to make Lewisham an autistic inclusive borough.
- (6) **Lewisham in Bloom.** Councillor Walsh spoke on this announcement:
- Councillor Walsh expressed his enthusiasm about the Lewisham in Bloom Programme, and he advised that Members would be notified about its launch of green public spaces to showcase the borough as a great place to live and work.

(7) **Community Energy Fund.** Councillor Louise Krupski spoke on this announcement:

- Councillor Krupski stated that a grant of up to £10,000 would be available to fund those community and voluntary group projects with information to demonstrate work undertaken to generate renewable energy, reduce fuel consumption and/or promote awareness about energy efficiency.

5. **Petitions**

Councillor Jackson presented a petition of 803 signatures on behalf of residents in Grove Park area. The petition called for a healthy streets' approach in SE12, specifically in relation to traffic management measures, safe spaces for pedestrian, cyclists, and wheelchair users in the neighbourhood.

Councillor Shrivastava advised that a petition had been handed to officers on behalf of residents in the New Cross Gate area, calling for the Cold Blow Lane tunnel to be permanently closed to traffic and fully pedestrianised.

Councillor Schmidt presented a petition of 84 signatures and advised that 323 online and 316 email signatures were submitted to the Council on behalf of residents in Evelyn Ward. The residents were opposing the introduction of parking permits in their area.

6. **Public Questions**

The Speaker announced that 70 questions were received from members of the public, and that written answers to those had been published on the Council's website.

The published public questions and responses provided by the Council were NOTED.

At this point of the proceedings, voices were raised by members of the public present at the meeting and calling for the Council to join in expressing support for a ceasefire in relation to the current Middle East conflict. The Speaker advised that the meeting was not the right forum to raise the matter, and he issued warnings for the noise to cease.

The Speaker suspended the meeting at 7.50 pm after the second warning because of continuous interruptions to the proceedings by the protesters.

The meeting resumed and continued in a closed session from 8.05pm onwards.

7. **Member Questions**

The meeting noted that 7 questions were received from Members, and that written answers were supplied and published on the Council's website.

Some Members asked supplementary questions and those were responded to by either the Mayor or the relevant Cabinet Member and NOTED.

8. Changes to Committee Appointments

Councillor Stamirowski MOVED, Councillor Millbank SECONDED, and the Council RESOLVED to agree the changes to committee appointments as set out in the report.

9. Overview & Scrutiny Annual Report

Councillor Schmidt MOVED, Councillor Ingleby SECONDED, and the Council RESOLVED to note the Overview and Scrutiny Annual Report 2022/23.

10. 2022/23 Statement of Accounts and Audit

Councillor De Ryk MOVED, Councillor Kestner SECONDED, and the Council RESOLVED

- To recommend delegation to the Section 151 Officer, in consultation with the Chair of the Audit & Risk Committee, to agree any changes to the agreed audit adjustments and the final Statement of Accounts for publication, alongside the Auditor's Annual Report.
- To approve the draft Statement of Accounts and Pension Fund Accounts 2022/23 and the agreed audit adjustments.
- To note the Audit Findings Report 2022/23 and addendum from Grant Thornton following the external audit of the Council's Statement of Accounts and Pension Fund Accounts.
- To note the Management Representation Letters.
- To note the Auditor's Annual Report (VFM) 2022/23 from Grant Thornton.

11. Adopting amendments to the Lewisham Standing Advisory Council on Religious Education (SACRE) Constitution

Councillor Johnston-Franklin MOVED, Councillor Jacq Paschoud SECONDED, and the Council RESOLVED to note and approve the revisions to the SACRE Constitution proposed by Lewisham Standing Advisory Council on Religious Education (Lewisham SACRE) and instructs the Monitoring Officer to amend the Constitution to reflect the changes.

12. Motions

Councillor Ese Erheriene MOVED, and Cllr Carol Webley-Brown SECONDED a motion supporting calls for a full statutory public enquiry into maternity safety in England, and to provide greater support and scrutiny to our healthcare partners in Lewisham.

The Council NOTED the motion and RESOLVED:

- To publicly join the Maternity Safety Alliance's calls for a full statutory public enquiry into maternity safety in England e.g., through the release of a press release.
- To write to the Department of Health and Social Care asking it to support the official campaign for a full statutory public inquiry into maternity safety in England.
- To undertake a review of maternity outcomes for black and global majority women at key health providers in the borough (e.g., Lewisham Hospital), and publicise the findings.
- To support our local health partners to improve maternity outcomes for black and global majority women.

The meeting closed at 8.35 pm.

Speaker of Council