

Council Assembly

(Budget and Council Tax Setting meeting)

MINUTES of the Council Assembly (Budget and Council Tax Setting meeting) held on Wednesday 26 February 2020 at 7.00 pm at Council Offices, 160 Tooley Street, London SE1 2QH

PRESENT:

The Worshipful the Mayor for 2019-20, Councillor Sandra Rhule (Chair)

Councillor Anood Al-Samerai	Councillor Maria Linforth-Hall
Councillor Humaira Ali	Councillor Richard Livingstone
Councillor Jasmine Ali	Councillor Rebecca Lury
Councillor Peter Babudu	Councillor Alice Macdonald
Councillor Maggie Browning	Councillor Eliza Mann
Councillor Jack Buck	Councillor James McAsh
Councillor Radha Burgess	Councillor Hamish McCallum
Councillor Victor Chamberlain	Councillor Darren Merrill
Councillor Sunil Chopra	Councillor Victoria Mills
Councillor James Coldwell	Councillor Adele Morris
Councillor Stephanie Cryan	Councillor Graham Neale
Councillor Dora Dixon-Fyle MBE	Councillor David Noakes
Councillor Nick Dolezal	Councillor Damian O'Brien
Councillor Karl Eastham	Councillor Jason Ochere
Councillor Gavin Edwards	Councillor Victoria Olisa
Councillor Paul Fleming	Councillor Leo Pollak
Councillor Tom Flynn	Councillor Catherine Rose
Councillor Renata Hamvas	Councillor Jane Salmon
Councillor Barrie Hargrove	Councillor Martin Seaton
Councillor Jon Hartley	Councillor Andy Simmons
Councillor William Houngho	Councillor Johnson Situ
Councillor Sirajul Islam	Councillor Michael Situ
Councillor Peter John OBE	Councillor Charlie Smith
Councillor Nick Johnson	Councillor Cleo Soanes
Councillor Eleanor Kerslake	Councillor Leanne Werner
Councillor Sarah King	Councillor Kath Whittam
Councillor Sunny Lambe	Councillor Bill Williams
Councillor Lorraine Lauder MBE	Councillor Kieron Williams
Councillor Richard Leeming	Councillor Ian Wingfield

1. PRELIMINARY BUSINESS

1.1 ANNOUNCEMENTS FROM THE MAYOR, MEMBERS OF THE CABINET OR CHIEF EXECUTIVE

The Mayor, Councillor Sandra Rhule, gave her thanks to the Deputy Mayor, Councillor Barrie Hargrove, for supporting the council while she was unwell.

The Leader of the Council, Councillor Peter John, announced his stepping down from the leadership, effective on 25 March 2020. Madam Mayor thanked Councillor John for his leadership of the council over the years and council assembly gave him a standing ovation.

1.2 NOTIFICATION OF ANY ITEMS OF BUSINESS WHICH THE MAYOR DEEMS URGENT

At this juncture, the meeting agreed the programme motion.

That the meeting be conducted as follows:

Time	Business
7.00pm – 7.15pm	1. Preliminary business and announcements
7.15pm – 10.00pm	Item 2.1 Policy and Resources Strategy 2020-21 - Revenue Budget 1. Consideration of this item is not time limited but the meeting is subject to the guillotine. 2. Debate to include: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Eight questions on reports• Councillor Vicky Mills to present recommendations (10 minutes)• Councillor Jane Salmon to reply on behalf of opposition (5 minutes)• Four amendments to be moved and seconded• Report and amendments to be debated as a single debate (all speakers 3 minutes each)• Reply to the debate from Councillor Vicky Mills (3 minutes)• Separate vote on each amendment• Recorded vote on substantive motion. Members can only speak once, except for Councillor Vicky Mills (cabinet member for finance, performance and Brexit), who will reply to the single debate. This report has a legal requirement to take a recorded

	vote on the substantive motion.
	Item 2.2 Capital Strategy and Treasury Management Strategy 2020-21 To be considered as normal.
	Item 2.3 Setting the Council Tax 2020-21 This report has a legal requirement to take a recorded vote on the substantive motion.
	Item 3.1 Constitutional Changes 2019-20: Contract standing orders, Financial standing orders, Member and officer protocol To be considered as normal.

Item 2 Reports for decision

Each report to have a single debate, subject to the guillotine.

1.3 DISCLOSURE OF INTERESTS AND DISPENSATIONS

The Mayor announced that all councillors had been granted a dispensation by the monitoring officer to vote on Item 2.3: Setting the council tax 2020-21.

There were no further disclosures of interest.

1.4 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors Evelyn Akoto, Helen Dennis (on maternity leave), Margy Newens, and Dan Whitehead.

1.5 MINUTES

The minutes of the council assembly meeting held on 28 January 2020 were agreed as a correct record.

2. REPORT(S) FOR DECISION FROM THE CABINET

2.1 POLICY AND RESOURCES STRATEGY 2020-21 - REVENUE BUDGET

(See pages 1 - 69 of supplemental agenda no. 1)

There were seven questions on the report, the written responses to which were circulated on blue paper at the meeting. There were eight supplemental questions.

There were four amendments to this report.

In accordance with council assembly procedure rule 1.14.9, Councillor Vicky Mills, cabinet member for finance, performance and Brexit, moved the report.

In accordance with council assembly procedure rule 1.14.9, Councillor Jane Salmon responded to the cabinet member's statement.

Councillor Maggie Browning, seconded by Councillor Jason Ochere, moved Amendment A.

Councillor Graham Neale, seconded by Councillor Adele Morris, moved Amendment B.

Councillor Hamish McCallum, seconded by Councillor David Noakes, moved Amendment C.

Councillor Humaira Ali, seconded by Councillor William Hougbo, moved Amendment D.

Following debate (Councillors Livingstone, Lambe, Chamberlain, Kerlake, Jasmine Ali, O'Brien, Cryan, Johnson Situ, Linforth-Hall, Macdonald, Kieron Williams, Mann, Edwards, Bill Williams, Johnson, Dixon-Fyle, Al-Samerai, Fleming, and McAsh; Councillor Neale made a point of personal explanation) Councillor Vicky Mills exercised her right of reply.

Amendment A – Carried

Amendment B – Lost

Amendment C – Lost

Amendment D – Lost

At this juncture the clerk explained that the Local Authorities (Standing Orders) (England) (Amendment) Regulations 2014, which had come into force on 25 February 2014, required a recorded vote on key budget decisions by local authorities. The regulations required a recorded vote on decisions only. Therefore in accordance with council assembly procedure rule 1.16(4) (a roll call recorded vote), the bell was rung at the beginning and end of one minute, after which the doors to the room were closed.

The substantive motion was put to the vote, and the votes having been recorded, the Mayor declared the result as follows:

In favour of the substantive motion (46):

Councillors Jasmine Ali, Peter Babudu, Maggie Browning, Jack Buck, Radha Burgess, Sunil Chopra, James Coldwell, Stephanie Cryan, Dora Dixon-Fyle, Nick Dolezal, Karl Eastham, Gavin Edwards, Paul Fleming, Tom Flynn, Renata Hamvas, Barrie Hargrove, Jon Hartley, Sirajul Islam, Peter John, Eleanor Kerlake, Sarah King, Sunny Lambe, Lorraine Lauder, Richard Leeming, Richard Livingstone, Rebecca Lury, Alice Macdonald, James McAsh, Darren Merrill, Vicky Mills, Jason Ochere, Victoria Olisa, Leo Pollak, Sandra Rhule, Catherine Rose, Martin Seaton, Andy Simmons, Johnson Situ, Michael Situ, Charlie Smith, Cleo Soanes, Leanne Werner, Kath Whittam, Bill Williams, Kieron Williams and Ian Wingfield.

Abstained (13):

Councillors Humaira Ali, Anood Al-Samerai, Victor Chamberlain, William HOUNGBO, Nick Johnson, Maria Linforth-Hall, Eliza Mann, Hamish McCallum, Adele Morris, Graham Neale, David Noakes, Damian O'Brien and Jane Salmon.

Absent (4):

Councillors Evelyn Akoto, Helen Dennis, Margy Newens and Dan Whitehead.

The Mayor declared that the substantive motion was carried.

RESOLVED:

That council assembly:

1. Agreed to increase the Southwark element of the council tax for 2020-21 by 1.99%.
2. Agreed to use the flexibility offered by the government to support Adult Social Care through a precept equivalent to 2% of council tax on the basis that these additional funds will be used exclusively for adult social care
3. Agreed the recommendations of the 4 February 2020 cabinet for a general fund budget requirement (after specific grants) for 2020-21 of £294.292m.

Southwark Scholars

4. Council assembly noted:
 - a. That since the Southwark Scholars scheme was established in 2011 more than 88 young people from Southwark have had their university tuition fees paid.
 - b. That these Southwark Scholars have come from lower income backgrounds and have been chosen for their academic achievement and their record of community service.
 - c. That these Southwark Scholars are ambassadors for Southwark.
 - d. That following the UK's exit from the EU, there is uncertainty about the future of the Erasmus scheme.
5. Council assembly further noted:
 - a. That latest capital programme spend forecasts indicate that some borrowing may be deferred, marginally reducing debt financing costs in 2020-21.
6. Council assembly believed:
 - a. That the Southwark Scholars scheme is transforming lives of Southwark's young people, and that this should be celebrated.
 - b. That the funding for the Southwark Scholars scheme should be made secure on a long term basis so this scheme can continue with 10 scholarships awarded each year.
 - c. That our young people should be inspired to look outward and embrace opportunities not just on our doorstep but further afield too.
 - d. That at least two Southwark scholarships per year should be reserved for students studying modern European languages, studying a course with a year abroad at an EU institution, or studying their entire course at an EU institution.

7. Council assembly resolved:
 - a. To commit £50,000 from reduced debt financing costs to ensure the continuation of the Southwark Scholars scheme, with a minimum of two scholarships to be for students studying modern European languages, studying a course with a year abroad at an EU institution, or studying their entire course at an EU institution.

Southwark Renters Union

8. Council assembly noted:
 - a. That around a third of all homes in the borough are for private rental.
 - b. That as a result of the national housing crisis and the failure of this Conservative Government to properly regulate the private rental sector, too many of Southwark's residents live in insecure private rental accommodation.
 - c. The Council Plan commitment to set up a union for private sector renters to help empower tenants.
9. Council assembly resolved:
 - a. To commit £100,000 from the London Devolution Fund to finance the initial costs of setting up and running a renters union.
 - b. That the costs of the renters union from 2021 onwards be included in the 2021-22 base budget estimates, to be funded by the renewal of the council's mandatory and additional licencing schemes and planned expansion of the council's selective licencing scheme.

Black Cultural Centre Feasibility Study

10. Council assembly noted:
 - a. That Southwark is a diverse borough – as of 2015, 48% of Southwark's population identified as Black, Asian, or from another ethnic minority.
 - b. That Southwark council has consistently celebrated this diversity, and condemned the actions of this Conservative and previous Conservative/Liberal Democrat coalition governments in creating racist and discriminatory policies like the "Hostile Environment" which have led to appalling treatment of the Windrush generation and others who identify as Black or from another other ethnic minority.
 - c. Previous Council Assembly motions on making Southwark a Borough of Sanctuary, Solidarity with the Windrush Generation, and Promoting Equality and Valuing Diversity.
11. Council assembly believed:
 - a. That Southwark Council should carry out a feasibility study into developing a Black Cultural Centre in the borough, which would celebrate black heritage as well as providing space for a range of cultural and community organisations to use for meetings and events.
 - b. That this study should consider the scope for a centre, site options, and how it could become self funded and managed on a long term basis.
12. Council assembly resolved:

- a. To commit £100,000 from the London Devolution Fund to fund a feasibility study into establishing and developing a Black Cultural Centre.

13. Council assembly resolved to amend the budget as follows:

Item	Budget Impact (£)
Southwark Scholars	50,000
Reduced debt financing costs	-50,000
Southwark Renters Union	100,000
Black Cultural Centre Feasibility Study	100,000
London Devolution Fund Reserve	-200,000
Balance	0

Chief Finance Officer assurance on robustness of budget estimates

14. The strategic director of finance and governance, as the statutory section 151 officer, has confirmed that these proposals are legal, implementable and overall do not impact on the total budget requirement for 2020/21.

2.2 CAPITAL STRATEGY AND TREASURY MANAGEMENT STRATEGY 2020-21

(See pages 18 – 46 of the agenda)

Councillor Vicky Mills, cabinet member for finance, performance and Brexit, introduced the report and thanked the finance officers who had prepared the budget reports.

Following debate (Councillor Pollak spoke to the report) the recommendations contained within the report were put to the vote and declared to be carried.

RESOLVED:

That council assembly noted:

1. That the council continues to invest in an ambitious long term capital programme that provides significant ongoing benefits throughout the borough and revenue streams to support council services.
2. The HM Treasury decision on 9 October 2019 to increase the interest rate margin added to new borrowing from the Public Works Loan Board from 0.8% to 1.8%.

That council assembly approved:

3. The Capital Strategy 2020-21 as Appendix A of the report
4. The Treasury Management Strategy Statement 2020-21 as Appendix B of the report
5. The Investment Management Strategy 2020-21 as Appendix C of the report
6. The Minimum Revenue Provision Statement 2020-21 as Appendix D of the report

7. The Prudential Indicators for 2020-23 as Appendix E of the report.

2.3 SETTING THE COUNCIL TAX 2020-21

(See pages 70 – 82 of supplemental agenda no.1)

At this juncture the clerk explained that the Local Authorities (Standing Orders) (England) (Amendment) Regulations 2014, which had come into force on 25 February 2014, required a recorded vote on key budget decisions by local authorities. The regulations required a recorded vote on decisions only. Therefore in accordance with council assembly procedure rule 1.16(4) (a roll call recorded vote), the bell was rung at the beginning and end of one minute, after which the doors to the room were closed.

The substantive motion was put to the vote, and the votes having been recorded, the Mayor declared the result as follows:

In favour of the substantive motion (59):

Councillors Humaira Ali, Jasmine Ali, Anood Al-Samerai, Peter Babudu, Maggie Browning, Jack Buck, Radha Burgess, Victor Chamberlain, Sunil Chopra, James Coldwell, Stephanie Cryan, Dora Dixon-Fyle, Nick Dolezal, Karl Eastham, Gavin Edwards, Paul Fleming, Tom Flynn, Renata Hamvas, Barrie Hargrove, Jon Hartley, William Hougbo, Sirajul Islam, Peter John, Nick Johnson, Eleanor Kerlake, Sarah King, Sunny Lambe, Lorraine Lauder, Richard Leeming, Maria Linforth-Hall, Richard Livingstone, Rebecca Lury, Alice Macdonald, Eliza Mann, James McAsh, Hamish McCallum, Darren Merrill, Vicky Mills, Adele Morris, Graham Neale, David Noakes, Damian O'Brien, Jason Ochere, Victoria Olisa, Leo Pollak, Sandra Rhule, Catherine Rose, Jane Salmon, Martin Seaton, Andy Simmons, Johnson Situ, Michael Situ, Charlie Smith, Cleo Soanes, Leanne Werner, Kath Whittam, Bill Williams, Kieron Williams and Ian Wingfield.

Absent (4)

Councillors Evelyn Akoto, Helen Dennis, Margy Newens and Dan Whitehead.

The Mayor declared that the substantive motion was carried.

RESOLVED:

1. That the 2020-21 Southwark element of the council tax for band D properties in Southwark, including an increase of 1.99% and an increase of 2% for the adult social care precept be set at **£1,108.81**.
2. That the 2020-21 formal resolution for Southwark council taxes in 2020-21 be approved (appendix A of the report).
3. That no discount be applied to properties in the former parish of St Mary Newington for 2020-21.
4. That no discount be applied to properties in the former parish of St Saviour's for 2020-21.

5. That council assembly noted the Greater London Authority (GLA) proposal to set a precept level of **£332.07** at band D, which the GLA considered on 24 February 2020.
6. That the existing local war disability and war widow/ers' schemes for housing benefit be continued in 2020-21.

3. OTHER REPORTS

3.1 CONSTITUTIONAL CHANGES 2019/20: CONTRACT STANDING ORDERS, FINANCIAL STANDING ORDERS, MEMBER AND OFFICER PROTOCOL

(See pages 47 – 97 of the agenda)

This item was formally moved.

RESOLVED:

1. That council assembly agreed the proposed changes to the constitution as outlined in Appendices 1 to 3 of the report.

4. AMENDMENTS

Amendments are set out in supplemental agenda no. 2.

The meeting closed at 9.31 pm.

CHAIR:

DATED: