

**Councillors in
Attendance:**

Mayor Caroline Woodley, Cllr Kam Adams,
Cllr Grace Adebayo, Cllr Frank Baffour, Cllr Alastair Binnie-
Lubbock, Deputy Mayor Anntoinette Bramble,
Cllr Robert Chapman, Cllr Mete Coban, Cllr Sophie Conway,
Cllr Michael Desmond, Cllr Sade Etti, Cllr Susan Fajana-
Thomas, Cllr Zoe Garbett, Cllr Margaret Gordon,
Cllr Ben Hayhurst, Cllr Clare Joseph,
Cllr Christopher Kennedy, Krautwirt, Cllr Lee Laudat-Scott,
Lisser, Cllr Richard Lufkin, Cllr Yvonne Maxwell,
Cllr Clayeon McKenzie, Cllr Sem Moema, Cllr Jon Narcross,
Cllr Guy Nicholson, Cllr Joseph Ogundemuren,
Cllr Deniz Oguzkanli, Cllr Sam Pallis, Cllr Benzion Papier,
Cllr Sharon Patrick, Cllr Clare Potter, Cllr Fliss Premru,
Cllr Steve Race, Cllr Ian Rathbone, Cllr Ali Sadek,
Cllr Caroline Selman, Cllr Ian Sharer, Cllr Anya Sizer,
Cllr Gilbert Smyth, Cllr Simche Steinberger, Cllr Sheila Suso-
Runge, Cllr Lynne Troughton, Cllr Joe Walker,
Cllr Jessica Webb, Cllr Carole Williams and Cllr Sarah Young

Apologies:

Cllr Soraya Adejare, Cllr Polly Billington,
Cllr Humaira Garasia, Cllr Eluzer Goldberg,
Cllr M Can Ozsen, Cllr Midnight Ross, Cllr Ifraax Samatar
and Cllr Penny Wrout

Officer Contact:

Natalie Williams, Senior Governance Officer
governance@hackney.gov.uk

Councillor Anya Sizer [Speaker] in the Chair

1 Apologies for Absence

- 1.1 Apologies for absence were received from Councillors Adejare, Billington, Garasia, Goldberg, Ozsen, Ross, Samatar (dispensation) and Wrout.
- 1.2 Apologies for lateness were received from Councillors Conway and Race

2 Speaker's Announcements

- 2.1 The Speaker informed the Council of recent civic events and projects which she had supported since the last Council meeting, which included:

- A Chanukah service and lighting of the menorah.
- Turning on the Christmas lights in the Town Hall Square and attending pantomime at Hackney Empire as well as other pantomimes and concerts across the borough.
- The Salvation Army Christmas meal and community projects.
- Breakfast with ex-servicemen.
- Carols in Broadway Market.
- Welcoming several school groups as well as many community groups to the Speaker's Parlour.
- The Winter Toy Appeal.
- Hosting the Merry Cheesemas event in the Assembly Halls.
- Meeting Emdad Rahman from the Book Bike Project, who had set up a homeless book club. and delivered over 20,000 free books on his bike.

Forthcoming events for which tickets could be purchased via the Speaker's Office included:

- 'Bright Art, Healthy Minds' variety show at Hoxton Hall.
- A comedy evening at the Moth Club.
- The annual De Beauvoir dinner.

2.2 The Speaker thanked all staff that assisted in citizenship ceremonies and events hosted on Council premises. Concluding, she welcomed the Jo Cox Foundation's report on civility in politics, which highlighted both the problems and also suggestions on how politics could become a more welcoming and inclusive place in which to serve.

3 Declarations of Interest

3.1 There were no declarations of interest.

4 Minutes of the Previous Meeting

RESOLVED: That the minutes of the meeting held on 29 November 2023, be agreed as a true and accurate record of proceedings.

5 Cazenove Results of the By-Election

5.1 The Speaker congratulated and welcomed to the Chamber Conservative Cllr Ian Sharer, who had been elected to the Cazenove Ward following the by-election held on 18 January 2024

RESOLVED: To note the election results as set out at Appendix 1 of the report

6 Questions from Members of the Public

6.1 To the Cabinet Member for Community Safety and Regulatory Services from Kofo David

Has there been an increase in Hate Crime, Anti-Semitism or Islamophobia within the borough since the Israel and Gaza conflict and how is the Council dealing with it?

Response from the Cabinet Member for Community Safety and Regulatory Services

Cllr Fajana-Thomas noted the conflict in Gaza had touched residents in Hackney and deepest sympathies were conveyed to all those affected. The national counter terrorist threat level remained substantial which meant an attack was likely in the UK. This category remained unchanged since before the Hamas and Israeli conflict.

Since 7th October 2023, London and Hackney had seen an increase in reported hate crimes for antisemitism and to a lesser extent Islamophobia with community tensions in both communities moderately heightened. Thanks were expressed to the wider community and faith communities across the borough who had worked together throughout this time in support of community cohesion. During December 2023, the number of reported anti-semitic and Islamophobia incidents had started to reduce, however, it was noted that the incidents had remained higher than in previous years.

The Council prioritised maintaining social cohesion and had undertaken a number of activities to support this objective. This included: the relaunch of the No Place for Hate campaign which was attended by Mayor Woodley, the Chief Executive, faith groups and the wider community standing in solidarity with affected communities. Additionally, No Place for Hate posters had been installed around the borough. The Council and the police had held weekly meetings with community leaders from the Jewish community and responded to their feedback. Subsequently there were 250 council enforcement patrol hours around schools and synagogues since the beginning of the conflict, 2 sergeants and 12 constables dedicated daily, to Stamford Hill and Upper Clapton areas to respond quickly to reports of antisemitism and Islamophobia.

The police had set up a Hate Crime Response Unit in the Borough Command Unit (BCU), and officers from the Community Safety Team had been included in Jewish WhatsApp forums helping to dispel rumours and offer support and reassurance. The Council had regular contact with mosques across Hackney and had provided them with a named community safety contact that ensured a fast response to concerns raised. Weekly meetings in conjunction with the police had been offered to Muslim community representatives and low key patrols had been provided. The CCTV team had supported police investigations into hate crime incidents and in December an individual had been charged with an offence.

Supplementary Question:

Has the Council set out specific funds for these projects?

Cllr Fajana-Thomas noted that the costs for activities were contained within the Community Safety budget.

6.2 To the Mayor from Heather Mendick

As a Jewish resident I am appalled by the actions of Israel and I want to see Hackney's twinning with Haifa ended. How would the Mayor explain the Council's failure to do this?

Response from the Deputy Mayor and Cabinet Member for Delivery, Inclusive Economy and Regeneration

Deputy Mayor Nicholson noted Councillors present in the Chamber who had been past Speakers and had led on twinning initiatives which had built strong working relationships with Haifa. It was noted that twinning was non-political, non-sectarian, and inter-faith. The relationship with Haifa started in 1968 and had, for 30 years, been a relationship based on knowledge, experience and practices in healthcare between the Homerton Hospital and the Rambam Hospital in Haifa. This relationship included exchanges between nurses and practitioners from both hospitals and it was considered important these relationships had been maintained even through the current challenging times. Haifa and Hackney had diverse progressive communities that had brought friendship through healthcare. The relationship with hospitals in St George's Grenada was noted which had built collaborative relationships for people in both communities.

A supplementary question was asked which was disallowed by the Speaker as it had not arisen from the original question. The Speaker asked if there was a question that related to the original question. There followed a disturbance from public attendees. Having given warnings, the Speaker notified the Chamber that the meeting was to be adjourned and the public gallery cleared in accordance with Council Procedure Rules.

Meeting adjourned at 19.26

Meeting resumed at 19.35

6.3 To the Cabinet Member for Climate Change, Environment and Transport from Ruth Jenkins

Would the Council act to safeguard children of Southwold Primary School and park users, as parents have repeatedly requested over at least 5 years, by either installing a zebra crossing between Millfields Park North across Southwold Road towards the school, or putting in place a school crossing patrol / lollipop person?

Response from the Cabinet Member for Climate Change, Environment and Transport

Cllr Coban explained that the safety of children was a priority of the Council. Hackney Council had the most ambitious School Streets programme in London. Three programmes had been launched this week. Safety was an overarching theme that was taken into account in every decision taken that affected residents. Officers had met with residents and Cllr Rathbone to discuss the need for a crossing at this junction. Officers had undertaken a full assessment to identify the crossing needs and the traffic surveys in January 2023 had indicated that a crossing was not required at this location. Councillors recognised residents' concerns and had continued to engage with them to identify funding for a scheme at this location.

Supplementary Question:

How many primary schools in Hackney have neither a school zebra crossing or school crossing patrol to ensure safety?

Cllr Coban indicated that the Council had undertaken a wider study of child safety in schools as part of the Low Traffic Neighbourhood implementation plan. Data that outlined measures to help keep children safe was available to be shared and noted that he wanted to work with the resident going forward.

The Speaker noted that the questions submitted at 6.4, 6.5 and 6.6 had requested the responses be read in their absence.

6.4 To the Cabinet Member for Climate Change, Environment and Transport from Theo Hinton-Hallows

As an alumni of Hackney New School, I would like to know why the Council is prioritising car parking over providing children with safe means to cycle to school by not choosing option 2 for the Downham Road redesign, despite the Council's commitment to reducing car use in the borough?

Response from the Cabinet Member for Climate Change, Environment and Transport

Cllr Coban noted the Council had launched the 51st School Streets initiative at Hackney New Primary School this week and acknowledged the importance of providing safe conditions for cycling. The Council had ambitious plans to further improve cycling which was detailed in the local implementation plan published in January 2023. This included Cycleway 23 that runs across the borough from Lea Bridge to Dalston and was due for completion this year. The Council had recently consulted on 2 options for Downham Road and held 2 engagement events before the formal consultation with the local community. Independent consultants had been commissioned to provide analysis of the options and indicated that option 1, which had not proposed segregated cycle tracks, provided marginally improved benefits. This option had also been the preferred option by people attending the engagement events prior to formal consultation. Option 1 provided a better sense of place and also provided safe cycling conditions. A final decision on the scheme had not yet been made and was anticipated by the end of May 2024.

6.5 To the Cabinet Member for Housing Services and Resident Participation from Leslie Ann Saunders

Can the Cabinet Member for Housing please provide an update to the achievements and outputs of the Better Homes Partnership over the past 12 months and its plans for the next year?

Response from the Deputy Cabinet Member for Private Rented Sector and Housing Affordability

Noting the shared responsibility with Cllr Etti, Cllr Moema advised that the Better Homes Partnership operated as the forum for housing associations and Registered Partner organisations (RPs) in Hackney. It was designed as a networking forum that discussed strategic issues and was chaired by the RPs. Historically there had been 2 sub-groups in the Partnership; the Development Sub-Group and the Management Sub-Group. The Development Sub-Group discussed housing development and

supply, sites of opportunity and planning matters and the Management Sub-Group discussed matters related to housing management.

It was noted that the partnership was not a Hackney Council forum and had not enforced or overseen matters related to contracts, performance, or casework. Annual one-to-one meetings had been held between the Mayor of Hackney and the Chief Executives of the RPs to discuss strategic items such as damp and mould, repairs, funding and development opportunities, and fire safety casework. The partnership had not set group outputs, monitored performance, or made comparisons. Discussions over the past year had focused on damp and mould, fire safety, domestic abuse, and the cost of living crisis and the support available to tenants and leaseholders.

A review of the Hackney Housing Association Compact was on the agenda this year. The Compact held together the approach to partnership working. It was proposed that the Better Homes Partnership was relaunched as a physical meeting in Spring 2024 with the terms of reference, the future of the sub-groups, and the agenda for the coming year to be discussed.

6.6 To the Cabinet Member for Climate Change, Environment and Transport from Ifeoma Mkpuru

Please could you explain why the recycling bins, located opposite St. Mary's of Eton Church, Eastway E9 have been removed and what the Council's plans are to combat the continued dumping of rubbish within the vicinity and nearby estate?

Response from the Cabinet Member for Climate Change, Environment and Transport

Cllr Coban noted the bins were part of the public recycling sites designed to be used by all residents to recycle a range of items in different bins which included recycled electrical items, textiles, and dry mixed recycling. The bins faced repeated misuse and often contained wrong items which hindered the recycling process. The electrical recycle bin was removed in July 2022 and the recycling bins moved to Lavington Close. The move resulted in continued misuse of the bins with regular dumping of items. The bin for dry mixed recycling was removed in November 2023. The textile bin was generally used correctly and remained at the Eastway location.

Eastway was cleared of rubbish dumped in the area on a daily basis and officers had been asked to contact Metropolitan Housing who had responsibility for removing dumped items on the estate. Residents continued to receive household recycling services and recycling dry mixed items was available from home. The Council maintained over 70 public recycling sites that had over 130 bins with 18 sites available for recycled electrical items. The Eastway textile bin was to be monitored for fly-tipping over the next few weeks. Alternative locations may be considered if the textile bin attracted dumping. Residents were encouraged to report dumped residential rubbish to the Council through the Council Report a Problem page on the Council website or the Fix My Street App. The Council considered fly-tipping a serious issue and a team monitored hotspots, followed up on complaints raised and undertook enforcement action when necessary.

7 Questions from Members of the Council

The Speaker noted that the Monitoring Officer had advised that question 7.1 had been withdrawn as there was a current live planning application with respect to the site accommodated by Kidzmania.

7.2 From Cllr Patrick to the Cabinet Member for Health, Adult Social Care, Voluntary Sector and Culture

Following years of Tory cuts on Adult Social Care and an increase in demand, can the Cabinet Member give examples of the challenges the Council is facing because of this, highlighting the overall effect of the past 13 years?

Response from the Cabinet Member for Health, Adult Social Care, Voluntary Sector and Culture

Cllr Kennedy explained that several councils across the country had issued S114 Notices, which effectively declared authorities bankrupt; all authorities had cited Adult Social Care (ASC) cost pressures as one reason for issuing the Notice. The ASC pressures had been as a result of many factors which included people living longer, more complex needs, and increased unit costs per patient. The average weekly cost of a week in a nursing home had risen from £766 in 2019/20 to £1,172 4 years later, an increase of over 50%.

In addition, the Council had lost 40% of central government funding since 2010 and government funding had moved to one-off payments with no guarantee of continued funding year-on-year. Funding available was insufficient to bridge the gap in funding required.

7.3 From Cllr Garbett to the Cabinet Member for Employment, Human Resources and Equalities

The UK has some of the longest working hours in Europe but one of the least productive economies. Does the administration agree with the data that suggests a four-day, 32 hour working week with no loss of pay would benefit Hackney Council, its employees, our local economy, society and environment?

Response from Cabinet Member for Employment, Human Resources and Equalities

Cllr Williams noted the Council aspired to be an employer of choice with established procedures for flexible working requests which included compressed hours, hybrid working, and term time only working, regardless of the length of service. The policies included statutory safeguards such as a robust reason required to decline requests for flexible working and for decisions within a reasonable timescale.

There had been significant changes in working patterns since the pandemic. Staff working from home one day a week or more increased from 30% to 81% over the last 5 years. The Council had no plans to undertake trials of a four day working week in the Council. The Council had participated in the Timewise Fair and Flexible Council Programme that supported flexible working.

The Council had currently undertaken an engagement survey with staff to reflect on what worked well and what improvements had to be made to support staff.

Supplementary Question:

Would the Cabinet Member agree for the appropriate Cabinet Member and senior officers to meet with the 4 Day Working Week campaign group to explore how the four day working week would benefit the Council and taxpayer?

Cllr Williams advised that advice was taken from employment law professionals. It was important to ensure best service delivery to residents. As a result, she was reluctant to consider any changes and did not accept the request.

7.4 From Cllr Lufkin to the Cabinet Member for Climate Change, Environment and Transport

The Council's Community Energy Fund has initiated the second round of funding to assist community organisations transition to net zero. Could the Cabinet Member confirm how community energy aligns with the overall energy and environmental objectives of the borough?

Response from the Cabinet Member for Climate Change, Environment and Transport

Cllr Coban noted that clean solar energy that had cut bills for local community organisations had happened in Hackney. It was important that overall energy and environmental objectives not be seen in isolation and it was noted the significant economic opportunities a positive environmental agenda unlocked. London had responded to the climate emergency and had increased community energy across the capital. Community Energy London had pledged 1000 projects in the next few years and Hackney Council had committed to 50 projects with 30 initiatives achieved so far.

It was noted that community groups often look to the Council for support, advice, and collaboration. The Council had hosted a meeting that brought together a range of different organisations to take action on what could be achieved. The Council had control of 45% of the borough emissions and recognised the need to strategise with local organisations and businesses to achieve the Council's net zero ambitions. As part of this approach, the Council proposed to bring forward a net zero partnership with local organisations and businesses.

Hackney Light and Power Community Energy Fund had accelerated the development of community-led energy and carbon reduction projects and had been recognised in the UK as a leader in this work. The role of the local authority had been critical to the success of developing community energy projects. The Community Energy Fund had also unlocked other funding opportunities which brought additional capital funding to the borough. The first round of the Community Energy Fund delivered a range of projects at Hackney Empire, Mildmay Club, and Parkwood Primary School which provided funding for solar panels.

A key metric for successful projects was the lifetime carbon saving which the measures achieved. Cllr Coban noted a residential solar power proposal had been agreed at Cabinet earlier that week which provided for support to 500 council properties across the borough which helped reduce tenants bills and created jobs.

Supplementary Question:

How is Hackney doing in relation to other boroughs?

Cllr Coban noted that Hackney is one of few boroughs in London with a community energy fund. He reported that he had attended the Greater London Authority (GLA) Environment Committee this week and the GLA had visited the Leaside Trust to see the solar panel installation funded by the London Legacy Development Corporation (LLDC). It was noted that Hackney was recognised at a national level in leading on community energy.

7.5 From Cllr Binnie-Lubbock to the Cabinet Member for Community Safety and Regulatory Services

Following several incidents of serious violence and tragic fatalities in the borough over the last months, what measures are the Council and its partners taking to ensure residents feel safe?

Response from the Cabinet Member for Community Safety and Regulatory Services

Cllr Fajana-Thomas offered condolences to the families and loved one of the victims, following three unconnected murders in the borough in December 2023. The Council had supported the police through CCTV with their investigations and suspects for each of the three murders had been charged and remanded into custody.

Cllr Fajana-Thomas informed the Chamber that the Council was due to implement the Serious Violence Duty Strategy 2024-2027 which included analysis that identified trends and patterns in serious violence and informed the community safety partnership response. A Serious Violence Action Plan, to be published in February 2024, brought together all the commitments which included support for survivors of violence against women and girls and hate crime. In addition, the Council worked with the police and the Public Health Team and had increased patrols in communities affected by the tragic events.

It was reported that a temporary CCTV camera was installed in one of the areas and Cllr Fajana-Thomas had sent letters of reassurance to residents in the affected areas. The Community Safety Team, police, Ward Councillors, and residents held a meeting this week, linked to one of the murders, and heard concerns and worked to develop a multi-agency action plan.

The Council had the Violence Against Women and Girls Strategy (VAWG), with action plans, to address domestic violence. The Community Gangs Team had undertaken initiatives, with young people at risk from gang exploitation. The team had raised funds and refurbished 2 football pitches in known gang territories. These pitches, with support from Arsenal FC and Orient FC, provided regular coaching sessions free to users. Training was underway for care home supervisors in 40 homes which helped to identify gang issues. Three knife bins had been deployed around the borough that had resulted in the recovery of 180 weapons. The team had worked with DWP and the Youth Offending Team (YOT) to promote vulnerable young people into education, training and employment. The team had negotiated short term truces between gangs in the borough.

Through the Hackney Nights initiative there had been reductions in serious violence in the Shoreditch night time economy. There had been a marginal increase of 0.5% in violence with injury in Hackney over the last year, however, the commitment from community safety partners through the Serious Violence Duty Strategy was anticipated to make a positive difference to make Hackney safer.

Supplementary Question:

Does the current investment in violence prevention represent good value for money and where is further investment needed?

Cllr Fajana-Thomas was confident that the Community Gangs Team and Young Hackney provided value for money. Hackney had seen a reduction in crime across all measures before the incidents in December 2023 which was due to the work of the teams. The Community Gangs Team had a model that was promoted to other boroughs by the Metropolitan Police and the Greater London Assembly Violence Reduction Unit. Hackney used the public health model to respond to youth violence working in educational and youth settings and with parents. This approach had worked whilst it was noted that more had to, and was being done.

7.6 From Cllr Laudat-Scott to the Cabinet Member for Employment, Human Resources and Equalities

Does the Council have plans to transition from celebrating Black History Season to integrating Black history consistently into the year-round curriculum, events, and discussions, emphasising the importance of recognising Black contributions and experiences throughout the year?

Response from the Cabinet Member for Employment, Human Resources and Equalities

Cllr Williams noted the Council had marked Black History Month in October. For the past 10 years the Council had Black History Season which extended to include September, November and December. This year the Council had moved to Black History 365 with year round events in schools and Hackney Museums aimed at everyone in the community to celebrate Hackney's diverse cultures.

Hackney was proud to be home for many African and African Caribbean communities and outside the dedicated season; departments across the Council acknowledged the heritage, culture and creativity of these communities. The Culture, Libraries, and Heritage Teams hosted a programme of activities which last year included the Windrush Generations Festival.

Hackney schools had the diverse curriculum named 'The Black Contribution' curated by Hackney teachers which provided teaching resources for different age ranges including early years. Education was a core function of Hackney Museum which had a schools programme designed to be inclusive with diverse histories. The Black History collections had been the most popular schools programme and thousands of pupils visited each year.

Hackney Archives Team actively collected materials, including photographs, oral histories, and personal objects, since the 1990s. The Council had addressed underrepresentation of African and African Caribbean communities in the public realm and the Culture Team had led nationally significant projects that included the installation of the Windrush Sculptures.

Cllr Williams thanked all the teams that supported the work which acknowledged African and African Caribbean culture and history. She also thanked Mayor Woodley who had agreed to embed Black History into a 365 days a year programme

The Speaker noted that the meeting had come to the end of the 30 minutes allocated time frame and those questions that had not been answered, 7.7, 7.8, 7.9, 7.10, 7.11, and 7.12, would receive a written response included at Appendix A

8 Elected Mayor's Statement

- 8.1 Mayor Woodley welcomed everyone to the first Full Council of 2024 with special recognition to Cllr Ian Sharer following his election at the recent by-election. It was noted that he had previously served Hackney as both a Labour and Liberal Democrat Councillor. The Mayor thanked staff who had worked during the festive period to deliver essential services. She highlighted the importance of intentional rest, respite and wellbeing in order to continue working in a sustainable and healthy way.
- 8.2 The Mayor highlighted that the safety of residents remained a priority. She expressed sadness concerning three recent unconnected fatalities in the borough. Condolences were offered to the families of Lianne Gordon, Michael Murphy and Kobi Macharia Dooly, whose families were being supported by the Council's teams and partners. The Mayor thanked Cllr Fajana-Thomas OBE, Cabinet Member for Community Safety and Regulatory Services for demonstrating excellent leadership as well as Council officers who had acted with compassion and professionalism.
- 8.3 Mayor Woodley reaffirmed the administration's commitment to making the borough safe and outlined a number of steps that would be undertaken to achieve this. The Serious Violence Duty Strategy, approved by Cabinet on 22 January was an integral part of this work. Mayor Woodley emphasised the importance of politicians standing in solidarity against violence and hate and their responsibility to protect and bring communities together. She proceeded to outline various motions that the Council had passed in recent years in support of Hackney's diverse communities.
- 8.4 In reference to the Conservative Government's decade plus of austerity measures, cuts to public services and the ongoing cost of living crisis, the Mayor acknowledged the financial pressures and hardships faced by local residents. As well as the challenges faced by the Council to address these in light of no sign of a sustainable financial settlement. Mayor Woodley pledged to do all in her power to protect services for those most in need. Members were informed that the Government had so far failed to renew the Household Support Fund after March 2024. This was worth £5.6m to Hackney in 2023/24 and had been used to help fight food poverty and provide vital advice to residents in financial difficulty.
- 8.5 Mayor Woodley reported that she and Cllr Chapman had written a letter condemning among other things, the underfunding of social care. She was pleased to advise that the Secretary of State had backtracked and allocated more money for this area; however a long term solution was still awaited. Despite the financial challenges, the Mayor was pleased to announce that the Council would be able to balance its books and continue to provide many services alongside local partners.
- 8.6 In reference to the housing crisis, Mayor Woodley informed the Chamber that the Hackney Homeless and Rough Sleeping Strategy had been approved by Cabinet. The Council would continue to look for opportunities to bring in additional funding for this area. Work would also extend to working with the Private Rented Sector. The Council had recently secured £4.22m from the national Single Homelessness Accommodation Programme. This would help to deliver much-needed homes and support for people

sleeping rough with complex needs. Work to improve the Council's housing stock continued at a time where damp and mould was especially of concern during the winter months. She thanked Cllr McKenzie, Cabinet Member for Housing Services and Resident Participation for leading on this as well as Members across the parties for raising casework on behalf of residents.

- 8.7 Concluding, Mayor Woodley stated the importance of standing in solidarity in support of residents; standing against hate and violence; being unified in ensuring the safety of all in the borough and working together for a better Hackney.

Conservative Group Response

- 8.8 Cllr Steinberger gave apologies that he and other Conservative group Members would be leaving the meeting early as they were observing the Jewish Festival Tu BiShvat. He paid tribute to Donna Anthony from the Special Educational Needs and Disability Team who had recently passed away.
- 8.9 In reference to the earlier public disturbance at the meeting, Cllr Steinberger commended the Speaker, officers and security staff for their efficient and orderly handling of the situation.
- 8.10 Cllr Steinberger welcomed Cllr Ian Sharer to the Conservative group and the Chamber. He stated that the campaign was won almost on the single issue of Low Traffic Neighbourhoods (LTNs) and the election of Cllr Sharer represented the electorate's direct opposition to them. He implored the administration to listen to the voice of local residents with regard to LTNs which he believed were not wanted in certain parts of the borough.
- 8.11 Cllr Steinberger welcomed the announcement made earlier that day by the Secretary of State for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities of a £600 million support package, primarily for social care.
- 8.12 Concluding, Cllr Steinberger solicited the Council to provide premises as a hub from which Shomrim Stamford Hill (volunteer responders made up from members of the local community) could operate. He also expressed dismay at the ongoing issues raised to him by local residents in relation to housing, Council Tax and Housing Benefit.

Green Group Response

- 8.13 Cllr Garbett welcomed Cllr Ian Sharer to the Chamber following the Cazenove by-election, referencing his previous stints as a Labour and Liberal Democrat Councillor. She thanked Tamara Micner, the Green Party candidate and all those who voted for her. Cllr Garbett was disheartened at the reinstatement of the Labour Party candidate following the lack of a meaningful apology after expressing transphobic views. She emphasised the importance of challenging all forms of transphobia and requested the Mayor restate her commitment to the trans-community.
- 8.14 Cllr Garbett informed the Chamber that prior to the Council meeting the Green group had joined residents outside the Town Hall in a plea for all elected Members to do everything within their power to call for a ceasefire to the Israel Gaza conflict. She urged Members to continue to pressure the government and international community as the impact of the conflict had been felt by residents. Disappointment was

expressed that it had taken the Mayor 50 days to send a letter to Central Government following her response to a public question on the Israel Gaza conflict at the Council meeting on 29 November.

- 8.15 Concern was expressed relating to the earlier events during the public questions segment. It was believed that the ordeal of adjourning the meeting could have been avoided had the supplementary question been responded to.
- 8.16 In reference to the Independent Governance Review, the Green group welcomed the recommendations but stated that they still had questions pertaining to who knew what and safeguarding issues. Cllr Garbett looked forward to hearing from the Monitoring Officer regarding whether their motion could be heard following its referral at November's Council meeting.
- 8.17 Cllr Garbett stated that during the consultation and the subsequent Cabinet decision to close four primary schools, the Green group had engaged with parents, carers and teachers. Learning of the impact on staff and children; it was hoped that going forward, any consultation processes would be genuine and transparent and those impacted would be included at an early stage of decision making. Concerns were raised regarding the introduction of a last minute consultation relating to the closure of Children's Centres which was considered by Cabinet a few days prior.
- 8.18 Cllr Garbett stated that following her question at the last Council meeting regarding the action the Council was taking to address vulnerability in areas of the borough at risk of heatwave, there had been flooding in Hackney Wick as well as storms. She reported that the GLA Climate Resilience Report highlighted that the city of London was unprepared for severe weather events. She believed that residents were already seeing the impact of this with damage to their homes and businesses and immediate action necessary.
- 8.19 Concluding, Cllr Garbett stated that over a decade of Conservative austerity had decimated local authority budgets, with local authorities across the country facing bankruptcy. She questioned the Mayor on what would be done to advocate for local residents in support of ending austerity and ensuring a good deal for local authorities is at the centre of any Labour Party manifesto. The Green group advised that they would be bringing suggestions to the forthcoming budget meeting and would be willing to meet with the Mayor beforehand to discuss these. It was hoped that the additional perspective would be welcomed.

The Mayor's reply

- 8.20 Exercising the right of reply, Mayor Woodley stated the following:
- Echoing the sentiments of Cllr Steinberger, the Mayor paid tribute to Donna Anthony who had worked in the SEND and Early Years departments within the Council for several years.
 - The Council was challenged with regard to implementing ways to reduce traffic and ensure cleaner air. LTNs were very much wanted in some parts of the borough with pressure from residents for their introduction. There were 3 new LTNs in the pipeline.
 - 13 years of Conservative austerity had profoundly impacted the borough and residents.

- The issue relating to Shomrim was discussed at the recent Springfield Ward Panel meeting and Cllr Fajana-Thaoms would be looking into this. The work undertaken by Shomrim, in partnership with the police, especially in relation to hate crimes was of great value to the local community.
- The housing casework Members were receiving directly reflected the housing crisis. The Conservatives were encouraged to support the administration in lobbying Central Government to build more homes.
- Trans rights were recognised by the Council. There was no place for hate in Hackney. There was acknowledgement that comments made had complicated the Cazenove by-election, but it was noted that the management of candidates was not a Council responsibility as they were managed by the regional parties they represent.
- The delay in writing to Central Government was owing to the festive period and wanting the letter to be considered at the Labour Group meeting to ensure a balanced view.
- Hopefully, John Henderson's extension of the terms of reference and the forthcoming consideration by Scrutiny, would resolve any uncertainties and unanswered questions relating to safeguarding.
- Every effort was made with regard to the delay of the Cabinet report on the proposed closure of Children Centres. The option to delay to February was explored but it would have been impractical to delay the consultation. The decision was taken in consultation with the Monitoring Officer.
- It was important to develop resilience in relation to the climate crisis. The work that Cllr Coban, Cabinet Member for Climate Change, Environment and Transport, was doing in this area was commended.

9 Proposed Changes to the Council Tax Reduction Scheme

This report was covered by section 106 of the Local Government Finance Act 1992. The Speaker advised Members of the action they were required to take if section 106 was applicable to them. Members were informed that this would be a recorded vote and only those present in the Chamber for the duration of its consideration would be eligible to vote.

- 9.1 Cllr Chapman, Cabinet Member for Finance, Insourcing and Customer Service introduced the report that set out the authority's localised Council Tax Support Scheme. The scheme was in recognition and response to the cost of living crisis. Cllr Chapman highlighted that a manifesto commitment was made in 2022 to give low income households a bigger discount each year an increase to Council Tax was made. The proposals set out to deliver a 90 percent Council Tax discount by 2026 and a full 100 percent by 2030 to those eligible. The first stage of implementation was for the 2024/25 Municipal Year. Thanks were relayed to Scrutiny who helped provide understanding and context on the impact of the proposals.
- 9.2 Cllr Gordon spoke in support of the report and explained the Scrutiny engagement that was undertaken in devising the recommendations. Deputy Mayor Bramble and Cllr Coban also welcomed the report.
- 9.3 Cllr Steinberger raised concerns about the implementation of the recommendations owing to the far reaching ramifications of the cyber-attack.

On a recorded vote, there being:

For: (43 Members) Mayor Woodley, Cllr Adams, Cllr Adebayo, Cllr Baffour, Cllr Binnie-Lubbock, Deputy Mayor Bramble, Cllr Chapman, Cllr Coban, Cllr Conway, Cllr Desmond, Cllr Etti, Cllr Fajana-Thomas, Cllr Garbett, Cllr Gordon, Cllr Hayhurst, Cllr Joseph, Cllr Kennedy, Cllr Laudat-Scott, Cllr Lisser, Cllr Maxwell, Cllr McKenzie, Cllr Moema, Cllr Narcross, Deputy Mayor Nicholson, Cllr Ogundemuren, Cllr Oguzkanli, Cllr Pallis, Cllr Patrick, Cllr Potter, Cllr Premru, Cllr Race, Cllr Rathbone, Cllr Sadek, Cllr Selman, Cllr Sizer, Cllr Smyth, Cllr Steinberger, Cllr Suso-Runge, Cllr Troughton, Cllr Walker, Cllr Webb, Cllr Williams and Cllr Young.

Abstentions: 0

Against: 0

Not present in the Chamber: (4 Members) Cllr Krautwirt, Cllr Lufkin, Cllr Papier, Cllr Sharer

The resolution was declared CARRIED

RESOLVED: In recognition of the ongoing cost of living crisis in Hackney and the financial constraints placed on the Council, agree to revise the Council's current Council Tax Reduction Scheme by reducing the minimum contribution which all working age CTRS claimants have to pay from 15% to 10% of their Council Tax liability from the 1 April 2024

10 Calculation of 2024/25 Council Tax Base and Local Business Rate Income

This report was covered by section 106 of the Local Government Finance Act 1992. The Speaker advised Members of the action they were required to take if section 106 was applicable to them. Members were informed that this would be a recorded vote and only those present in the Chamber for the duration of its consideration would be eligible to vote.

The Conservative group were not present for this agenda item having previously given apologies detailed at agenda item 8.8.

- 10.1 Cllr Chapman, Cabinet Member for Finance, Insourcing and Customer Service introduced the report which was a key component of setting the Budget and Council Tax for the forthcoming financial year. An increased Council Tax collection rate of 93 percent was forecasted. In light of the housing crisis, owners of empty properties would be encouraged to bring them back into use. It was therefore proposed to levy a Council Tax premium equal to a 100% of the Council Tax charge in 2024/25 on any liable property. Additionally, it was proposed to signal the intent prior to 1 April 2024 to levy a second homes premium from 1 April 2025. Detailed proposals for its implementation would follow. These measures would assist with future revenue funding,
- 10.2 Cllr Moema and Cllr Desmsond welcomed the report. The commitment to work with the private sector housing team was highlighted as was the need to deploy some flexibility to those who genuinely wanted to pay arrears.

- 10.3 Cllr Binnie-Lubbock asked a question relating to whether there was any more the Council could do to provide business rates relief or reduction for small businesses. In response, Cllr Chapman advised that a small business relief was available to businesses that occupied premises with a rate of a value of less than £1500. The business rate was a national tax, which had very little local discretion. There was no specific relief that could be made outside of legislation. General support was available through the Hackney Business Network and Hackney Impact.

On a recorded vote, there being:

For: (41 Members) Mayor Woodley, Cllr Adams, Cllr Adebayo, Cllr Baffour, Cllr Binnie-Lubbock, Deputy Mayor Bramble, Cllr Chapman, Cllr Coban, Cllr Conway, Cllr Desmond, Cllr Etti, Cllr Fajana-Thomas, Cllr Garbett, Cllr Gordon, Cllr Hayhurst, Cllr Joseph, Cllr Kennedy, Cllr Laudat-Scott, Cllr Lufkin, Cllr Maxwell, Cllr McKenzie, Cllr Moema, Cllr Narcross, Deputy Mayor Nicholson, Cllr Ogundemuren, Cllr Oguzkanli, Cllr Pallis, Cllr Patrick, Cllr Potter, Cllr Premru, Cllr Race, Cllr Sadek, Cllr Selman, Cllr Sizer, Cllr Smyth, Cllr Suso-Runge, Cllr Troughton, Cllr Walker, Cllr Webb, Cllr Williams and Cllr Young.

Abstentions: 0

Against: 0

Not present in the Chamber: Cllr Krautwirt, Cllr Lisser, Cllr Papier, Cllr Rathbone, Cllr Sharer, Cllr Steinberger,

The resolution was declared CARRIED

RESOLVED:

1. In accordance with the Local Authorities (Calculation of Council Tax Base) (England) Regulations 2012, the amount calculated by Hackney Council as its Council Tax Base for 2024/25 shall be 77,766.9 Band D equivalent properties adjusted for non-collection. This represents an estimated collection rate of 93.5%.
2. In accordance with The Non-Domestic Rating (Rates Retention) Regulations 2013 Hackney's non-domestic rating income for 2024/25 is £179,559,273 subject to verification by the Academy (our Revenues Software supplier) software release. This comprises three elements.
 - £66,209,106 which is payable in agreed instalments to the Greater London Authority
 - £54,298,802 which is retained by Hackney Council and included as part of its resources when calculating the 2024/24 Council Tax requirement.
 - £59,051,365 which is payable in agreed instalments to Central Government
3. The proposal to levy a council tax premium equal to a 100% of the Council tax charge in 2024/25 on any liable property which is unoccupied and substantially unfurnished for a continuous period of at least one year.

4. The proposal that we signal our intent prior to 1st April 2024 that we will levy second homes premium from 1st April 2025.
5. To note that changes are proposed to the current CTRS scheme in 2024/25 and that this is covered by another report on this agenda.

11 Gender and Ethnicity Pay Gap 2023

- 11.1 Cllr Williams, Cabinet Member for Employment, Human Resources and Equalities introduced the seventh annual report, which was a requirement of the Equality Act 2010. As of 31 March 2023 the gender pay gap remained in favour of women. It was highlighted that the most commonly used measure was the median. The report also included the ethnicity pay gap, measuring the difference in average salaries of white employees and those who are Black or of Global Majority ethnicity. Although there was not a legal requirement to publish this information, it was a way to hold the Council to account and evidence the impact of its anti-racism work. Despite the increase in Black and Global majority staff in the lowest quartile of the organisation, it was noted that the mean ethnicity pay gap had marginally decreased. In the coming years, the focus would be on reducing the ethnicity pay gap and understanding the intersectional impact of pay gaps on gender in conjunction with other protected characteristics. There would also be a push to enhance data completeness and report the pensions pay gap by 2025.
- 11.2 Cllr Garbett asked a question about the low proportion of staff identifying as having a disability, not making declarations about disabilities and what the Council was doing to address this. Cllr Williams shared the concerns raised relating to the equity of the Council's employment policies. Every effort was being made to remove barriers for staff with disabilities. Paragraph 7 of the report set out the next steps, one of which was to increase the percentage of staff who prefer not to disclose specific information by improving trust and confidence. However it was acknowledged that it was a matter of personal choice.
- 11.3 In response to a question from Cllr Coban regarding how many other London boroughs publish information relating to their ethnicity pay gap, Cllr Williams advised that there was not a legal requirement to do so. There was a national campaign to voluntarily publish their ethnicity pay gap. The figures of those reporting were very low, however London Councils did have some data relating to this.

RESOLVED: To note the contents of the report

12 Members' Allowances Scheme

RESOLVED: To agree the report and the Members' Allowances Scheme 2023/24 (Updated January 2024) attached at Appendix 1.

13 Licensing Committee Annual Report 2022/23

- 13.1 Cllr Fajana-Thomas, Cabinet Member for Community Safety and Regulatory Services introduced the report, which had been considered by the Licensing Committee on 10 January 2024. There was a commitment to work with the relevant agencies to ensure

that Hackney's entertainment venues remained a safe place for all. Thanks were relayed to the Chair of Licensing, Members of the Licensing Committee, the Licensing Service and Amanda Nauth, Licensing Lawyer, for their commitment and ensuring that Licensing application hearings were well managed.

- 13.2 Cllr Smyth, Chair of the Licensing Committee, relayed his thanks to officers. He believed that the Licensing Service was a credit to the Council and ensured that the borough was safe and welcoming for all. He thanked Members of the Licensing Sub-Committees for their work to ensure that the needs of residents were balanced with supporting businesses and facilitating a vibrant day, evening and night time economy. He stated that the night time economy was an intricate part of Hackney's reputation for being a vibrant place to live, work and visit. Cllr Smyth spoke about the Statement of Licensing Policy; Cumulative Impact Assessment; the review of fees; the Late Night Levy; and the Hackney Nights Portal all of which he believed to be fundamental to achieving an inclusive and mixed economy.
- 13.3 Cllr Garbett, a member of the Licensing Committee welcomed the report and the work of the Chair of the Committee as well as the Night-time Economy Team. She highlighted that Dalston Pubwatch had received an award for being the third best pubwatch in the country. Dalston vendors were commended for their commitment to ensuring a safe night time economy. Cllr Garbett welcomed the possibility of Dalston being considered as a Special Consideration Area as opposed to a Special Policy Area and petitioned all Councillors to inform their constituents of the cumulative impact consultation to ensure that all voices were heard.

RESOLVED: To note the report and appendix.

14 Pensions Committee Annual Report 2022/23

- 14.1 Cllr Chapan, Cabinet Member for Finance, Insourcing and Customer Services introduced the report. He highlighted the work the Pensions Committee had undertaken over the past two years relating to Climate Change. He was pleased to report that the Pension Fund had reduced its exposure to fossil fuel reserves by 97% far exceeding the Fund's original target to reduce exposure by 50% by 2022. This was achieved whilst the fund continued to perform well, with a funding level of 106%. He thanked the Pensions Committee Chair and Members of the Committee.
- 14.2 Cllr Adams, Chair of the Pensions Committee, thanked officers past and present and Members of the Pensions Committee for their commitment to the responsible management of the 1.87 billion pension fund. This was in spite of considerable challenges for the Local Government Pensions Scheme (LGPS) and the economy at large. In reference to Climate Change, Members were informed that carbon risk had been integrated into the strategy setting process. The committee's ambition was for the Fund to achieve net zero emissions by 2040; with 3 shorter term targets to help monitor progress. The increased funding position from 92% in 2019 to 106% was due to better than expected investment return and had enabled the Council to reduce its contribution rate. Cllr Adams highlighted the work of the administration team in collaboration with the Committee as set out within the report.
- 14.3 Cllr Binnie-Lubbock stated that although commendable, the reduction to the exposure to fossil fuel risk was not an actual reduction to fossil fuel company investment. He stated that the call from divestment campaigners was to divest from fossil fuel

companies. Cllr Binnie-Lubbock asked if a country was found to be committing genocide in the international criminal court, or in violation of resolutions by the United Nations Security Council, whether the Pensions Committee would consider as part of that review, (following its recent actions to divest from Russian stocks) taking theprecedented step of looking to divest from stocks in such countries. Cllr Adams explained that the Pensions Committee followed guidance from the Law Commission. Divestment was permitted where there was no risk of significant financial detriment and where scheme members and employers share concerns. The Committee had noted the legal position with regard to divestment, boycott and sanctions. It had become clear that the UK Government had prohibited divestment that was motivated by political or moral disapproval of the foreign state. The Fund was able to divest from its holdings in Russia due to a number of reasons including long term financial concerns relating to assets and the alignment with the United Kingdom's foreign policy.

- 14.4 Cllr Garbett asked how the Pensions Committee was engaging with pension holders with regard to how they want their pensions invested and whether there could be seats reserved for union representatives on the committee, considering how many members they represent. Cllr Adams advised that scheme members had not been solicited on their views in the recent past. Occasionally, questions are received relating to the Fund's investments by scheme members but more commonly by lobby groups. There were currently two scheme member Freedom of Information requests relating to investment of companies that were active in the occupied Palestine Territory. The Fund had approximately 25,000 members and consideration would be given to surveying members to identify environmental, social and governance factors that may be of importance to them. Cllr Adams stated that it was vital that the Pension Fund did not become politicised and it was therefore not appropriate to ask scheme members questions that were deemed to be politically sensitive. Trade Unions had been offered representation on the Pensions Board as a scheme member representative which was a statutory role.
- 14.5 Cllr Premru asked a question about the Pensions Committee's intentions to divest from the arms trade and when the deputation referred to it regarding divestment from companies complicit in human rights abuses in the Occupied Palestinian Territories would be heard. Expressing sorrow of the ongoing conflict and the impact on innocent civilians, Cllr Adams stated that the Council was required to support good community relations. As such, the decision taken last year to postpone hearing the deputation was subject to review. He advised that the Committee's ambition was for the Fund to achieve net zero emissions by 2040; with 3 shorter term targets to help monitor progress. In response to a supplementary question from Cllr Premru, Cllr Adams reiterated that the divestment in Russia was in line with UK foreign policy and not detrimental to the Pension Fund.

RESOLVED: To note the report and appendix.

Cllr Binnie-Lubbock moved a motion to extend the meeting beyond 10.00pm to 10.30pm in accordance with Part 4A Rule 7 paragraph 7.1 of the Council's Constitution. This was seconded by Cllr Garbett. Cllr Adams suggested that 10:15pm which was seconded by Cllr Rathbone. This was put to the vote.

The Speaker declared the procedural motion to extend the meeting to 10.15pm
CARRIED

15 Confirmation of Political Proportionality and Appointments to Committees and Commissions

The Speaker advised that this report had to be deferred to the next meeting, to allow Group Leaders and Whips sufficient time to consider and present nominations to seats.

16 Motions

16 Green Motion – Defending Our Democratic Rights

Amendments to the motion had been received from the Labour Group and contained in the tabled papers circulated. The proposed amendments had not been accepted by the Green Group.

Cllr Garbett stated that all should be outraged at the continued assault on democracy and on the rights of citizens. In the interest of time, she decided to forego the right to make a speech.

Cllr Binnie-Lubbock, as seconder to the motion, reserved his right to speak until later in the debate.

Cllr Fajana-Thomas, proposed amendments to the motion which were seconded by Cllr Walker. The amendments were primarily made on the belief that the Public Order Act did not undermine the intention to peacefully protest; but strengthened police powers to tackle dangerous tactics and protect victims of crime.

Cllr Binnie-Lubbock believed that the motion as amended did not protect the right to protest. He expressed disappointment that the amendments removed reference to the Police, Crime and Sentencing Act 2022 which he believed to be discriminatory to the Traveller Community.

Cllr Walker, as seconder of the amended motion outlined what the administration had done to protect residents' rights. This included making representations against the deployment of live facial recognition (LFR) in Hackney, without proper consultation and welcoming the police's decision to suspend plans for this.

Following a vote, the Speaker declared the amendments to the motion **CARRIED**

The Speaker proceeded to the substantive motion which was not debated. Cllr Binnie-Lubbock had reserved his right to speak. He stated that the motion, as amended, did not protect the right to protest; and did not oppose Government regulation which he felt criminalised and made protesting more difficult for Hackney's marginalised communities.

Following a vote, the Speaker declared the motion as amended by Labour **CARRIED**

RESOLVED: That Labour amendments to the motion be carried.

This Council notes that:

- On 2 May 2023 the final stages of the Public Order Bill passed through the House of Lords, which gives the Police greater powers to prevent serious disruptions caused by protests in England and Wales.
- Article 11 of the Human Rights Act 1998 enshrines the Right to Peaceful Assembly into British law, guaranteed by Articles 10 and 11 of the European Convention on Human Rights (ECHR)
- A Legislative Scrutiny Report published by the Joint Committee on Human Rights called for key measures in the Public Order Bill to be amended or removed in order to reverse the “chilling effect” it is likely to have on the right to protest.
- This report found that these offences have a very wide scope and criminalise those legitimately exercising their Article 10, 11, 8 and Article 6 rights.
- Some aspects of the Public Order Act 2023 have been criticised by Amnesty International, Liberty, Equality and Human Rights Commission (EHRC), and the UN Human Rights Commissioner.
- The Right to Protest is a fundamental pillar of democracy.
- The objective of a protest is to peacefully disrupt and agitate for change, such as the anti-apartheid and Civil Rights Movement, Women’s Suffrage, Gay Pride and workers’ rights.
- Baroness Casey’s Report into the Metropolitan Police Service found that there was a deepening mistrust of the force which is institutionally racist, sexist, homophobic and ‘broken’, compounded by a culture of denial and obfuscation.
- The Administration’s ongoing work with the Metropolitan Police Service, MOPAC and local Borough Commander on improving standards through the Community Resilience Partnership and after the Casey Report and City and Hackney Safeguarding Children Panel Child Q reports.
- The co-production of a local action plan with Hackney communities, the Met and the Council on improving trust and confidence.

This Council resolves to:

- **Work towards Hackney’s local action plan on policing includes consideration of alternative ways to keep communities safe, and community education on the Police, Sentencing and Crimes Act 2022, and the Public Order Act 2023, so that Hackney residents are aware of their rights.**
- **Refer local issues concerning the Right of Protest to the Hackney’s Cabinet Member for Community Safety.**
- **Not agree to the deployment of Live Facial Recognition in Hackney until the Council is satisfied that the potential benefits to crime reduction will not lead to a further erosion of trust and confidence in policing in Hackney.**

Proposed by: Cllr Fajana - Thomas

Seconded by: Cllr Joe Walker

16b Green Motion – Standing Up for Responsible Tax Conduct – Councils for Fair Tax Declaration

Amendments to the motion had been received from the Labour Group and contained in the tabled papers circulated. All of the proposed amendments had been accepted by the Green Group. Subsequently, the proposer and seconder amended their original motion to reflect this.

Cllr Binnie-Lubbok stated that the motion was not controversial and in accordance with the beliefs of Councillors across the political parties. In the interest of time, he decided to forego the right to make a speech.

Cllr Garbett, as seconder to the motion, reserved her right to speak until later in the debate.

Cllr Chapman spoke in support of the motion highlighting that a crucial part of the amendment was to update what is likely to be known as the Council's Sustainable Insourcing and Procurement Strategy. The strategy would recognise the principles of fair tax.

Cllr Garbett, as seconder implored all members to vote for the motion.

Following a vote, the Speaker declared the motion as amended by the Greens UNANIMOUSLY CARRIED

RESOLVED: That the Greens' amended motion be carried.

Hackney Council notes that:

- The pressure on organisations to pay their fair share of tax has never been stronger.
- Polling from the Institute for Business Ethics finds that “corporate tax avoidance” has, since 2013, been the clear number one concern of the British public when it comes to business conduct.
- Two thirds of people (64%) believe the Government and local councils should at least consider a company's ethics and how they pay their tax, as well as value for money and quality of service provided, when awarding contracts to companies.
- Around 17.5% of public contracts in the UK have been won by companies with links to tax havens.
- It has been conservatively estimated that losses from multinational profit-shifting (just one form of tax avoidance) could be costing the UK some £17bn per annum in lost corporation tax revenues.
- The Fair Tax Mark offers a means for business to demonstrate good tax conduct, and has been secured by a wide range of businesses across the UK, including FTSE-listed PLCs, co-operatives, social enterprises and large private businesses.
- Labour and Co-operative MPs and councillors have been at the forefront of the fight for a fairer tax system, with numerous Labour London boroughs having signed up.

Hackney Council believes that:

- Paying tax is often presented as a burden, but it shouldn't be.

- Tax enables us to provide services from education, health and social care, to flood defence, roads, policing and defence. It also helps to counter financial inequalities and rebalance distorted economies.
- As recipients of public funding, local authorities should take the lead in the promotion of exemplary tax conduct; be that by ensuring contractors are paying their proper share of tax, or by refusing to go along with offshore tax dodging when buying land and property.
- Where councils hold substantive stakes in private enterprises, influence should be wielded to ensure that such businesses are exemplars of tax transparency and tax avoidance is shunned.
- More action is needed, however, as current and proposed new UK procurement law significantly restricts councils' ability to either penalise poor tax conduct (as exclusion grounds are rarely triggered) or reward good tax conduct, when buying goods or services.
- Hackney Council can and should stand up for responsible tax conduct - doing what they can within existing frameworks and pledging to do more given the opportunity, as active supporters of international tax justice.
- Hackney Council's administration has long been a proponent for fair taxation and welcomes the Shadow Chancellor's statements on fair tax.

Hackney Council resolves to:

- **Reaffirm its commitment to the Councils for Fair Tax Declaration and enact the Declaration through the points below.**
- **Lead by example and demonstrate good practice in Hackney Council's tax conduct, right across our activities.**
- **Reaffirm IR35 is implemented robustly and contract workers pay a fair share of employment taxes.**
- **Shun use of offshore vehicles for the purchase of land and property, especially where this leads to reduced payments of stamp duty.**
- **Undertake due diligence to ensure that not-for-profit structures are not being used inappropriately by suppliers as an artificial device to reduce the payment of tax and business rates.**
- **Demand clarity on the ultimate beneficial ownership of suppliers UK and overseas and their consolidated profit & loss position, given lack of clarity could be strong indicators of poor financial probity and weak financial standing.**
- **Promote Fair Tax Mark certification especially for any business in which we have a significant stake and where corporation tax is due.**
- **Support Fair Tax Week events in the borough and celebrate the tax contribution made by responsible businesses that are proud to promote responsible tax conduct and pay their fair share of corporation tax.**
- **Support calls for urgent reform of UK law to enable local authorities to revise their procurement policies and better penalise poor tax conduct and reward good tax conduct.**
- **Recognise the principles of Fair Tax in its Sustainable Procurement Strategy.**

Proposed by: Cllr Binnie-Lubbock

Seconded by: Cllr Garbett

16c **Green Motion – The Crisis in Israel and Palestine: Call for a Ceasefire, Release of all Hostages & More Support for Local Community Cohesion**

Amendments to the motion had been received from the Labour Group and contained in the tabled papers circulated. Some of the proposed amendments had been accepted by the Green Group. subsequently the proposer and seconder had amended their motion to reflect this. There remained a number of amendments that had not been accepted.

Cllr Binnie-Lubbock introduced the motion, highlighting the ongoing conflict had escalated to some of the poorest regions and countries. He believed saying nothing was to be silently complicit. He thanked all those who had tirelessly protested to oppose a military machine aided by arms companies based in the UK and funded by public institutions and pension funds like that of the Council.

Cllr Binnie- Lubbock believed that freedom should not be contingent on Israel's approval and generosity but on the commitment and solidarity of others. He welcomed the early motion in parliament welcoming South Africa's genocide case against Israel, which had been sponsored by Green MP Caroline Lucas and signed by Hackney North MP, Diane Abbot. This was yet to be signed by Hackney South MP, Meg Hillier

The importance of being partners for peace was highlighted, especially at such a time which had seen hate crime as a direct result of the conflict. He thanked the Labour Councillors who had taken a stand at November's Council meeting voting with the Green group for the motion to be heard

Cllr Binnie-Lubbock believed that supporting international institutions like the International Criminal Court and applying pressure on political parties to cease violence, free those being held unjustly including all people of Gaza were necessary steps in brokering peace.

Cllr Garbett, as seconder, reserved her right to speak until later in the debate.

Deputy Mayor Nicholson, proposed amendments to the motion which were seconded by Cllr Rathbone. The Deputy Mayor expressed sorrow relating to the ongoing conflict, the loss of life and the impact on local residents. The amendments to the motion were centred on the belief that elected Councillors were mandated to support the people by whom they were elected, He advised that the administration had undertaken a number of steps to bring communities together; ensure residents were safe; and intervene swiftly to violence and hate crime. The amendments captured the essence of what Councillors were elected to do and was within their remit to deliver. On international matters, the responsibility was for Councillors to call on national politicians to bring about peace which was a secondary responsibility. The essence of the amended motion focussed on the primary responsibility of elected members to ensure Hackney remained a safe and diverse place.

Following a vote, the Speaker declared the amendments to the motion CARRIED

The Speaker proceeded to the substantive motion which was not debated. Cllr Garbett, had reserved her right to speak. She recognized the mandate on local Councillors to represent their constituents; however, many residents within the borough had been directly impacted by the conflict and had called on Councillors to take action. She

expressed disappointment that the amended motion had lost the element of lasting peace.

Due to time constraints, Cllr Rathbone, seconder of the amended motion did not make a speech.

Following a vote, the Speaker declared the motion as amended CARRIED

RESOLVED: That the Labour amendments to the motion be carried

This Council notes:

1. Across Hackney residents have been horrified by the violent conflict in Israel and Palestine and are grief stricken at the loss of lives, including thousands of children, following the terror attack on Israel by Hamas on 7th October. Many, especially in Jewish, Muslim and Arab communities, as well as those from other communities of all faiths and none, are concerned for the safety of friends, family and work colleagues in the region.
2. Previous conflicts in the region have been associated with increases in community tensions, Islamophobia, antisemitism and hate crime in the UK.
3. There has been a worrying rise in antisemitic and Islamophobic hate crime in Hackney since the terror attacks by Hamas on Israelis on 7th October and the siege, bombardment and ground invasion of Gaza. Hackney stands against antisemitism, Islamophobia, xenophobia and all forms of racism and hate crime, passing motions to adopt the IHRA definition of antisemitism and the All-Party Parliamentary Group on British Muslims definition of Islamophobia.
4. That a range of international humanitarian organisations have been calling for an urgent ceasefire on all sides and lasting peace in the region and for a two-state solution.
5. That Hackney is twinned with Haifa city in Israel. Haifa is 160km from the Gaza Strip.
6. The brilliant work by Council officers, faith and community groups and partners including the Community Security Trust, Tell Mama, as well as others, and the police across the borough to hold our community together, provide solace for today and hope for the future.
7. The vital and ongoing work undertaken by the Council with partners to ensure the safety of our communities, which includes:
 - The sending of a letter from the Mayor to the Prime Minister expressing our concerns about the impact the conflict in the Middle East is having on Hackney residents and community cohesion, calling on the Government to: focus all efforts on bringing an immediate cessation to hostilities in Israel and Palestine, including an immediate and sustainable humanitarian ceasefire on all sides, lasting peace in the region and a renewed peace process, the urgent release of all hostages and provide central government funding to support community cohesion and peace-making at a local level
 - Increasing the number of council enforcement patrols and deploying the council's mobile CCTV van into vulnerable communities
 - Meeting with the borough commander and continuing to work closely with the police to support their work

- Co-hosting, with the police, community stalls around the borough as part of national hate crime awareness week
- Responding swiftly to hate incidents, crimes and anti-social behaviour
- Writing to faith leaders to express our support
- Reaching out to our Jewish and Muslim community partners in particular to reiterate the work the Council is undertaking with the police to keep the community safe
- Writing to all schools and education settings, including faith schools, and offering ongoing security liaison, support, resource and guidance
- Holding interfaith events.

This Council believes:

8. The truce at the end of November 2023 was a vital step towards releasing hostages and the provision of humanitarian aid. There must be an immediate cessation to hostilities in Israel and Palestine, including an immediate and sustainable humanitarian ceasefire on all sides. Humanitarian aid and basic services must be immediately restored. All hostages must be immediately released.
9. Peace, justice and reconciliation in the region is likely to have a positive impact on community cohesion in Hackney.
10. There can be no place for hate in our Borough. Hackney must be a safe place for those of all faiths and nationalities. We will continue to support those whose families and loved ones are caught up in this conflict. We must also stand up for those who may be perceived by others, sometimes because of assumptions regarding faith or race, to have links to the region and as a result are suffering from prejudice and discrimination; and as a Borough of Sanctuary we extend a special welcome to those fleeing war and persecution.

This Council resolves:

11. **To continue to work with borough partners to ensure safety for our Muslim and Jewish communities, hold interfaith events regularly, and to be ready to welcome refugees.**
12. **To continue to encourage interfaith and community groups to apply for funding, like Local Initiative Funding, to support community cohesion, peace-making and celebrating how Hackney fosters harmony between our diverse communities.**

Proposed by: Deputy Mayor Guy Nicholson

Seconded by: Cllr Ian Rathbone

16c Green Motion: Reduce Glyphosate to Zero Now

In accordance with Part 4A Rule 16.4 of the Council's Constitution, the Speaker advised that this motion which had not been debated would stand referred, without discussion, to the next ordinary meeting of Full Council.

End of meeting.

Wednesday, 24 January 2024

Duration of the meeting: 7.00 - 10.5 pm

**Speaker of the London Borough of Hackney 2023/24
Cllr Anya Sizer**