
London Borough of Hackney
Council
Municipal Year 2016/17
Date of Meeting Wednesday, 1st March, 2017

Minutes of the proceedings of
Council held at Hackney Town
Hall, Mare Street,
London E8 1EA

**Councillors in
Attendance:**

Mayor Philip Glanville, Cllr Kam Adams, Cllr Soraya Adejare, Cllr Dawood Akhoon, Cllr Brian Bell, Deputy Mayor Anntoinette Bramble, Cllr Will Brett, Cllr Laura Bunt, Cllr Jon Burke, Cllr Robert Chapman, Cllr Mete Coban, Cllr Sophie Conway, Cllr Feryal Demirci, Cllr Michael Desmond, Cllr Sade Etti, Cllr Susan Fajana-Thomas, Cllr Margaret Gordon, Cllr Michelle Gregory, Cllr Katie Hanson, Cllr Ben Hayhurst, Cllr Christopher Kennedy, Cllr Richard Lufkin, Cllr Yvonne Maxwell, Cllr Clayeon McKenzie, Cllr Jonathan McShane, Cllr Sem Moema, Cllr Patrick Moule, Cllr Sally Mulready, Cllr Ann Munn, Cllr Guy Nicholson, Cllr Harvey Odze, Cllr Deniz Oguzkanli, Cllr M Can Ozsen, Cllr Sharon Patrick, Cllr James Peters, Cllr Emma Plouviez, Cllr Clare Potter, Cllr Tom Rahilly, Cllr Ian Rathbone, Cllr Rebecca Rennison, Cllr Anna-Joy Rickard, Cllr Rosemary Sales, Cllr Caroline Selman, Cllr Ian Sharer, Cllr Nick Sharman, Cllr Peter Snell, Cllr Simche Steinberger, Cllr Vincent Stops, Cllr Geoff Taylor, Cllr Jessica Webb and Cllr Carole Williams

Apologies: Cllr Sophie Cameron, Cllr Ned Herccock and Cllr Michael Levy

Officer Contact: Emma Perry and Jessica Feeney, Governance Services

Councillor Rosemary Sales [Speaker] in the Chair

1 Apologies for Absence

- 1.1 Apologies for absence from Members are listed above.
- 1.2 Apologies for lateness were received from Councillors Coban, Potter, Rickard and Snell.

2 Speaker's Announcements

- 2.1 The Speaker welcomed everyone to the meeting and informed Members that the budget item would be a recorded vote.
- 2.2 The Speaker notified Members of the following forthcoming civic events:-

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- **Fair Trade Reception**, Tuesday 7 March, 6.00 – 8.00pm – Speaker's Parlour
- **Exercising the Freedom of the Borough by 3MI (Military Intelligence) Battalion**, Saturday 1 April, 10.00am – Hackney Town Hall
- **Hackney Refugee Welcome Meeting**, 26 April, 4.00pm – Clapton Girls Academy with Citizens UK, Hackney

2.3 The Speaker notified Members of the following forthcoming fundraising events:-

- **Comedy Night**, Thursday 23 March, 7.30pm – Ribbons and Taylor, Stoke Newington
- **Brewery Tour**, Thursday 27 April – visit Hackney's micro breweries, details to follow
- **Hackney Half Marathon**, 30 April
- **Hackney in Harmony – Speaker's Concert**, Saturday 6 May – 7.00pm – St John of Jerusalem Church, Hackney

3 Declarations of Interest

3.1 Councillor Selman declared a non-pecuniary interest in Item 8 – Budget and Council tax Report 2017/18, as she was a trustee of the Citizens Advice Bureau, referred to in the Liberal Democrat alternative budget.

4 Minutes of the previous meeting

4.1 **RESOLVED** that the minutes of the previous meeting held on 25 January 2017 be approved, subject to the following comment from Councillor Steinberger:-

- Item 5 b) Deputation – Wordsworth Road Area CS1 Motor Traffic Reduction Scheme – It should state Stamford instead of Stanford and it was Councillor Steinberger not Councillor Odze who raised the issue of the petition.

5 Deputations

a Controlled Parking for Lower Osbaldeston Road & Lower Kyverdale Road

5.1 Councillor Fajana-Thomas introduced the deputation on behalf of residents.

5.2 Mr Michael Graham was speaking on behalf of residents of Lower Osbaldeston Road and Lower Kyverdale Road, who had been adversely affected by surrounding controlled parking zones. The roads had been experiencing high parking stress south of Cazenove Road. Stage 1 consultation had been carried out in 2015 which resulted in neither of the two roads in entirety wanting parking controls. Residents had written to the previous Mayor in 2015 regarding the issue of parking stress, however no solution had been found.

5.3 A further consultation had taken place in November 2016, which resulted in 70% of residents in Lower Osbaldeston Road and 90% of residents in Lower Kyverdale Road being in favour of some form of parking control measure. He therefore requested that some form of parking control measure be implemented to ensure that residents were able to park in their own road, as there had also

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- been instances of vandalism to parked vehicles. He believed that residents should take precedence as there was often no parking spaces left in their road.
- 5.4 Mr Graham made reference to neighbouring Alkham Road which had been assigned a CPZ, which he believed would only add to the parking stress and cause displacement to surrounding roads.
- 5.5 Mr Graham, on behalf of residents, stated that the residents from both roads had demonstrated an overwhelming amount of support for parking controls and asked the Council when they would be implemented.
- 5.6 In response to a question from Councillor Hanson, Mr Graham indicated that their Ward Councillors were not in support of CPZs.
- 5.7 Councillor Demirci responded to the deputation and thanked the residents for their attendance. Councillor Demirci stated that she had full sympathy for the residents affected and was aware of the parking stress around Lower Osbaldeston Road and Lower Kyverdale Road. She stated that Parking Services had previously received two petitions for parking controls from the Stamford Hill area which were previously not in favour of parking controls. Stage 1 consultation had been undertaken in 2015 which received a 48% response from residents. The majority of responses received from the Stamford Hill area were not in favour of parking controls.
- 5.8 The Council generally conducted two stages of consultation before a CPZ was introduced. The decision to consult was normally made by the Council's Cabinet, according to evidence of a need for a CPZ. A full consultation could typically take 8-12 months to implement as the Council was required to follow certain processes and procedures.
- 5.9 Councillor Demirci advised that Parking Services would be carrying out a stage 2 consultation in the new Stamford Hill parking zone between March and April 2017. She urged residents to respond to the consultation and to gather support from Ward Councillors.

6 Questions from Members of the Council

- 6.1 From Cllr Anna-Joy Rickard to the Cabinet Member for Planning, Business and Investment:
"Can the Cabinet Member for Planning, Business and Investment tell me how the Council proposes to support Hackney businesses through this period of economic uncertainty brought about by the UK's decision to leave the EU?"

Response from Cllr Nicholson:

Councillor Nicholson stated that Hackney had a diverse economy and the UK's decision to leave the EU, along with recent business rates revaluation, was causing uncertainty on the ongoing prosperity of businesses across the UK.

Councillor Nicholson explained that at this stage in the Brexit process, it was not possible to fully determine the true impact that leaving the EU would have on Hackney's business community. However, it was the priority of the Council's Economic Regeneration Service to monitor the situation. During this period the Council would work with the Government, London Boroughs, think tank

advisory bodies and business representation groups to build an informed strategy for supporting businesses going forward. Councillor Nicholson suggested that he would extend an invitation to the Chair of the Brexit Select Committee to hold a meeting in the borough and meet local businesses.

6.2 From Councillor Adams to the Deputy Mayor:

'In recent times, the focus has been on the young people who go onto apprenticeships or further education at the age of 18. However I am concerned that many young people do not gain enough qualifications to start an apprenticeship or go to university, and are not engaging in any meaningful trade. Can the Deputy Mayor share with us what the council is doing to help/engage this group in the context of rising inequality in the borough?'

The Deputy Mayor stated that the Council had recently launched its own apprenticeship programme, with the aim of having 75 apprentices employed across the Council during 2017/18, and 100 during 2018/19. These were high-quality apprenticeships which paid the London Living Wage, with the majority being entry-level apprenticeships at Level 2 and 3. The Apprenticeship Programme Manager had been working with recruiting managers to ensure that entry requirements and person specifications were not prohibitive and that these roles should not ask for GCSEs as a pre-requisite unless there was a clear justification to do so. Functional skills in English and Maths had been built into all apprenticeships, and apprentices were required to achieve Level 2 in those areas by the end of their apprenticeship. Members were informed that the Council was also ensuring that the vacancies were promoted through Young Hackney and other services to young people who faced a range of disadvantages.

The Council's Young Hackney Service aimed to remove barriers that minimised learning progression for young people through Young Hackney Early Help teams attached to secondary schools in the borough. Young Hackney organises out of school careers events aimed at inspiring young men and young women. The Service also commissioned careers education for young people in voluntary and community sector settings. Six Apprenticeships for local young people had been provided within Young Hackney and two of those were nominated for Hackney Stars.

6.3 From Cllr Sade Etti to the Mayoral Advisor for Private Renting and Housing Affordability:

"As part of the Council's drive to improve standards within the private rented sector in Hackney would the Mayoral Advisor for Private Renting and Housing Affordability be able to update Members on how the Council intends to tackle rogue landlords?"

Response from Cllr Moema:

Councillor Moema advised that the Council's Private Sector Housing Team enforced the full range of legislation in respect of private sector landlords. It dealt with and resolved around 700 complaints from tenants annually and had licensed 193 Houses in Multiple Occupation (HMOs) under the mandatory licensing scheme. It had taken three successful criminal prosecutions this year resulting in substantial fines. Councillor Moema explained that the Council also used its planning enforcement powers to take action against landlords who built

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illegal extensions to let out to tenants. As a result of Council action, a landlord had recently been fined £40,000 for an illegal roof extension.

Councillor Moema reported that the Council had commissioned consultants to undertake a data modelling exercise, providing intelligence on the number and location of HMOs in the Borough. The report and database would be delivered in June 2017.

The Council welcomed proposed new powers for local authorities to regulate rogue landlords, introduced through the Housing & Planning Act 2016. Alongside rogue landlord enforcement activity, the Council was also supporting good landlords by participating in the London Landlord Accreditation Scheme. The Council now had 646 accredited landlords in Hackney, all part of a diverse private rented sector that provided around one in every three homes in the borough.

6.4 From Councillor Rathbone to the Cabinet Member for Energy, Sustainability and Community Services:

'In July 2015 the Council re-affirmed its commitment to fairtrade by passing a resolution which agreed to serve Fairtrade products within its buildings and offices. The Hackney fairtrade group will be seeking to re-apply for Fairtrade borough status in 2017. With this in mind, what is being done to ensure procurement guidelines are observed and secondly, what is being done to expand the purchase and use of other Fairtrade products across the Council?'

The Cabinet Member for Energy, Sustainability and Community Services explained that the Cabinet Procurement Committee approved the award of the first Council-wide Catering Contract in November 2015. This commenced in March 2016 and Fairtrade was part of the service specification, with Fairtrade beverages and confectionary supplied where possible. The Council's onsite catering kitchen would also become available to the service provider which would assist in further solidifying the Council's commitment when enabling more food products to be produced fresh onsite with greater control of ingredients. The contract would be monitored through visual checks by the FM Team and through the scheduled client meetings where new product lines were discussed and agreed.

The Catering Contract for the Surestart Children's Centres used a provider who focussed on organic and wherever possible locally and ethically produced local products. The production was externally accredited. The range of Fairtrade goods utilised was a standing agenda item at client meetings for the Corporate Catering and Children's Centre contracts.

Members were advised that there was not a catering framework offer for schools, although the position was under consideration if sufficient interest was generated.

6.5 From Cllr Soraya Adejare to the Cabinet Member for Finance and Corporate Services:

"There has been public concern that some local authorities are using money raised from parking charges to subsidise general, non-transport-related expenditure. What is the position in Hackney?"

Response from Cllr Taylor:

Councillor Taylor explained that the London Borough of Hackney used any surplus from its parking account to contribute towards its charge for the London-wide Freedom pass scheme. Hackney's charge for the Freedom Pass scheme in 2017/18 was £12.2m.

Councillor Odze added that the Council should look at abolishing Controlled Parking Zones (CPZs) and find an alternative method of funding Hackney's charge for the Freedom Pass scheme.

6.6 From Councillor Hayhurst to the Cabinet Member for Health, Social Care and Devolution:

'CHUHSE has been a success story in Hackney with reports of improved provision in the out of hours GP service which in turn has been credited to have contributed to a reduction in A & E admissions. The proposed 111 service across our INEL partners will be staffed by non-clinician call handlers in contrast to CHUHSE where the residents' calls are answered by GPs directly. Does he share my concern that the proposed 111 service may result in delayed diagnosis and possibly be counterproductive in terms of increasing pressures on local Accident and Emergency service provision'

Members were advised that the topic of out-of-hours GP services was discussed at length during the February 2017 Health in Hackney Scrutiny Commission meeting, and the concern of many in the borough about the proposal to impose a one-size fits all service onto residents in Hackney for vital out-of-hours advice and care.

The Cabinet Member for Health, Social Care and Devolution advised that in 2009 the service was provided by a not-for-profit organisation called Camidoc, organised by local GPs. A period of significant financial difficulty led to Camidoc losing its contract with the PCTs and being replaced on an emergency short-term basis by a private company called Harmoni. Following a short period of delivery by Harmoni across large parts of London the company ran into problems based on quality, and when the contract was ended our local GPs set up CHUHSE (City and Hackney Urgent Healthcare Social Enterprise) in 2013, commissioned by the local CCG.

Since then GPs working for CHUHSE developed a well-respected local service that consistently met National Quality Requirements, and provided both telephone and face-to-face advice to over 1,000 residents per month.

The proposed new arrangement was to provide a Clinical Advice Service that took calls directly from the national 111 number. In tests that had been carried out elsewhere in the country the model reduced the demand on A&E services. The Cabinet Member applauded the work of the Health in Hackney Scrutiny Commission in highlighting these concerns to national bodies that were forcing the new model on local commissioners in our CCG.

6.7 From Cllr Chapman to the Cabinet Member for Community Safety and Enforcement:

"I have been concerned to see the apparent increase in reporting of ASB in the Homerton and Hackney Central wards in Hackney. Would she be able to

comment on possible causes; as well as the measures which are in place to address this recent increase?"

Response from Cllr Selman:

Councillor Selman stated that although indicative data had suggested that there had been a recent increase in calls to the Police about anti-social behaviour (ASB), over the last five years there had been a long term downwards trend in ASB in the borough, with a 44% reduction in ASB calls between 2011/12 and 2015/16. Over the last year Hackney Central had seen a rise in reports of ASB to the Police, with the largest contributor being nuisance or rowdy behaviour. Homerton Ward had also seen a smaller increase, with the actual volume of calls higher than Hackney Central.

The Council was committed to tackling ASB and finding ways of preventing it. Detailed analysis of both police and council data had identified five key hotspots of ASB in the borough, with Hackney Central featuring as one of those hotspots. In addition, the Council had a longer term action plan for each hotspot, monitored through Partnership Tasking.

Councillor Selman advised that where a complaint of ASB involved a number of issues, the Council looked to work in partnership. A recent example of this was St John's Churchyard and vicinity. She added that the new Community Safety, Regulatory and Enforcement Service was due to be in place from Spring/Summer 2017 and all trends and emerging ASB hotspots would continue to be monitored through partnership tasking, delivering a co-ordinated response to ASB.

6.8 From Councillor Brett to the Mayor:

'Would the Mayor outline what effect the measures announced in the Government's recently published White Paper on Housing would have on Hackney's ability to build more social and genuinely affordable housing in the near future.'

The Mayor advised that the measures in the White Paper were underwhelming. It was stated that the Government was correct in its assessment that the current housing market was broken, but their plans wouldn't do this, and that the Council were looking to build many more homes. It was reported further that the White Paper did little to address the chronic problems of affordability in the private rented sector (CPRS) and, while the Council welcomed the plans to end letting agent fees paid by tenants, something the Council has been campaigning for, but more needed to be done to stabilise rents and lengthen tenancies across the PRS, not just in new Build to Rent.

There were many changes proposed to planning policies and procedures, with the purported aim of speeding up housing delivery. Of the 38 formal consultation questions within the White Paper, nearly all of those related to planning changes. The Planning service was currently assessing the potential impact of all the proposed measures, individually and as a whole.

The Mayor stated that through the Council's formal response to the White Paper, and in other forums, he would continue to press the Government for the changes needed to enable Hackney and other councils to achieve a step-

change in building the thousands of genuinely affordable homes that were needed.

(Due to time constraints, questions 6.9 – 6.12 were not taken at the meeting and the Speaker advised that Members would receive a written response. These response are attached as Appendix One).

7 Elected Mayor's Statement (standing item)

- 7.1 The Mayor highlighted the position of the Government in relation to the Dubs Amendment and Syrian Refugees. It was explained that the Mayor had written to the Home Secretary outlining the support that the Council had previously offered but unfortunately the support was not taken up.
- 7.2 The Mayor thanked the Deputy Mayor Councillor Bramble on her campaigning work on schools and the threat of funding cuts citing that Hackney was a great example of what works.
- 7.3 The Mayor paid tribute to Councillor Nicolson, the East End Trades Guild and various teams in the Council on their work which had been put in to the campaign on business rates. There had been a 46% rise on small businesses, as well as rises for the Council, Schools' and the NHS, It was explained that there was still uncertainty. The Council was informed that the Petition had reached 4,832 signatures.
- 7.4 Tribute was also paid to Councillor McShane and the work that had had been carried out in relation to the local NHS with the Council, CCG and others. Not only on devolution and the responding to the STP, but also the new integrated Health and Social Care commissioning body for Hackney.
- 7.5 Councillor Steinberger responded to the Mayor's statement on behalf of the Conservative Group. He congratulated the Conservative Party on Copeland by-election result, it was highlighted that it was the first time since 1935 that the majority vote was Conservative compared with Labour. Council on its by-election. The Business Rates Petition was supported and it was agreed that assistance would be supported in gaining signatures.
- 7.6 The Mayor encouraged everyone to nominate others for the Hackney Awards Ceremony and congratulated Gareth Snell on his by-election victory in Stoke-on-Trent.
- 7.7 Councillor Steinberger stated that he was satisfied with the letter on the 73 Bus route. Although it was highlighted that the letter did not include any comments on the pensioners and vulnerable people who would be affected.
- 7.8 Councillor Sharer responded to the Mayor's statement on behalf of the Liberal Democrat Group. He supported the Business Rates Petition and agreed to take the petition to residents in his ward. It was also stated that the Independent Schools of Hackney were an essential saving for the borough of Hackney.
- 7.9 The Mayor welcomed the support from the opposition groups on business rates petition.

8 Report from Cabinet: Budget and Council Tax Report 2017/18

- 8.1 Alternative budget proposals from the Conservative Group and the Liberal Democrat Group were tabled at the meeting.
- 8.2 Mayor Glanville introduced the budget and thanked the Group Director Finance and Resources and his staff for their assistance, as well as Councillor Taylor, Cabinet Member for Finance and Customer Services. Mayor Glanville also thanked his fellow Cabinet Members for their assistance, as well as scrutiny and backbenchers, who had all played an essential role in developing this budget.
- 8.3 Mayor Glanville referred to the cuts to Local Government and stated that the Council faced a number of financial challenges from 2020, as a result of the planned Government austerity cuts. Mayor Glanville advised that the Council had faced a reduction in its grant from 340million in 2010 to a predicted £160million in 2019. Mayor Glanville believed that the poorest people in the borough would bear the brunt of these cuts, which targeted the most vulnerable people in society.
- 8.4 Mayor Glanville stated that it was important to think long-term and the budget was about protecting services and investing for the future. Mayor Glanville was proud to propose a budget that kept open every one of the borough's libraries, children centres, award winning museum, parks, leisure centres and maintained investment in its voluntary sector. He added that the Learning Trust and Hackney Homes had now come back to the Council, in addition to insourcing IT, recycling and other contracts, improving the quality of services, improving staff pay and conditions and saving money.
- 8.5 Mayor Glanville was proud that the council had frozen council tax for a period of 10 years from 2005-2015, saving the average household £1,400. However, it had not been possible to manage the cost pressures and subsidise Government cuts, so this year it was proposed to put up the Adult Social Care precept by 2% and council tax up by 1%. These rises would enable the council to raise £2million, which could be spent supporting social care and services.
- 8.6 Mayor Glanville referred to the Council's commercial income which was due to increase by 400% by 2018/19 to over £12million, compared with £3million in 2012/13. He regretted the overspend on the works to Hackney Town Hall, however the project would save the Council money in the long run, as it enabled 40% more staff to be accommodated in the building and freed up other buildings across the campus.
- 8.7 The proposed budget enabled the Council to invest in the future by maintaining and creating circumstances needed to build over 3000 homes, create a new apprenticeship programme, invest in its parks, maintain its schools and build new ones.
- 8.8 Councillor Sharer thanked the Corporate Director of Finance and Resources and his staff and presented the Liberal Democrat Group's alternative budget, as tabled at the meeting. Councillor Sharer believed that as money was tighter, more advice should be given on debt and money management. The Liberal Democrat Group proposed a number of minor amendments to the budget and

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- agreed with Mayor Glanville that the austerity cuts proposed by the Government cut too deep. The Liberal Democrat Group's alternative budget was seconded by Councillor Jacobson.
- 8.9 Councillor Steinberger thanked the Corporate Director of Finance and Resources and his staff and presented the Conservative Group's alternative budget, as tabled at the meeting. The Conservative Group's alternative budget proposed a number of changes in capital expenditure, including reductions in investment in planned highways maintenance and general parks expenditure, as well as a reduction in investment in respect of Shoreditch Action Plan from £2,000 to £1,000. In line with Government directions, they also proposed an end to the publication of Hackney Today. Councillor Steinberger raised concern regarding a potential overspend in the budget for works to Council buildings and believed that buildings such as Stoke Newington Town Hall could be better utilised. The Conservative Group's alternative budget was seconded by Councillor Odze.
- 8.10 Councillor Nicholson welcomed the cross party support against the proposed increase in business rates. He referred to suggestions of joint working with other boroughs and stated that there were distinct boundaries and that the council could not take on processes from another authority.
- 8.11 Deputy Mayor Bramble congratulated Mayor Glanville on his first budget. The London Borough of Hackney was one of the few boroughs that continued to open and protect all of its libraries and children's centres. Deputy Mayor Bramble urged cross party agreement to go to Government against the proposed austerity cuts, which expected Councils to do more with less.
- 8.12 Councillor Odze congratulated Mayor Glanville on his first budget. Councillor Odze stated that the Government had a number of tough decisions to make as they had no other options, which they had done. He also encouraged more joined up working with neighbouring boroughs.
- 8.13 Councillor Stops stated that Hackney Town Hall was located within his ward and it was a great pleasure to be back in the Council Chamber. Residents were proud of the town hall and wanted heritage assets to be retained. He believed it had been a great investment.
- 8.14 Councillors Fajana-Thomas, Demirci, Taylor, Etti, Burke, Coban and Rathbone also supported the Mayor's budget.
- 8.15 Councillor Steinberger made reference to Ward Forums and questioned their effectiveness in discussing particular issues within a ward.
- 8.16 Mayor Glanville then responded to the debate and the alternative budget proposals from the Conservative Group and Liberal Democrat Group.
- 8.17 With regard to the works to Hackney Town Hall, Mayor Glanville stated that the Council would eventually save revenue in the future and was actively re-stacking staff from other buildings into the Hackney Service Centre. In response to the proposals from the Conservative Group, he stated that the Council would stop the publication of Hackney Today when it was no longer required to publish statutory notices.

The Speaker then invited Council to vote on the Liberal Democrat group alternative budget proposals.

For: Cllrs Sharer and Akhoon (2)

Against: Mayor Glanville and Cllrs Adams, Adejare, Bell, Bramble, Brett, Burke, Chapman, Coban, Conway, Demirci, Desmond, Etti, Fajana-Thomas, Gordon, Gregory, Hanson, Hayhurst, Kennedy, Lufkin, Maxwell, McKenzie, McShane, Moema, Moule, Mulready, Munn, Nicholson, Odze, Oguzkanli, Ozsen, Patrick, Peters, Plouviez, Potter, Rahilly, Rathbone, Rennison, Rickard, Sales, Sharman, Snell, Steinberger, Stops, Taylor, Webb and Williams (47)

Abstentions: None (0)

Not Present: Cllrs Buitekant, Bunt, Cameron, Ebbutt, Hercock, Levy, Papier and Selman (8)

The vote was not carried.

Councillor Steinberger moved the Conservative Group alternative budget proposals, as tabled at the meeting. This was seconded by Councillor Odze.

The Speaker invited Council to vote on the Conservative Group alternative budget proposals.

For: Cllrs Steinberger and Odze (2)

Against: Mayor Glanville and Cllrs Adams, Adejare, Akhoon, Bell, Bramble, Brett, Bunt, Burke, Chapman, Coban, Conway, Demirci, Desmond, Etti, Fajana-Thomas, Gordon, Gregory, Hanson, Hayhurst, Kennedy, Lufkin, Maxwell, McKenzie, McShane, Moema, Moule, Mulready, Munn, Nicholson, Oguzkanli, Ozsen, Patrick, Peters, Plouviez, Potter, Rahilly, Rathbone, Rennison, Rickard, Sales, Selman, Sharer, Sharman, Snell, Stops, Taylor, Webb and Williams (49)

Abstentions: None (0)

Not Present: Cllrs Buitekant, Cameron, Ebbutt, Hercock, Levy and Papier (6)

The vote was not carried.

The Speaker then invited Council to vote on the recommendation in the substantive report.

For: Mayor Glanville and Cllrs Adams, Adejare, Bell, Bramble, Brett, Bunt, Burke, Chapman, Coban, Conway, Demirci, Desmond, Etti, Fajana-Thomas, Gordon, Gregory, Hanson, Hayhurst, Kennedy, Lufkin, Maxwell, McKenzie, McShane, Moema, Moule, Mulready, Munn, Nicholson, Oguzkanli, Ozsen, Patrick, Peters, Plouviez, Potter, Rahilly, Rathbone, Rennison, Rickard, Sales, Selman, Sharman, Snell, Stops, Taylor, Webb and Williams (47)

Against: Cllrs Akhoon, Odze, Sharer and Steinberger (4)

Abstentions: None (0)

Not Present: Cllrs Buitekant, Cameron, Ebbutt, Hercock, Levy and Papier (6)

RESOLVED:

1. **To bring forward into 2017/18 the Council's projected General Fund balances of £15.0m and to note the Housing Revenue Account (HRA) balances of £10.2m.**
2. **To agree for approval the directorate estimates and estimates for the General Finance Account items set out in Appendix 2, and to take into account the comments arising from scrutiny of the budget by a meeting of the Governance and Resources Scrutiny Commission on 20 February 2016.**
3. **To note that the budget is a financial exposition of the priorities set out within the Corporate Plan and Business (Divisional-level) Plans.**
4. **To note that in line with the requirements of the Local Government Act 2003, the Group Director, Finance and Corporate Resources, is of the view that:**

The General Fund balances of £15.0m and the level of reserves, particularly in relation to capital, are adequate to meet the Council's financial needs for 2017/18 and that in light of the economic uncertainty they should not fall below this level. This view takes account of the reserves included in the Council's latest audited Accounts as at 31 March 2016, the movements of those reserves since that date – which have been tracked through the Overall Financial Position (OFP) Reports, the financial data included in the quarterly reviews and the latest OFP projections. Note also, that the projections in the HRA to maintain the balance at £10.2m by 31 March 2017 are also considered to be adequate at this point in time but will need to continue to be reviewed in the light of the challenges facing the HRA.

The General Fund estimates are sufficiently robust to set a balanced budget for 2017/18. This takes into account the adequacy of the level of balances and reserves outlined above and the assurance gained from the comparisons of the 2016/17 budget with the projected spend identified in the December 2016 OFP. The overall level of the corporate contingency has been set at £2m.

5. **To approve the proposed General Fund fees and charges as set out in Appendix 8 for implementation from 1st April 2017.**
6. **To continue the policy requiring the Group Director, Finance and Corporate Resources to seek to mitigate the impact of significant changes to either resources, such as Top Up Grant changes, or expenditure requirements.**
7. **To note the summary of the HRA Budget and Rent setting report agreed by Cabinet on 23rd January 2017.**
8. **To authorise the Group Director, Finance and Corporate Resources to implement any virements required to allocate provision for demand and growth pressures set out in this report subject to the appropriate evidence base being provided.**
9. **To approve:**

The allocation of resources to the 2017/18 Non-Housing capital schemes referred to in Paragraph 24 and Appendix 7.

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The allocation of resources to the 2017/18 Housing indicative capital programme referred to in Paragraph 24 and Appendix 7, including the HRA approvals previously agreed by Cabinet on January 23 2017.

10. *To note that the new capital expenditure proposals match uncommitted resources for the year 2017/18.*
11. *To agree the prudential indicators for Capital Expenditure and the Capital Financing Requirement, the Authorised Limit and Operational Boundary for External Debt, the Affordability prudential indicators and the Treasury Management Prudential Indicators for 2017/18 as set out in paragraph 25, and Appendix 4.*
12. *To confirm that the authorised limit for external debt of £506.873m agreed above for 2017/18 will be the statutory limit determined under section 3(1) of the Local Government Act 2003. Further reassurance about the robustness of the budget is the confirmation that the Council's borrowings are within the boundaries of prudential guidelines.*
13. *To continue to support the approach of using reserves to manage emerging risks and liabilities and to note the latest reserve position.*
14. *To note that at its meeting on 23 January 2017 the Council agreed its Council Tax Base for the 2017/18 financial year as 68,399 in accordance with regulations made under section 33(5) of the Local Government Finance Act 1992. The Council Tax Base is the total number of properties in each of the eight council tax bands A to H converted to an equivalent number of band D properties.*
15. *To agree that the following amounts be now calculated by the Council for the year 2017/18 in accordance with Sections 31A to 36 of the Localism Act 2011.*
 - (i) *The authority calculates the aggregate of: (in accordance with Section 31A (2) of the Act)*
 - (a) *£1,087.368m being the expenditure which the authority estimates it will incur in the year in performing its functions and will charge to a revenue account, other than a BID Revenue Account, for the year in accordance with proper practices.*
 - (b) *£2m being such allowance as the authority estimates will be appropriate for contingencies in relation to amounts to be charged or credited to a revenue account for the year in accordance with proper practices.*
 - (c) *£nil being the financial reserves which the authority estimates it will be appropriate to raise in the year for meeting its estimated future expenditure.*
 - (d) *£nil being such financial reserves as are sufficient to meet so much of the amount estimated by the authority to be a revenue account deficit for any earlier financial year as has not already been provided for.*
 - (e) *£nil being the amount which it estimates will be transferred in the year from its general fund to its collection fund in accordance with section 97(4) of the 1988 Act, and*

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- (f) £nil being the amount which it estimates will be transferred from its general fund to its collection fund pursuant to a direction under section 98(5) of the 1988 Act and charged to a revenue account for the year.
16. (2) *The authority calculates the aggregate of: (in accordance with Section 31A (3) of the Act)*
- (a) *£1,014.094m being the income which it estimates will accrue to it in the year and which it will credit to a revenue account, other than a BID Revenue Account, for the year in accordance with proper practices.*
- (b) *£3.526m being the amount which it estimates will be transferred in the year from its collection fund to its general fund in accordance with section 97(3) of the 1988 Act.*
- (c) *£nil being the amount which it estimates will be transferred from its collection fund to its general fund pursuant to a direction under section 98(4) of the 1988 Act and will be credited to a revenue account for the year, and*
- (d) *£nil being the amount of the financial reserves which the authority estimates it will use in order to provide for the items mentioned in subsection (2) (a), (b), (e) and (f) above.*
17. (3) *£71.748m being the amount by which the aggregate calculated under subsection (1) above exceeds that calculated under subsection (2) above, the authority calculates the amount equal to the difference; and the amount so calculated is its Council Tax Requirement for the year.*
18. *£1,048.97 being the amount at (3.2.17) divided by the amount at (3.2.14) above, calculated by the Council, in accordance with section 31A of the Act, as the basic amount of its council tax for the year*
19. *That the Council in accordance with Sections 30 and 36 of the Local Government Finance Act 1992, hereby sets the aggregate amounts shown in the tables below as the amounts of Council tax for 2017/18 for each part of its area and for each of the categories of dwellings.*

VALUATION BANDS							
A	B	C	D	E	F	G	H
£	£	£	£	£	£	£	£
699.31	815.87	932.42	1048.97	1282.07	1515.18	1748.28	2097.94

20. *That it be noted that for 2017/18 the Greater London Authority has stated the following amounts in precepts issued to the Council, in accordance with Section 40 of the Local Government Finance Act 1992, for each of the categories of dwellings shown below:*

VALUATION BANDS							
A	B	C	D	E	F	G	H
£	£	£	£	£	£	£	£
186.68	217.79	248.91	280.02	342.25	404.47	466.70	560.04

21. *That having calculated the aggregate in each case of the amounts at 3.2.19 and 3.2.20 above, the Council, in accordance with Section 30(2) of the Local Government Finance Act 1992, hereby sets the following amounts as the*

amounts of Council Tax for 2017/18 for each of the categories of dwellings shown below:

VALUATION BANDS							
A	B	C	D	E	F	G	H
£	£	£	£	£	£	£	£
885.99	1033.66	1181.33	1328.99	1624.32	1919.65	2214.98	2657.98

Note subject to GLA confirmation of precept

22. **To agree, subject to the decision of Members on recommendations 3.2.15 to 3.2.17 that Hackney's Council Tax requirement for 2017/18 be £71.748m which results in a Band D Council Tax of £1,048.97 for Hackney purposes and a total Band D Council Tax of £1,328.99 including the Greater London Authority (GLA) precept. An analysis of the tax base total Band D Council Tax across Council Tax Bands is shown in 3.2.21 above and an exemplification of the taxbase and discounts by band, is shown in Appendix 6.**
23. **To agree that in accordance with principles approved under section 52ZB of the Local Government Finance Act 1992, and the new provisions included in the Localism Act 2011, the increase in the Council's Council Tax requirement for 2017/18 as shown at Appendix 9 is not excessive (5% or above) and therefore does not require the Council to hold a referendum.**
24. **To agree the Treasury Management Strategy for 2017/18 to 2019/20, set out at Appendix 4.**
25. **To agree the criteria for lending and the financial limits set out at Appendix 4.**
26. **To approve the MRP statement setting out the method of calculation to be used, as set out in Appendix 4.**

9 Report of the Chief Executive: Overview and Scrutiny Review Report

- 9.1 The Council was informed that Independent Consultants were commissioned on behalf of the Scrutiny Chairs Group (SCG) in February 2016 to carry out a review of the Overview and Scrutiny function in Hackney.
- 9.2 The review found that Overview and Scrutiny in Hackney was considered to have a strong track-record in scrutiny and operated a good practice model. The review noted that in the climate of austerity in which all councils currently operated, it was particularly important to seek to ensure that the 'added value' provided by overview and scrutiny was commensurate with the resources allocated to the function. The key objectives of the review was to identify areas of improvement to the system and processes and to consider the changes that could be implemented in a cost-effective way.
- 9.3 The recommendations were supported by the SCG. Members were advised that should those recommendations be agreed they would come into effect in June 2017 following the Council's Annual General Meeting in May 2017.

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- 9.4 Councillor Odze proposed a number of amendments to the report, which were seconded by Councillor Steinberger. These proposed amendments were not carried.
- 9.5 Councillor Steinberger stated that the majority party could not scrutinise their own decisions.
- 9.6 The Mayor stated that there was a need for scrutiny as it held the executive to account, it was added further that the majority party welcomed the involvement of the opposition.

RESOLVED:

In respect of the Overview and Scrutiny Panel:

1. The Scrutiny Chairs Group be disbanded and replaced with the Overview and Scrutiny Panel. The responsibilities of the Overview and Scrutiny Panel will include: maintaining an overview of the scrutiny work programme; invoking the call-in procedure; co-ordinate the involvement of scrutiny in the budget process; identifying cross cutting reviews to deal with scrutiny opportunities which fall in-between the remits of the topic-specific commissions; operate as a forum of shared learning to share good practice and hold question time for the Mayor and Chief Executive.
2. The Overview and Scrutiny Panel's membership will consist of the chairs and vice-chairs of the proposed four thematic Commissions and a member of the larger opposition party.
3. The Overview and Scrutiny Panel will meet quarterly. The frequency of thematic Commission meetings to reduce from monthly to six-weekly. Meetings to include site visits and informal meetings.

In respect of Overview and Scrutiny Commissions. Proposal to reduce to 4 thematic scrutiny commissions as follows:

4. Children and Young People Scrutiny Commission's remit to remain unchanged.
5. Health in Hackney Scrutiny Commission's remit to remain unchanged.
6. The Living in Hackney Scrutiny Commission with the remit of quality of life in local communities covering neighbourhoods, place, wellbeing, amenities and the added remit of scrutiny of the formal crime and disorder partnership function.
7. The creation of a new scrutiny commission called Working in Hackney Scrutiny Commission, with the remit of the prosperity of the borough and development, in particular economic development, employment and large scale schemes.
8. The Community Safety and Social inclusion Commission and the Governance and Resources Commission to be disbanded.

10 Report of the Chief Executive: New Overview and Scrutiny Arrangements - Changes to the Constitution

- 10.1 The Director of Legal introduced the report and commended it to Council.
- 10.2 Councillor Odze proposed a number of amendments to the appendices to the report. Councillor Odze requested that the sentence 'The Overview and Scrutiny Panel's Chair shall be a Member of the majority political group of the Council', which was referred to within the report and appendices, be deleted.
- 10.3 The Council voted on the proposed amendments to the report, which were not carried.

RESOLVED:

That the amendments to the Constitution as set out in appendices 1 to 4 of the report with effect from the start of the 2017/18 Municipal Year, be approved.

For: Many
Against: 2
Abstention: None

11 Report of the Chief Executive: New Overview and Scrutiny Arrangements - Proposed changes to the Council's Members' Allowances Scheme

- 11.1 The report was introduced to Members by the Monitoring Officer. The Council agreed its Members Allowances Scheme for 2016/17 at its meeting on 20th July 2016. In February 2016 the Scrutiny Chairs Group agreed to carry out an independent review of the Council's overview and scrutiny arrangements. One of the recommendations from the review was to set up a Scrutiny Panel to replace the Scrutiny Chairs Group.
- 11.2 Council Officers approached Sir Rodney Brooke CBE DL as the Council's Independent Adviser on Members Allowances to develop a report with recommendations on the proposed remuneration of the Chair and Vice Chair of the new Scrutiny Panel and to add the remuneration of the Chair and Vice Chair of the new Scrutiny Panel to the Members Allowance Scheme.

RESOLVED:

1. That the report of the Council's independent adviser on Members Allowances, be noted.
2. To agree to include the Chair and Vice Chair of the Scrutiny Panel in the Members Allowances Scheme from 2017/18.
3. To agree the recommended Special Responsibility Allowance for the role of Chair of the Scrutiny Panel be set at £8,224.73.
4. To agree the recommended Special Responsibility Allowance for the role of Vice Chair of the Scrutiny Panel be set at £5,483.15.

12 Report of the Chief Executive: Hackney's Integrated Commissioning Committee - Changes to the Constitution

12.1 The Director of Legal introduced the report and commended it to Council.

12.2 Councillor Odze welcomed the report and acknowledged the benefits of joint working. He suggested that consideration should be made for a better name, which better reflected the role of the committee.

RESOLVED:

1. To approve that the terms of reference for the Hackney Integrated Commissioning Committee and Integrated Commissioning Board, as attached at Appendix 1 to the report, be included in the Constitution in Part 3.3.
2. To approve other amendments to the Constitution to reflect the establishment of the Integrated Commissioning Committee as detailed in paragraph 3.5 of the report.

13 Report of Audit Committee: Annual Report 2016/17

13.1 Members were informed that the purpose of the report was to detail the role of the Audit Committee and summarise the key activities and achievements in 2016/17 that demonstrated how the Committee had fulfilled this role effectively and to measure consistency with the guidance issued by the Public Sector Internal Audit Standards and other statutory requirements. It was added that in reviewing the performance of the Audit Committee against the Public Sector Internal Audit Standards and in the areas mentioned above, the judgement was that the Committee had fulfilled its role effectively.

13.2 Members of the Council commended the Finance Department on their work and congratulated them on completing the accounts within 4 months.

13.3 Opportunities for further strengthening the performance and effectiveness of the Audit Committee were identified and would be addressed through a programme of development sessions delivered to members on issues including Treasury Management, Anti-Fraud and Risk Management.

RESOLVED:

That the Annual Report of the Audit Committee set out in Appendix 1 to the report be noted.

14 Draft Programme of Meetings 2017-18

RESOLVED:

That indicative approval of the programme of meetings for the Municipal Year 2017/18 be granted, subject to the following amendment:

- Council scheduled for 29 November 2017 be moved to 25 October 2017.

15 Council Appointments and Nominations to Outside Bodies

RESOLVED:

To agree the following appointment to Outside Bodies on behalf of the Council, as set out in the schedule tabled at the meeting:

Cllr Clare Potter appointed to the Finsbury Park Trust

16 Appointments to Committees and Commissions (standing item)

16.1 There were no appointments to Committees/Commissions.

Appendix One

6.9 From Councillor Desmond to the Cabinet Member for Neighbourhoods, Transport and Parks:

“With a number of residents and businesses in Hackney Downs badly affected by the burst pipe in Northwold Road late last year, does not agree that Thames Water’s priority for the area should be investing in infrastructure – in particular replacing the pipes there, which were first installed in 1868 – as well as prioritising the installation of water meters to manage supply and demand.”

Response from Councillor Demirci:

Thames Water need to continue to invest in the area in a variety of aspects:

1. Certainly they need to invest in their water supply assets to ensure that incidents such as that in Northwold Road last do not happen again. This investment also needs to be within the smaller diameter mains to prevent the significant amount of leakage that they have on their network but also to reduce the numbers of smaller bursts that affect customers, damage the highway, and causes disruption when being repair under emergency basis rather than in a planned way.

For the major burst Thames Water have said:

Thames Water plan for 30” at Northwold Rd

- Design study currently being undertaken with a view to relining Design study currently being undertaken with a view to relining 1.6km of pipe.
 - TW are committed to delivering a solution that will remove the risk from this main.
 - Independent review led by Paul Independent review led by Paul Cuttill OBE
 - Wider study of bursts in last year study of bursts in last year study of bursts in last year study of bursts in last year study of bursts in last year study of bursts in last year by summer 2017
 - Long -term investment strategy
2. Managing Supply – Below is email correspondence between Councillor Jacobson and Thames Water regarding water metering and their need do this as part of their 25 year plan for managing water resources:

Dear Councillor Jacobson

Thank you for your email. I am sorry to hear you feel that way and I understand your concerns and will make sure these are passed on to the Head of Metering.

We believe metering is the fairest way to pay as customers only pay for the water they use, and will help address the immediate supply and demand gap in London in a sustainable way to ensure Londoner's continue to have a stable water supply in future years as our population grows and our climate changes.

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Customers will also be able to go online or call us to find out how much water they are using, giving greater control of usage and ultimately their bills. Our smart meters use wireless technology to send us frequent and accurate readings and will enable us to track leaks remotely on across our network, as well as customers' pipes which accounts for a quarter of our total leakage. This means we will be able to fix leaks faster and target mains replacement work more effectively.

The Thames Water supply area has been designated as being in an area of serious water stress by the Secretary of State and as such water meters formed an integral part of our 25-year plan for managing water resources. Our plan was approved by the Secretary of State in June 2012 and as such we are now in the process of installing meters in all properties where a meter can be physically fitted, on a compulsory basis

Widespread metering is a cost effective programme to manage supply and demand. Some customer bills will increase while others will fall but overall switching people to meters does not increase either our income or profits. Any inadvertent increase would be identified in the information we provide to Ofwat and returned to customers through lower bills. Our progressive metering programme follows similar compulsory meter programmes completed by Southern Water and South East Water, and is running in parallel with Affinity Water's compulsory meter installation programme.

A third of our customers who are already on water meters use on average 12% less water and tend to have experienced lower bills. We have a substantial customer engagement programme to help customers reduce their water use and to help with this transition, as we do understand that not everyone will want to have a water meter and so we have a number of support measures put in place to help customers adjust before switching to a water metered account.

Once a meter is installed, customers have up to two years before their bill is switched from the current rateable value to paying for the water they use. During this period all customers will be provided information that compares these two bill amounts, as well as the offer of a free smarter home visit, by our partner charity Groundwork providing advice on how they can manage their water bills through water efficiency. With simple changes to showerheads, taps and some daily water use behaviours, a family of four could reduce their annual water bill by up to £90 and also reduce their annual energy bill by the same amount, through using less hot water. This energy bill saving has the potential to offset a metered water bill increase which some customers may face, while other customers will find that they save on both their water and energy bill straight away.

We offer a number of financial support schemes and extra support to help our most vulnerable and low income customers in hardship. At these home visits customers who are still struggling with their bills, after these efficiency changes, and who are in receipt of benefits will also be informed of our social tariffs - WaterSure and WaterSure Plus. If the customer meets the required eligibility criteria, these assistance tariffs can either cap their metered water bill or reduce it by 50%. Furthermore, we have been referring potentially financially vulnerable customers to our independent debt advice

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partner, so we can check they are currently in receipt of all the benefits they are entitled to.

I hope we can work with you and the local community to ensure residents are aware of the changes, help and support that is available before eventually moving to a water metered account. We would be more than happy to meet with you to discuss this further with more information.

Kind regards
Mumin

Dear Mumin Islam

Thanks for being the public face of the money making scam for the profit making privatised Thames Water.

As you are aware just like the POLL TAX this will have a disproportionate effect on larger households who will see their bills increase dramatically.

As a local Councillor I act in the best interest of my constituents. for years residents had the choice of whether to have a meter installed and the imposition of meter in every home is a tax on the poor and larger households.

Please can you request from the powers that be that the compulsory meter scheme is scrapped.

I look forward to hearing from you

Yours sincerely

Councillor Abraham Jacobson
Liberal Democrats Councillor
Cazenove Ward

3. Flooding - The Council also need to continue to lobby Thames Water in terms of their investment in flood management and flooding from their sewer network. There are a number of areas within the borough that are susceptible to flooding from Thames Water's sewers where TW need to investigate and consider investment to improve resilience to flooding. Members may remember the storms in 2014 that resulted in a number of areas flooding, particularly Northwold Road and Wick Road. Resolving these problems may not be high on TW's priority but they continue to need solutions and investments
- 6.10 From Councillor Gregory to the Cabinet Member for Finance and Corporate Services:
"What are the council's plans for digital inclusion for all residents of Hackney and how will we ensure no-one is left behind?"

Response from Councillor Taylor:

The Council has taken a number of measures to ensure that the benefits of digital service developments are shared by all residents. Information about how

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residents can access the Council's online services is provided on the Council website, through the Council Tax booklets that we send to every household and also at other times that we make contact with customers.

In addition to this, we provide support and advice for residents who need more help to access online services at the Council's Service Centre, libraries and some community halls within the borough; through provision of public computers and wifi access at libraries (which have recently been upgraded to improve the user experience); and by providing support in partnership with the Hackney Learning Trust and the local voluntary sector. The Hackney Learning Trust also hold IT skills workshops for residents on two afternoons a week in the Hackney Service Centre.

The Council is developing further plans to build on this, which includes piloting wifi provision in temporary accommodation hostels and community facilities, and a project to focus on digital inclusion within Housing which will consider how to make our online services more attractive to residents, how to encourage residents to channel shift and how we continue to support vulnerable residents.

This will continue to be a priority for the Council and we will be exploring further opportunities to extend on this support.

6.11 From Councillor Ozsen to the Cabinet Member for Health, Social Care and Devolution:

"With national news coverage implying a health service in crisis; can the Cabinet Member for Health, Social Care and Devolution comment on local provision during the winter period?"

Response from Councillor McShane:

The Council and local partners work together throughout the year to make sure that local public services are prepared for winter pressures and that the best advice is available to residents about how to keep themselves healthy and safe.

For health, this includes examples such as:

- Free flu jabs for people who are over 65, have a long term health condition or are pregnant
- Reminders to check eligibility for the meals on wheels service
- Assistance from the Hackney SHINE service (Seasonal Health Interventions Network) which provides energy advice, carries out free home energy visits, advises on switching suppliers to get the best energy deals – as well as helping our residents to access a whole range of income, housing and health related services across the borough.

It's worth focusing on SHINE briefly just to highlight the excellent part that Council services can play in helping residents stay healthy, safe and financially secure over the winter period. Last year, for example, the service was set a target of receiving 600 referrals, but due to effective work at informing frontline colleagues about the offer, and a successful mail-out to residents, they actually received almost 2,000 referrals. Of those residents, as well as receiving the energy advice and home visits, on average 5 other support interventions that were suggested. Two thirds of those residents had a disability and all the targets we set were exceeded for targeting people over 65 years old, families with young children on low incomes, and people with underlying health conditions. These targets have increased year on year despite the service

absorbing the 5% reduction in funding following the Government's in-year cut to our Public Health grant in 2015/16.

As a result of this success we are currently in the process of recommissioning this service in the next two months to ensure we continue to get Best Value for public resources and that residents continue to receive an excellent, well-targeted service.

SHINE – the Seasonal Health Interventions Network – is just one example of the excellent opportunities that are available from more integrated working across public services in Hackney: working together to keep residents healthy and safe in winter and throughout the year.

6.12 From Councillor Coban to the Cabinet Member for Planning, Business and Investment:

“Can the Lead Member for Business, Planning & Investment tell the Council what has been done to ensure that the call from local Hackney businesses is being heard to stop the completely unaffordable and damaging rise in business rates that will be imposed on our business community by this Conservative Government?”

Response from Councillor Nicholson:

This Council has taken a very proactive approach to ensure that the impact of the business rates revaluation on businesses in London and particularly those in Hackney is brought to the attention of the Government.

The Council first wrote to the Chancellor of the Exchequer setting out our concerns regarding the revaluation in November 2016 when the impact of the revaluation proposals became evident through the release of the draft valuations. In that letter we made clear the potential impact on local businesses of the 46% increase in business rate rateable values in Hackney (the highest in the country) as well as the impact on the Council itself and its schools through increased rates bills. The letter called for the freezing of the implementation of the revaluation until 2020 or at least until the negotiations regarding the EU exit are completed, as these add another dimension of pressure and uncertainty on business. In addition the letter called for a dedicated Valuation Office for London in order that appeals against valuations can be more efficiently managed.

The Council have continued to lobby ministers re the impact of the business rates revaluation and most recently held an event at Hackney House, partnered with the East End Trade Guild, to launch a petition to the government which is calling on them to:

- Further increase the rates relief for small businesses and introduce a new relief system for medium businesses, and;
- Devolve the operation and setting of London's business rates to London's government so they better suit the challenges of the Capital.

At that event, the speakers also called on Government to introduce higher thresholds for London than other parts of the country in order that businesses were not unfairly impacted due to the increase in property prices and rent values that London has witnessed in recent years.

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The petition is due to be presented to 10 Downing Street on Friday 3rd March, prior to the budget on 8th March.

On a more practical note, the Council's Business Rates Team are available to assist and advise local businesses and can be contacted by telephone, e-mail or in writing. The team can advise ratepayers on liability, entitlement to reliefs, payment and recovery options. Where workload and resources allow the team will proactively contact ratepayers to advise on action due to be taken or on reliefs that appear to be applicable. Generally they will advise ratepayers to contact the Valuation Office Agency (VOA) on matters relating to, or for appeals against the rateable value of property. Members of the team attended the event above to give specific advice to the ratepayers regarding the impact of the revaluation and any reliefs available to them.