



DRAFT

London Borough of Hackney
Council
Municipal Year 2020/21
Date of Meeting Wednesday, 27th January, 2021

Minutes of the
proceedings of Council
held remotely

Councillors in Attendance:

Mayor Glanville
Cllr Kam Adams - Speaker (Chair)

Cllr Soraya Adejare, Cllr Brian Bell, Cllr Polly Billington, Deputy Mayor Anntoinette Bramble, Cllr Sophie Cameron, Cllr Robert Chapman, Cllr Ajay Chauhan, Cllr Mete Coban, Cllr Sophie Conway, Cllr Kofo David, Deputy Speaker - Cllr Michael Desmond, Cllr Sade Etti, Cllr Susan Fajana-Thomas, Cllr Humaira Garasia, Cllr Margaret Gordon, Cllr Katie Hanson, Cllr Ben Hayhurst, Cllr Christopher Kennedy, Cllr Michael Levy, Cllr Yvonne Maxwell, Cllr Clayeon McKenzie, Cllr Anthony McMahon,

Cllr Sem Moema, Cllr Guy Nicholson, Cllr Harvey Odze, Cllr Deniz Oguzkanli, Cllr M Can Ozsen, Cllr Sharon Patrick, Cllr Samuel Pallis, Cllr James Peters, Cllr Emma Plouviez, Cllr Clare Potter, Cllr Steve Race, Cllr Ian Rathbone, Deputy Mayor Rebecca Rennison, Cllr Anna-Joy Rickard, Cllr Nick Sharman, Cllr Gilbert Smyth, Cllr Peter Snell, Cllr Patrick Spence, Cllr Simche Steinberger, Cllr Vincent Stops, Cllr Jessica Webb, Cllr Carole Williams, Cllr Caroline Woodley and Cllr Penny Wrout

Officer Contact: Andrew Spragg, Governance Services

This meeting was live streamed and can be viewed at :

<https://youtu.be/Z6YvyfpLOzY>

Councillor Kam Adams (The Speaker) in the Chair

1. Apologies for Absence

- 1.1 Apologies for absence were received from and/or on behalf of Councillors: Lufkin and Gregory

2. Speaker's Announcements

- 2.1 The Speaker updated Members on some of his activities and engagements attended since the last council meeting including:
- London Mayors' Association Annual Civic Service at the Westminster Abbey
 - Remembrance Sunday and Wreath Laying
 - Association of Jewish Ex-servicemen and Women (AJEX) Remembrance Ceremony 2020
 - Speaker's Charity Quiz Night
 - Speaker's Christmas Carol Service
 - Speaker Switching on Christmas Light at the Town Hall Square
 - London's New Year's Day Parade and Festival

3. Declarations of Interest

- 3.1 There were no interests declared.

Agenda item 13 - for the sake of transparency, Councillors Odze and Rathbone stated that they were both in receipt of pensions from the LBH pension fund.

4. Minutes of the previous meeting

- 4.1 The minutes of the previous meeting of Full Council held on Wednesday, 21st October 2020 were agreed as a true and accurate record of proceedings

5. Petition - Sistah Space

- 5.1 Ms Ngozi Fulani, petition organiser, addressed Council expressing her view of the need for specialist provision within the borough for female victims of domestic abuse who are of African heritage. Ms Fulani highlighted the work of the charity, noting that it was a recipient of the Council's Citizen's Award and previously one of the Speaker's nominated Charities.

It was reported that the petition had been signed by in excess of 2,500 people. The current pandemic and subsequent lockdowns were cited to be of particular significance to the charity's work.

Ms Fulani reiterated her specific request to the Council as set out in the petition contained within the agenda pack.

Following Ms Fulani's address, Councillors Williams, Fajana-Thomas, Potter, Etti, Conway and David contributed to the debate. The councillors held the work of Sistah Space in high esteem, however did not support the demands made by the charity and noted the need to work within the framework of both the mediation agreement and the Voluntary Community Sector (VCS) policy. The social media campaign against the council as well as accusations of institutional racism were rebutted and the council's commitment to ensuring diversity, inclusion and race equality were highlighted. As was the Council's in-house provision for victims of domestic abuse. It was reported that out of 154 victims of domestic violence that the council had supported within the past month, 51 of these identified as black ethnic/African Caribbean heritage.

Councillors Odze and Steinberger contributed to the debate in support of the petition. They called on the Council to grant the provision requested by Sistah Space and offer equivalent funding to other similar charities supporting women.

Mayor Glanville responded to the petition commending the work of Sistah Space and highlighting the Council's commitment to Black Lives Matter as well as to its VCS. In specific reference to Sistah Space, it was reported that they have not been required to pay any rental charges since December 2019. The outcome of the independent mediation was an extension of the temporary licence for use of two rooms at Mare Street at no cost to Sistah Space. This expired on 17th January 2021. The subsequent arrangements following the expiration of the temporary licence was agreed by both parties at mediation. The Mayor requested that the public statements released following the mediation be included in the minutes. **These are attached at Appendix A.**

Mayor Glanville informed Council that Sistah Space was free to bid for alternate properties within the Council's portfolio in line with the VCS policy and the terms of the mediation agreement. There were four VCS properties currently unoccupied, none of which meet the specified criteria set out by Sistah Space in the petition. The Mayor set out the steps the council had taken, which he described as going above and beyond the terms of the agreement.

Concluding, the Mayor set out the Council's desire to work in a transparent and equitable way in partnership with charities like Sistah Space within the Council's VCS policy framework to end domestic violence and abuse for women and girls within the borough.

6. Questions from Members of the Public

Responses to questions that were not taken at the meeting due to non attendance and/or time constraints are attached at **Appendix B**

6.1 Question from Mr Christopher Sills to Mayor Glanville

Would you agree with me that a major consultation on parking during the Covid crisis was irresponsible?

Mr Sills was not present at the meeting. A written response would be provided as set out in **Appendix B**

6.2 Question from Ms Inez Miszczyk to Mayor Glanville

What steps were taken to protect vulnerable people during the covid crisis?

This question was withdrawn at the request of Ms Miszczyk and deferred to the next meeting.

6.3 Question from Mr Nick Bailey to Cabinet Member for Finance and Housing Needs

Will the council resolve to :

1. Write to the Chancellor, Rishi Sunak and to the Prime Minister , Boris Johnson demanding that the £20 increase to Universal Credit is made permanent and extended to claimants on legacy benefits.
2. Work with other local government organisations to form a coalition to pressure the government to make the £20 increase to UC permanent.

Response

Deputy Mayor Rennison agreed with a permanent extension of £20 to Universal Credit. She said that the fact that Conservative MPs boycotted the vote on the issue was shameful. Cutting the £20 per-week increase was a £1040 cut to the annual income of 6 million people, including 27,000 households on Universal Credit in Hackney.

The Deputy Mayor stated that the Joseph Rowntree Foundation had warned that the cut to Universal Credit could see another 200,000 children pushed into poverty and the Labour Party had lobbied the Government to support those most in need.

Deputy Mayor Rennison believed that an overhaul of the welfare state was needed to tackle the fundamental system of social insecurity that the Conservatives created, even before the Pandemic when 4.2 million children in the UK lived in poverty. This was why Hackney Labour Party passed a motion in Full Council in October 2020, calling for an overhaul of the welfare state and;

- the return of Local Housing Allowance rates to 50% of market rent;
- the abolition of the benefit cap, two-child limit and bedroom tax;
- the restoration of Child Benefit as a universal benefit and;
- the scrapping of the No Recourse to Public Funds condition – because access to welfare and public services should be based on need alone.

The Deputy Mayor stated that the Hackney Labour Group, and Council, would continue to campaign for a fair and just welfare system and that she would write to the Chancellor and others on this matter asking for Mr Bailey's agreement that this be extended an overhaul of the welfare state.

Supplementary Question

Nick Bailey referred to these wider issues around the welfare state and asked that the campaign be thought about as a focused specific campaign, whilst acknowledging the need for action to be taken in relation to the welfare system.

Response

Deputy Mayor Rennison reiterated her agreement on the need to focus on the £20 increase in Universal Credit remaining, stating that the system was stacked against the very people that needed it.

6.4 Question from Mr Reiner Tegtmeier to Mayor Glaville

The climate emergency demands that we use our land to sequester carbon from the atmosphere. Accordingly, volunteers planted thousands of trees on Hackney Marshes - yet 70% of them died. What future remedial actions will Hackney Council take in successfully planning, implementing and supervising carbon sequestration through tree planting?

Response

Mayor Glaville acknowledged that it was deeply disappointing that a large number of the trees planted at Hackney Marshes in partnership with the charity Trees for Cities, had died. He was however pleased to report that the partnership was not simply a one off event and work was ongoing to create an edible forest of over 6,000 fruit and nut trees on the Marshes that will improve the environment for local people. It was noted that the trees planted in partnership with Trees for Cities incurred no capital costs to the council.

The Mayor noted that despite best efforts, two of the main challenges to the Council's commitment to tackling the climate emergency and carbon capture in terms of tree planting, included extreme dry and hot weather conditions and the global pandemic.

Mayor Glaville proceeded to explain how the tree planting exercise fits within the wider policy framework, manifesto, declaration of climate emergency and subsequent action plan to plant 1,000 new trees in the borough's parks and 5,000 new street trees to increase canopy cover, capture carbon and create more beautiful streets.

On Monday 25th January, Cabinet approved a further £1.75m capital spending for the borough's tree planting programme. It was noted that Hackney's 1000th new street tree had been planted and that every tree planted after this is exceeding his administration's manifesto commitment which includes plans to plant 2,500 more trees over the next financial year.

Supplementary Question

Mr Tegtmeier applauded the administration's commitment to a 'green Hackney' and asked whether the Mayor would give consideration to creating a specialist Bio-Diversity Officer post to ensure the efforts of volunteers and experts are properly coordinated and that the biodiversity of trees is considered in all infrastructure.

Response

The Mayor stated that he had previously put on public record that the financial commitment to fund the Biodiversity Officer post and recruitment would commence once the Parks and Green Spaces Team had completed their re-organisation. There is also an emerging green infrastructure strategy that will operate across the borough's parks,

streets, new developments and existing spaces. This sits under LP33 of the Council's New Local Plan.

6.5 Question from Ms Rebecca Lammers to Mayor Glanville

Why hasn't Hackney Council fulfilled its Public Sector Equality Duty and provided Sistah Space with long-term premises?

Response

Councillor Kennedy referenced the reviewers of the Local Government Equalities Framework as set out in Hackney. He said that Hackney was one of only 19 Local Authorities to have reached 'excellent' in that framework, due to the hard-work and dedication of council officers under the leadership of a Labour administration dedicated to equality.

Councillor Kennedy referred to the Public Sector Equality Duty (PSED) and clarified that section 149 covered the elimination of discrimination and the advancement of equality of opportunity. He said that the Council had a duty to do this, in making policy and taking decisions. The VCS policy was drafted with this in mind and was thoroughly consulted upon. In all interactions with Sistah Space, the Council had given careful consideration to its obligations in this regard and the potential impact on service users. He confirmed that Sistah Space were not evicted and outlined the arrangements of the use of two rooms at Mare Street.

Councillor Kennedy stated that the Council had its own Domestic Abuse Intervention Service that supported 154 survivors in the last month alone, 51 of whom described themselves as of African, Black British, Black Mix or Black Caribbean heritage. He said he was appalled at the political opponents who claimed to stand for equality.

Supplementary Question

Rebecca Lammers stated that the Council had a moral obligation to support Sistah Space. She said that the Conservative Party supported the group but not the Labour Party

Response

Councillor Kennedy responded that the Council had lived up to its moral obligations. In recognising the importance of Sistah Space's work, the Council had supported them with the provision of property and fitting this out to their specification. This was why mediation was entered into and why both sides agreed that on or before 17th January Sistah Space would vacate that space. Councillor Kennedy concluded by saying that he hoped the Council could work with Sistah Space in a constructive way.

In accordance with the Council's constitution, the Speaker advised that the allocated 30 minutes for this item had come to an end. Written responses would be provided for the remaining five questions as contained within **Appendix B** attached to these minutes

In recognition of Holocaust Memorial Day, the Speaker briefly paused proceedings to light a candle and invited Members present to do the same.

7. Questions from Members of the Council

7.1 Question from Councillor Steve Race to Deputy Mayor Bramble (Cabinet Member for Education, Young People and Children's Social Care)

The Cabinet member for education, young people and children's social care will have seen the deserved furore over the paucity of the food packs that are provided to young people in lieu of free school meals, instead of the £30 voucher. Can the Cabinet member please set out Hackney's approach to and involvement in providing food for lower income families during this lockdown?

Response

Deputy Mayor Bramble responded that since 4th January, schools had to provide free school meals for children who were learning from home. Schools still provided meals for eligible children on site, including children who were most vulnerable or those from key worker families. For those at home, in the first two weeks of term, schools had the option to provide actual meals or hampers or to provide local supermarket tokens. This was brokered across the vouchers using the Edenred system. Schools had to fund this, with the assurance that they would be refunded. Since 18th January the Government had set up the national voucher scheme, provided via Edenred. Many schools found this challenging and made arrangements themselves until the national scheme was in operation.

The Council also worked with a variety of communities, including partners in the Orthodox Jewish Community, providing food parcels. Work was being carried out with VCS partners to ensure a broad reach with a helpline also set up.

Over the half term period, when the Government decided they would not provide free school meals, the Council decided to support the children. Deputy Mayor Bramble said that the Council was committed to ensuring that families in need of food would be supported.

Supplementary Question

In reference to the pictures of the inadequate food packages that were circulated by families on social media, Councillor Race asked if Deputy Mayor Bramble agreed that those packages showed a lack of understanding of what it meant to be poor, together with showing a lack of respect to these families and their dignity? Councillor Race further asked what lobbying was taking place to ensure that children do not go hungry.

Response

Deputy Mayor Bramble referred to the circulated pictures as abhorrent and said that these families should not be robbed of their dignity. She informed Members of initiatives to ensure that good quality produce including organic food would be circulated in food parcels to those families in need. The Mayor and herself had been lobbying across a variety of settings, making it clear that children who need food should receive it.

7.2 From Councillor Clare Joseph to to Deputy Mayor Bramble (Cabinet Member for Education, Young People and Children's Social Care)

I would first like to thank Cllr Bramble and Mayor Glanville for their hard work alongside the NEU in campaigning to ensure that schools were able to move to remote learning in order to protect staff and pupils' families during the latest wave of this pandemic. Unfortunately the government has failed to produce a clear plan for schools and has continued to react late and with aggression to the concerns of teachers. However despite being officially closed, schools are now open to an increasing number of children who are deemed to be vulnerable, or do not have internet access, as well as the children of key workers. Inevitably this puts teachers and TAs in our borough at an increasing risk of catching the virus, and many worry for their health. Do we know when rapid testing might be available for primary schools?

Councillor Joseph informed Council that since the submission of her question, there had been some developments. She subsequently wished to update the last line of her question to read "*Do we know when rapid testing and vaccines might be available for all onsite Hackney School staff?*"

Response

Deputy Mayor Bramble advised that there was a range of testing available across Hackney's education settings. She was pleased to report that along with Mayor Glanville and Councillor Kennedy they had recently visited Stoke Newington Secondary School where there was a comprehensive and robust lateral flow testing system in place. From 4th January, all schools had been working to set systems up to provide rapid response and testing through a variety of means, whether using school nurses or teachers. In addition, all schools had been given home testing kits.

Deputy Mayor Bramble proceeded to explain the bubble system implemented in schools. She explained that Hackney schools could only work within the confines of the framework set by the Government nationally, however the administration continued to respond swiftly within the changing parameters to ensure that staff, students and families remained safe.

In addition to schools, there were currently two children centres in the borough that were in the process of setting up lateral flow testing.

Supplementary Question

Councillor Joseph welcomed the response and asked whether there was a clear action plan that all schools are asked to implement if staff or pupils display symptoms of the virus?

Response

Deputy Mayor Bramble advised that there was a comprehensive document which provided a clear guide of what to do when a teacher or pupil displayed or developed symptoms of the virus. This has been shared with every headteacher and Chair of Governors, whom she had met with along with Public Health officials. Assurances were given that Public Health teams and Education were working closely together in response to the pandemic.

7.3 From Councillor Sade Etti to the Cabinet Member for Health, Adult Social Care and Leisure

Could the Cabinet Member for Health, Adult Social Care and Leisure please provide an update on access to Covid-19 vaccination sites in Hackney, and the role the Council is playing as a partner to Health Authorities in ensuring Hackney residents are able to access vaccinations as soon as possible?

Response

Councillor Kennedy stated that Hackney residents could get vaccinations through: hospitals, mass vaccination centres, local centres, pharmacies and by direct visits to GP surgeries. Both Barts and Homerton Hospitals were providing vaccines to frontline health workers in City and Hackney and also to some eligible patients.

Councillor Kennedy told Council that Hackney residents aged over 80, living or working in a care home and frontline healthcare staff were currently receiving their first dose vaccination at the Bocking Street site. The second purpose-built vaccination hub at the John Scott Health Centre in the north of the Borough opened on Monday. He congratulated the Clinical Commissioning Group and the General Practitioners Confederation for this.

Councillor Kennedy referred to the two community pharmacies in the borough that would also be giving vaccinations via bookings from the national portal with some Hackney residents being offered vaccinations at the mass vaccination sites, including the recently opened Excel Centre.

Site visits to care homes in Hackney had taken place to vaccinate residents and staff. A significant number of the Borough's care home residents and housebound patients had also been vaccinated since the beginning of January.

The Council was supporting the vaccine roll out, providing logistical support at John Scott, Council venues, and dedicated communications support. The Council's engagement team was gathering local insights to understand why particular groups may not be taking up the vaccine and how to encourage them to do so.

Supplementary Question

Councillor Etti thanked Councillor Kennedy for his hard work and asked if there were places of worship in the Borough that would provide spaces for vaccinations to be carried out.

Response

Councillor Kennedy stated that he and the Mayor had offered the CCG additional space for vaccinations and at the moment further venues were not required..

7.4 From Councillor Clare Potter to the Cabinet Member for Community Safety

With reference to the research published by Hackney Account in 2020 'for young people and by young people' on policing in our borough; can the Cabinet Member for

Community Safety outline how the council is seeking to work with Account and the police to address the recommendations made in the report?

Response

Councillor Fajana-Thomas reported that the research published by the Account Group was primarily focussed on developing trust, confidence and transparency around local policing. She advised that she was in ongoing discussions with officers, the Account group, local Police and the Mayor's Office for Police and Crime (MOPAC) to look at how the recommendations can be taken forward. The focus of discussions has been on how the Police can effectively be held to account and support young people.

Members were informed that this work coincided with the production of a MOPAC action plan requested by the Mayor of London against the backdrop of Black Lives Matter. Locally, the administration was looking at how it can align with, support and influence the local implementation of this plan. It was noted that the Council's scrutiny function is key as it was felt that for local scrutiny of the Police to be effective it is crucial for them to recognise and have confidence in the scrutiny process. This can be achieved through building on and shaping the requirements set out in the MOPAC action plan and as recommended by IOPC so that the process works for Hackney and its communities. It is also necessary that accountability structures have the confidence of the community and are seen to be effective at robustly scrutinising police activity.

The Council is seeking to play a key role in developing these structures and processes so that those holding the Police to account are truly representative of Hackney's diverse communities and particularly those most impacted by measures such as stop and search. It is also key to ensure that accountability groups have access to appropriate data (for example of disproportionality in use of force/handcuffs) and evidence (body worn video etc.) to make informed judgements on overall trends and particular cases.

The Council is working with Police colleagues to develop a shared understanding of structural racism and what an effective ant-racist approach might look like for an organisation such as the Police. This builds on the inclusive leadership approach and the Council's commitment to anti-racism.

7.5 From Councillor Robert Chapman to Mayor Glanville

The Council's stake in the Town Centre site at 55 Morning Lane offers a great opportunity to maximise the delivery of genuinely affordable housing and affordable workspaces. Can I ask the Mayor to confirm* the Council's commitment that any development must be informed by and useful for Hackney Central and its residents and local businesses, and ask how Homerton Ward and all community campaigners, including Morning Lane People's Space (MOPS), can be supported in contributing to that end.

Response

Mayor Glanville congratulated the work of Homerton Ward Councillors as custodians of social housing and affordable housing. The Mayor gave details of the Council's historical involvement in securing the plot of land in Hackney Town Centre. The rationale being the Council wanted to avoid the site simply going to the highest bidder with no concern to its social value.

The Mayor was pleased to report he had attended events held by the Morning Lane People's Space campaign – at both the launch and outcome of their public consultations, where the love of their local Tesco store that serves communities across the borough, was made clear. Subsequently, the Mayor stated that any plans will guarantee a Tesco store on the site into the future.

It was acknowledged that a lot had changed since the deal was signed in 2017. Brexit had driven up development costs, and Covid had caused delays in respect to the design. Assurances were given that there was no secret plan or deal happening in the background. The Council as freeholder would require further engagement with residents and community groups as well as a full public consultation prior to the developer submitting a planning application to the Planning Authority.

In accordance with the Council's constitution, the Speaker advised that the allocated 30 minutes for this item had come to an end. Written responses would be provided for the remaining four questions as contained within **Appendix C**

8. Elected Mayor's Statement

8.1 Mayor Glanville addressed Council as follows:

- Holocaust Memorial Day - a live streamed ceremony that took place earlier that day where the theme was light in the darkness. The Mayor reiterated his administration's firm commitment to Holocaust Memorial Day remembrance and condemned the evils of prejudice, racism, discrimination.
- Volunteers, public sector workers and businesses in the borough - the Mayor paid tribute to the aforementioned, who kept essential services going over the Christmas period and who have been instrumental in the borough's response to COVID. Special mention was made of the Festive Food Fund and the Here to Help phone-line.
- Deaths in the borough - it was noted that 355 Hackney residents had lost their lives as a result of coronavirus, 65 since the start of the year. Tribute was paid to notable Hackney residents who had died from COVID and non COVID related illnesses.
- Illegal gatherings - illegal events had been organised within the borough despite the restrictions, many of which had garnered national attention. In expressing his disappointment, the Mayor noted that these were organised and attended by different communities, all of which he described as marginalised. He commended the Police in their response to these crimes.
- Government failure to take action - in specific reference to schools, testing and economic support the Mayor expressed his view on how the lack of decisive leadership from central Government had impacted locally.
- Black Lives Matter - the Council's continued commitment to this was emphasised. Special thanks were relayed to Councillors Williams and Nicholson in their work on the removal of references to the contributors to the slave trade across the borough's streetscene.
- Public Health Teams and the NHS - commendation of the work of these partners was noted, with specific reference to lateral flow testing in the borough.
- The Council's Budget - in preparing for the budget, the Mayor had written to the Chancellor expressing concerns that unless the Government ensured relief was in

place for local businesses for the next financial year, there will be further hardship experienced.

8.2 In response to the Mayor's statement, Councillor Levy addressed Council, raising the following points:

- Holocaust Memorial Day Event - he expressed his thanks to the Speaker, Mayor and organiser Nicola Baboneau for a moving and dignified ceremony and commended the Council on being at the forefront in the fight against racism and homophobia in all its forms.
- Introduction of Lower Traffic Neighbourhoods (LTNs) - he was critical of the Council's scheme and made comparison to the recent High Court ruling that the Mayor of London and Transport for London acted unlawfully. This was due to its failure to have due regard to the public sector equality duties under the Equalities Act in its treatment of taxis in its streetspace plan. He believed the judge's comments on inadequate impact equalities assessment and failure to consider those with protected characteristics could be equally applied to the local scheme and hoped there would be a more conciliatory approach going forward.
- Vaccination programme - he congratulated the Government on their roll out of the vaccine across the country.
- Hackney Council's Registrars - special mention was given to the team who were facing a surge in the registration of deaths due to the pandemic whilst still undertaking their day to day work of registering births and conducting citizenship ceremonies during such a challenging time.
- Parking Exemption for Key Workers - it was requested that the Mayor support permanent parking exemptions for key workers in the borough.

Mayor Glanville thanked Councillor Levy for his comments and acknowledged that the Council was reflecting on the recent High Court judgement. The Mayor highlighted the black cab industry's valued contribution to the public transport system. The Mayor echoed Councillor Levy's sentiments on the rollout of vaccinations-which he noted was delivered via the public sector unlike some of the other responses to the pandemic which had a far lesser success rate. As the Cabinet Member with responsibility for Customer Services, Mayor Glanville applauded the work of Hackney's registrars and had written to them relaying his thanks. In reference to parking exemptions, it was noted that it was unlikely this could be sustained once lockdown ends.

The meeting adjourned for a five minute break.

9. Calculation of 2021/22 Council Tax Base and Local Business Rate

Members noted the reasons for the late publication of this report as set out in the agenda pack.

Deputy Mayor Rennison introduced the report. A special thanks was relayed to officers as it was a particularly challenging time to forecast an accurate collection rate for the forthcoming year. It was noted that the forecast Council tax collection rate for the 2021/22 financial year had been set at 94% and the business rate just over £91m,

Councillor Odze expressed concern that the forecast collection rate was a gross overestimation, given the unprecedented times and potential widespread unemployment once the furlough scheme ends.

Councillor Nicholson contributed to the debate, highlighting the difficult task the Council had ahead in ensuring that it is appropriately resourced to deliver essential services and support to residents and businesses, given that there was no clear guidance on the amount of funding available from central government .

Deputy Mayor Rennison gave assurances that anticipated increased unemployment had been fully accounted for in the forecast and subsequently increased council tax support had been built into the model. It was noted that Hackney had the lowest collection rate forecast in London.

For: Mayor Glanville, Councillors Adams, Adejare, Bell, Billington, Bramble, Cameron, Chapman, Chauhan, Coban, Conway, David, Desmond, Etti, Fajana-Thomas, Garasia, Gordon, Hanson, Hayhurst, Joseph, Kennedy, Lynch, Maxwell, McKenzie, McMahon, Moema, Nicholson, Oguzkanli, Patrick, Pallis, Peters, Plouviez, Potter, Race, Rathbone, Rennison, Sharman, Smyth, Snell, Spence, Stops, Webb, Williams, Woodley, Wrout

Against: Councillors Levy and Odze

Abstain: Councillor Ozsen

Not present for vote: Councillors Papier and Steinberger

RESOLVED:

That 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 2021/22 shall be 72,039 Band D equivalent properties adjusted for non-collection. This represents an estimated collection rate of 94%.

That in accordance with The Non-Domestic Rating (Rates Retention) Regulations 2013 Hackney's non-domestic rating income for 2021/22 is £91,064,033 subject to completion of the NDR1. This comprises three elements.

- **£33,471,970 which is payable in agreed instalments to the Greater London Authority**
- **£27,738,583 which is retained by Hackney Council and included as part of its resources when calculating the 2021/22 Council Tax requirement.**
- **£29,853,480 which is payable in agreed instalments to Central Government**

To note that no changes are proposed to the current CTRS scheme in 2021/22.

10. Children and Families Service 2019-2020 Full Year Report

Deputy Mayor Bramble introduced the report, noting that it had been considered by Cabinet, Corporate Parenting Board, Children's & Young People's Scrutiny Commission and the City and Hackney Safeguarding Children's Board.

Deputy Mayor Bramble gave special mention to Hackney's young carers, 65% of whom are in education, employment or training and the borough's looked after children who are 5th in the country for their GCSE results.

The Deputy Mayor commended the work of the service for adapting to new ways of working following the pandemic and cyber attack and highlighted the anti-racism practise work within the service. She relayed her thanks to staff who had worked hard to respond to the Ofsted report during very challenging times.

Mayor Glanville, Councillors Conway, Snell, Lynch and Woodley contributed to the debate. The report was welcomed and the rigorous process of constructive challenge and scrutiny noted. In addition, the concentrated efforts to improve practise to support the most vulnerable and progress made against the Ofsted action plan targets was commended.

RESOLVED: That the report and appendix be noted.

11. Annual Pay Policy Statement 2020/21

Councillor Williams introduced the report. It was noted that it was a statutory requirement to produce this information annually and that there were no substantive changes to the previous year.

In specific reference to the pandemic, it was reported that the Council's Human Resources policies had been amended in line with Government guidance and were continually under review. In addition, a new menopause policy had been introduced.

RESOLVED: That the Pay Policy Statement for 2021/22 is agreed as recommended by the Corporate Committee at their meeting 16.12.20.

12. Gender and Ethnicity Pay Gap Report

Councillor Williams introduced the report, noting there was no legal requirement to publish the information. She believed it highlighted the administration's commitment to Black Lives Matter and the work being done to increase ethnic diversity across the Council, especially in the top two tiers of management. The ethnicity pay gap was a representation and not an accurate figure, however there was an action plan to bridge the gap, details of which were presented.

Councillor Odze commented, stating that the Council workforce was not representative of the borough's cultural diversity as there were very few (if any) Orthodox Jews employed, given the substantial number of residents in the borough. He expressed his disappointment that the report did not cover all ethnicities.

Councillor Williams responded that the Council had taken steps to engage with the Orthodox Jewish Community to support them into employment within the Council.

RESOLVED: That the Gender and Ethnicity Pay Gap report and appendices are noted.

13. Pensions Committee Annual Report

Councillor Chapman, Chair of the Pensions Committee, introduced the report highlighting some of the key points featured. He was pleased to report that funding had returned to pre pandemic levels and the current financial position of the fund was sound, following a period of volatility in investment markets. Pensions had continued to be paid throughout the pandemic. It was also noted that Hackney Pension Fund was over halfway to achieving its commitment to reducing its exposure to fossil fuel reserves over a six year period.

A brief discussion of the report ensued during which Deputy Mayor Rennison, Councillors Desmond and Odze applauded the work of the Pensions Committee and relayed their thanks to Councillor Chapman and Pension Committee Members. In addition, Councillor Odze welcomed the decision not to participate in the Boycott, Divestment and Sanctions (BDS) Campaign.

RESOLVED: That the report and appendix be noted.

14. Licensing Committee Annual Report

Councillor Fajana-Thomas, Cabinet Member with responsibility for Licensing, introduced the report. It was noted that the impact of the ongoing pandemic on the Licensing Service was not yet fully known but would be reflected in future reports. Thanks were relayed to the Chair, Councillor Emma Plouviez, Committee Members, Councillor Caroline Selman and Licensing Service Staff.

The Mayor welcomed the report. Reflecting on the sector within Hackney, he thanked all licensed premises in the borough stating that there had been a lack of adequate support for businesses from Central Government. He thanked the Licensing Service, for their response to the various lockdowns, for their efforts in keeping the public safe and for fulfilling their regulatory function during very challenging times. Thanks were also relayed to the Night Time Levy Team and Pubwatches.

Councillor Odze echoed the Mayor's sentiments and was pleased to note that Betting Shop Premises Licence renewals in the borough were down.

RESOLVED: That the report and appendix be noted.

Councillor Peters, proposed a motion without notice to extend the meeting by 30 minutes. This was seconded by Cllr Sem Moema and agreed by many.

15. Appointments to Committees and Commissions

Tim Shields, Chief Executive, introduced the report as set out.

RESOLVED: That the appointment of Richard Brown, as a voting co-optee and statutory representative from Church of England London Diocesan Board to the Children and Young People's Scrutiny Commission until 1 May 2022 be agreed.

16. Motion

The Council noted the motion as set out in the agenda pack.

Proposed by: Councillor Adejare
Seconded by: Councillor Cameron

Councillor Adejare moved the motion. Councillor Cameron seconded the motion.

Councillor Adejare introduced the motion, outlining the stigma, judgement and discrimination faced by single parents. She believed this was embedded in legislation, society and practices across many organisations. Councillor Adejare described single parents as a marginalised demographic from a myriad of backgrounds who experience commonality due to shared economic and social inequalities. Councillor Adejare spoke in favour of the single parent becoming a protected characteristic in the Equalities Act and urged that the motion be carried.

Councillor Cameron was proud to second the motion and relayed her personal experiences. She spoke in favour of lone parents receiving the same legal protection that married parents have enjoyed since 1975. Councillor Cameron commended the work of the Single Parents Rights Campaign who she reported as being instrumental in the Government introduction of single parent support bubbles during the various lockdowns .

Councillors Moema, Etti, Woodley (Cabinet Member with responsibility for families), Odze, Patrick, Lynch and Mayor Glanville contributed to the debate, many of whom spoke candidly about their own personal experiences and all speaking in support of the motion.

Councillor Adejare thanked all those who had contributed to the development of the motion and its debate and urged the Council to support it.

For: All

Against: None

RESOLVED: That the motion be unanimously carried.

Duration of meeting: 7pm – 10.20pm

APPENDIX A - Agenda item 5, Sistah Space Petition

Statements Released Following Mediation

9th October 2020

Following independent mediation, Hackney Council and Sistah Space are pleased to announce that they have agreed to enter into a new temporary licence of two rooms at 280 Mare Street which will start on 9 October 2020 and end on 17 January 2021. The arrangement will continue to be at no cost to Sistah Space who will be able to continue its services in the premises.

Sistah Space have agreed to leave 280 Mare Street by 17 January 2021, and understands that they will need to remove all of their belongings by this date. The Council has agreed to cover Sistah Space's removal costs, up to a predefined cap, and will do so at the end of this period.

Sistah Space have accepted that the Council is unable to guarantee further temporary or permanent accommodation beyond this date and they have commenced their search for a more permanent venue that is safe for the women it serves. Sistah Space understands that they will be free to take part in any competitive process for Council buildings as they become available, alongside other voluntary and charitable organisations. Sistah Space also understands that the Council will continue with its plans to market and ultimately let 280 Mare Street.

Sistah Space were previously letting a space in Clapton from the Council under a voluntary sector lease and were temporarily relocated to 280 Mare Street whilst refurbishment works were carried out to the Clapton premises. Sistah Space procured three risk assessments of the Clapton premises in September 2020 and have made it clear to the Council that, in their view, the Clapton premises are not suitable or safe for their type of work and nor could they be made suitable or safe enough by further works being undertaken. Sistah Space do not wish to return to the Clapton offices as a result of their safety concerns and understands that these will, therefore, be marketed to other voluntary sector tenants in the usual way.

Both parties have agreed to move on from this regrettable dispute in relation to Sistah Space's use of rooms at 280 Mare Street and agree to make no further public comments about the dispute beyond this statement. Hackney Council and Sistah Space look forward to working together in the months and years to come.

Sistah Space (recipients of the Mayor's Civic Award) are pleased to be able to refocus their time and resources on providing specialist support to victims of domestic abuse in the African and Caribbean heritage communities during this unprecedented time.

11 August 2020

This afternoon, the Council has asked Sistah Space to return to its registered premises in Clapton, following requested refurbishment of the building, and served notice on the shared commercial workspace in Mare Street being used on a rent-free, temporary basis by the organisation.

Sistah Space had been using the commercial workspace since December 2019, with 24/7 security and other costs covered by the Council, while the Council refurbished its Clapton premises to a specification agreed with, and at the request of the charity – including improved security and emergency escape routes. The Council has always planned to let the shared commercial workspace on Mare Street to a

single workspace provider to manage, and was open and frank about this with Sistah Space when it agreed the temporary arrangements last year.

Sistah Space signed up to the arrangement lasting until 31 March at the latest, after the Council identified the temporary space to allow continuity of the charity's services while it completed the requested refurbishment work at the Clapton office. The Council understands Sistah Space's concerns about moving during the coronavirus pandemic, which is why since March it has allowed the charity to continue to stay rent-free in its current temporary premises and offered to work with staff to support a safe return. It has made it repeatedly clear that this was a temporary arrangement.

Asking Sistah Space to now return to its refurbished premises in Clapton, that it has used since 2016 at a subsidised rent of £1,600 per year, is a last resort, but follows six months of offers to make further security improvements to its Clapton building, help it move safely with the support of the Council's Public Health team or better understand its concerns.

The Council has offered to make further improvements to this building, such as installing roller shutters that can be closed electronically from inside the premises, intruder and panic alarms, and CCTV, or discuss specific concerns about the premises, but has not received any further details or engagement from Sistah Space to take forward those concerns. This offer remains open, including help to ensure Sistah Space's work meets coronavirus guidelines.

The charity provides advocacy, advice and educational classes to women and girls of African and Caribbean heritage affected by domestic violence, but is not a refuge and does not provide accommodation.

The Council does not let buildings at commercial rates to make a profit – all income generated is directly invested into frontline services, including the Council's own Domestic Abuse Intervention Service. After a decade of austerity and cuts in Government funding, letting buildings in this way is a vital source of revenue to support Council services.

The Council continues to invest more than most other local authorities in supporting people affected by domestic abuse. The Council's Domestic Abuse Intervention Service is still operating a full service throughout the coronavirus pandemic and has increased its capacity to provide vital support, advice and help to those in need at this time. This is also supplemented by specialist domestic abuse and sexual exploitation provision provided through London Councils – the umbrella organisation for the capital's local authorities – which Hackney Council also funds.

Hackney Council funds one of the highest number of refuge spaces in London, and more women approach refuges in Hackney than almost anywhere else in the capital. For more information or if you need support, visit [the Domestic Abuse page](#).

28 July 2020

Hackney Council has further written to domestic violence charity Sistah Space to set out how it is able to support it in the future and to ask it to sign an agreement to allow them to stay in interim premises while this is resolved.

The organisation, which supports women and girls of African heritage suffering domestic abuse, has registered premises in Clapton, in one of the Council's voluntary sector premises that it rents at a subsidised rate, significantly below commercial levels.

In 2019, the Council agreed to carry out works to improve this building in response to a request from Sistah Space, and supported the charity to move to temporary space within a commercial workspace in Mare Street, on a rent-free basis, while the Council carried out those improvements. Sistah Space agreed to move back once this work was completed.

After Sistah Space raised concerns at the start of the coronavirus pandemic about moving back to the premises, refurbished to an agreed specification with the organisation, the Council offered to extend the temporary arrangements from March 2020 until at least the end of July. The Council has always been clear that it would take a flexible and supportive approach to any move, which would always be subject to it being safe to do so in line with coronavirus restrictions and guidance.

This offer to continue using Mare Street temporarily remains open, as long as Sistah Space agrees to sign a property license needed for health, safety and insurance purposes and to ensure there is a legal basis for the organisation to use the space. It has so far not done so.

The Council is unclear why Sistah Space has said it is being forced to suspend its services, when it simply needs to sign a property license to continue to use the space on a temporary basis and avoid any disruption to, or impact on, the people it supports.

The Council has offered the support of its Public Health and other teams to ensure a safe move back to Clapton, consistent with Government coronavirus guidelines. It has also consistently offered to work with Sistah Space to look at further improvements, such as installing roller shutters that can be closed electronically from inside the premises, intruder and panic alarms, and CCTV.

At a meeting last week, Sistah Space made it clear that, contrary to its original position, it would not be moving back to Clapton. The Council has made it clear that it is committed to continuing to work with Sistah Space to support it to continue to use this space should it change its mind – although this is ultimately a decision for Sistah Space and its trustees to make.

The Council recognises that Sistah Space is keen to identify an alternative property to the one in Clapton in the longer term, but has been honest about its limited ability to provide alternative space that meets Sistah Space's criteria, at subsidised rates. None of the Council's other voluntary and community sector buildings are currently available, and if any became so, an open, transparent process would be required to ensure fairness to other voluntary organisations.

Sistah Space has now told the Council that it would like to rent the Mare Street shared workspace on commercial terms on a longer term basis. The Council is concerned about the suitability of the workspace in Mare Street for Sistah Space's sensitive work, due to the likely challenges of keeping vulnerable women safe in what is a shared commercial multi-use workspace. However, as was made clear at the outset, the Council intends to let this building to one single workspace provider to manage, and has confirmed it is happy to introduce Sistah Space to this provider to discuss whether an agreement would be possible.

While Sistah Space is not a refuge, the Council has also repeatedly encouraged the charity to engage with discussions around pan-London refuge provision and asked it to join the regular meetings with other third-sector domestic abuse agencies run by the Council's Domestic Abuse Intervention Service, so that it can help support women and girls who have contacted Sistah Space.

12 June 2020

Some people have asked about the Council's support for Sistah Space, an organisation which provides support for women and girls of African heritage affected by domestic abuse.

Hackney Council has long tried to support Sistah Space's work, which is why it funds them alongside other registered domestic abuse charities operating in Hackney. The Speaker of Hackney, Cllr Kam Adams, selected Sistah Space as one of three nominated charities he is raising money for during his term.

Refurbishing Sistah Space's premises

In 2016, Hackney Council let premises in Lower Clapton Road on a low-cost basis to Hackney CVS so that it could grant a licence to Sistah Space to operate in the building.

Last year, Sistah Space contacted the Council to explain that these premises were not suitable for the organisation's long-term needs, but that changes could be made to the building to make it functional until a permanent home for its work could be found. In response, the Council stopped any rent payments due, and agreed to carry out specific work at Sistah Space's request, including:

- A new secure front door and frontage
- An internal partitioned room for private meetings
- A new rear door providing an emergency escape
- An upgrade to the heating and electrical systems

The final work went further – including new flooring, new toilet facilities, a new kitchenette and upgraded internal and external lighting. These were agreed and designed with Sistah Space, including the layout of space, materials, and colour schemes. The Council's project team held a number of meetings with Sistah Space representatives, and engaged in regular correspondence over several weeks, to ensure the final specification was agreed by Sistah Space. The total cost of the project was around £35,000, paid for by the Council.

Sistah Space required short-term accommodation whilst the works were undertaken, so the Council provided space in a commercial building on Mare St that was temporarily available. This has been provided on a rent-free basis, with the Council covering all costs associated with their use of the building, including 24/7 security, utilities, rates, internet and cleaning. The Council also covered Sistah Space's removal costs and provided fire safety training to staff and volunteers. This was all agreed on the basis that Sistah Space would move back to Lower Clapton Road once the works there were completed, which they agreed to.

This refurbishment is now complete, which is why the Council approached Sistah Space last month about moving back to Lower Clapton Road. After Sistah Space raised concerns about moving during the coronavirus pandemic – especially given the disproportionate impact of the virus on the communities they serve – the Council offered to extend the current rent-free temporary arrangement in Mare Street until the end of July at the earliest. This will continue to be reviewed in line with Government announcements on lockdown restrictions, and Sistah Space will not be asked to move until it is safe to do so.

Like all tenants on a Voluntary and Community Sector lease, any rent due from April to June has been waived, and the current temporary arrangement costs the Council more than £20,000 per month – a cost it has accepted to support Sistah Space's important work continuing at this time. It also provided £5,000 in grant funding to Sistah Space in 2019/20, and has offered a further £5,000 grant this financial year once administrative processes required of all grant recipients are completed. The Council will continue to help Sistah Space find a more appropriate long-term home.

Support for domestic abuse and charities

Providing support for people affected by domestic abuse is more important than ever. The Council's Domestic Abuse Intervention Service is operating a full service and has increased its capacity to provide vital support, advice and help to those in need at this time. This is also supplemented by specialist domestic abuse and sexual exploitation provision provided through London Councils – the umbrella organisation for the capital's local authorities – which Hackney Council also funds. Hackney Council funds one of the highest number of refuge spaces in London, and more women approach refuges in Hackney than almost anywhere else in the capital.

This has included a wide-reaching communications campaign, letting people know who they can get in touch with for help and support, training those on the frontline to identify and respond safely and effectively to cases of domestic abuse, continuing to rehouse those at risk and supporting migrant women with no recourse to public funds who will be particularly vulnerable in these unprecedented circumstances.

Tackling violence against women and girls is a long standing priority for Hackney's Community Safety Partnership. The Council has been leading regular meetings with statutory partners, local domestic abuse agencies, voluntary and community sector partners to ensure a joined-up approach and to pick up on any issues and concerns. This will continue during and after the lockdown period, given the anticipated rise in domestic abuse reporting as measures are relaxed.

The Council has also worked with community, faith and voluntary groups and mutual aid organisations to provide them with material and guidance on identifying and responding safely to domestic abuse. Any increase in demand for accommodation is immediately identified and addressed.

More information on the support that is available for anyone affected by domestic abuse is available on the [Domestic Violence and Sexual Abuse page](#).

APPENDIX B - Agenda item 6, Questions from Members of the Public

Responses to questions that were not taken at the meeting due to non attendance and/or time constraints

[To follow - not required for Council to approve the minutes]

APPENDIX C - Agenda item 7, Questions from Members

Responses to questions that were not taken at the meeting due to non attendance and/or time constraints

[To follow - not required for Council to approve the minutes]