



London Borough of Hackney
Full Council Extraordinary Meeting
Municipal Year 2023/24
Date of Meeting: Wednesday, 24 January 2024

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

Councillors in Attendance:	<p>Cllr Anya Sizer - Speaker of Hackney</p> <p>Elected Mayor, Caroline Woodley.</p> <p>Cllr Kam Adams, Cllr Grace Adebayo, Cllr Frank Baffour, Cllr Alastair Binnie-Lubbock, Deputy Mayor Anntoinette Bramble, Cllr Robert Chapman, Cllr Mete Coban, Cllr Sophie Conway (late), Cllr Michael Desmond, Cllr Sade Etti, Cllr Susan Fajana-Thomas, Cllr Zoë Garbett, Cllr Margaret Gordon, Cllr Ben Hayhurst (late), Cllr Clare Joseph (late), Cllr Christopher Kennedy, Cllr Benzion Papier (late), Cllr Lee Laudat-Scott, Cllr Richard Lufkin, Cllr Yvonne Maxwell, Cllr Clayeon McKenzie, Cllr Sem Moema, Cllr Jon Narcross, Deputy Mayor Nicholson, Cllr Joseph Ogundemuren, Cllr Deniz Oguzkanli, Cllr Sam Pallis, Cllr Sharon Patrick, Cllr Clare Potter, Cllr Fliss Premru, Cllr Ian Rathbone, Cllr Ali Sadek (late), Cllr Caroline Selman, Cllr Gilbert Smyth, Cllr Sheila Suso-Runge, Cllr Lynne Troughton, Cllr Joe Walker, Cllr Jessica Webb, Cllr Carol Williams and Cllr Sarah Young</p>
Apologies for Absence:	<p>Cllr Soraya Adejare, Cllr Polly Billington, Cllr Humaira Garasia, Cllr Eluzer Goldberg, Cllr M Can Ozsen, Cllr Midnight Ross, Cllr Ifraax Samatar (dispensation), Cllr Penny Wrout,</p>
Apologies for Lateness:	<p>Cllr Sophie Conway and Cllr Steve Race</p>
Absent	<p>Cllr Levy, Cllr Simche Steinberger, Cllr Shaul Krautwirt, Cllr Hershy Lisser, Cllr Ian Sharer</p>
Invited	<p>Mr John Henderson</p>
Officer Contact:	<p>Tessa Mitchell, Governance Team Leader governance@hackney.gov.uk</p>

Councillor Sizer [Speaker] in the Chair

1. Apologies for Absence

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

2. Declarations of Interest

- 2.1 There were no declarations of interest.

3. Independent Governance Review

Ms Dawn Carter-McDonald, Interim Chief Executive, introduced Mr John Henderson and explained that the purpose of the extraordinary meeting is to present on the outcome of Mr Henderson's non-statutory Independent Governance Review following the conviction and sentencing of former Councillor Tom Dewey and the subsequent resignation of former Mayor Philip Glanville.

Mr Henderson thanked Madam Speaker and Ms Carter-McDonald for the opportunity to conduct the investigation and listen to members. In his introduction, Mr Henderson made the following remarks:

- 3.1 He expressed his gratitude to all Elected Members past and present for their candid approach and self awareness during the interviews. Mr Henderson also thanked the editor and staff of the Hackney Citizen for their assistance in providing access to articles on the matter. Mr Henderson confirmed that former Mayor Glanville and Mr Dewey did not respond to the invitation to be interviewed.
- 3.2 The Terms of Reference for the investigation were extended with respect to the time frame for the investigation, given the political and public discussions outside the initial period from Friday 13 May to Monday 16 May 2022. It was therefore decided to include all of Mr Dewey's time with the Council and up to Mr Glanville's resignation in September 2023.
- 3.3 The Terms of Reference was also extended to interview all of the Group Leaders within the Borough including some additional Elected Members.

The Findings:

- 3.4 Mr Henderson reported that the two main overriding issues from Members were questioning how Mr Dewey became a candidate and the blurring of lines

between officers and members of the Council. It is recommended in the report that political groups take a closer look at the motivations of candidates.

- 3.5 In his remarks, Mr Henderson stated that he did not think there is a widespread problem within the Council but more of a localised issue.

Questions:

Following Mr Henderson's introduction, questions were received from Cllr Binnie-Lubbock, Cllr Ozgunkanli, Cllr Garbett, Cllr Premru, Cllr Gordon, Cllr Maxwell and Deputy Mayor Bramble. Mr Henderson's response is summarised as follows:-

- 3.6 Mr Dewey did not become a member of Hackney Council until after he was elected, therefore the National Crime Agency had no requirement to inform the Council. Anything that happened on the campaign trail is outside of this scope of the investigation. Mr Henderson went on to state that until Mr Dewey had been elected there was no responsibility for the Council. Officers received notification from the National Crime Agency for the first time on Friday 13 May 2022 and did all that they could at the time.
- 3.7 Mr Henderson explained that as part of his investigation, he went through events in considerable detail with the former Chief Executive, Mark Carroll at the time and with Monitoring Officer. Mr Henderson could not see how they could have handled events any better. He added that it was fortunate as a Council that Mr Dewey opted to resign and that he was offered support. Mr Henderson commended the Council's officers as having done a good job.
- 3.8 It is confirmed that there was only one working week between Mr Dewey being declared as a councillor and the National Crime Agency having done all of the information governance then subsequently getting in touch with the Council. Mr Henderson added that Metropolitan Police carries out arrests just shy of 100,000 people per year. On Friday 5 May 2022, elections were held nationally with 7,080 councillors being elected.
- 3.9 There are sensitive areas in terms of the rights of a person to be innocent until proven guilty therefore, the conversation that Mr Carroll and Ms Carter-McDonald had with Mr Dewey on Monday 16 May 2022 was a sensitive matter to get to the right outcome.
- 3.10 In response to questions about relationships between members and officers, Mr Henderson stated that culture comes from the top. He commented on his conversations with Mayor Woodley and Ms Carter-McDonald and that they are committed to ensuring that there is an appropriate culture between officers and members.
- 3.11 Mr Henderson confirmed that Mr Mark Carroll telephoned Mr Glanville on morning of Saturday 14 May and fully briefed him on what had happened. In that conversation Mr Glanville referenced the Eurovision party and Mr Carroll advised him to cancel.
- 3.12 Mr Henderson did not speak with Mr Dewey. In Mr Henderson's view, Mr Dewey's acts targeted a place where he was going to launch his political career. It was isolated in terms of the personnel involved.

- 3.13 In response to questions about sharing the Terms of Reference and interview notes, Mr Henderson deferred to Ms Carter-McDonald but stated that he did not take verbatim notes and all notes were shared with everyone he spoke with.
- 3.14 Mr Henderson confirmed that every step of the timeline put together was followed to the letter. With reference to DBS checks, there is discussion at Central government for all councillors depending on committees and commissions they might fill. The process is retrospective and negative for vetting because you are innocent until proven guilty. Mr Dewey's bail conditions for example is not the business of the Council but it was decisive in swinging Mr Dewey's decision at the time.
- 3.15 In response to the question on cost of elections, Ms Carter-McDonald stated that she will need to liaise with colleagues and will provide the information in due course.
- 3.16 Ms Carter-McDonald also stated that the redacted Terms of Reference will be shared with members along with a list of the participants and confirmed that the notes taken by Mr Henderson will not be shared.
- 3.17 It was noted that Mr Henderson will also be attending Scrutiny Panel at 7pm on Tuesday 30 January 2024.

Mayor Woodley thanked Mr Henderson for his undertaking of the investigation in an efficient manner and in a professional way to close the discussion as best we could. Mayor Woodley stated that she has every confidence in members and officers that work continues in a professional manner. The Mayor also thanked Deputy Mayor Bramble for her support.

In closing, Madam Speaker also relayed her thanks for the thorough report and contributions to the discussions.

RESOLVED:

To note the contents of the report and the recommendations.

Actions for the Interim Chief Executive

- (i) Circulate redacted Terms of Reference (enclosed)
- (ii) Circulate list of participants (enclosed)

Additional documents appended

- (iii) Whistleblowing Policy (enclosed)
- (iv) Employee Code of Conduct (enclosed)

Close of meeting.

Duration of Meeting - 5:00 - 5:37pm

Wednesday, 24 January 2024

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