

Council Assembly (Budget and council tax setting meeting)

MINUTES of the Council Assembly (Budget and council tax setting meeting) held on Wednesday 24 February 2021 at 7.00 pm at Virtual/online. Livestream here: <https://www.youtube.com/user/southwarkcouncil>

PRESENT:

The Worshipful the Mayor for 2020-21, Councillor Barrie Hargrove
The Worshipful the Deputy Mayor for 2020-21, Councillor Sunil Chopra (in the chair)

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

1. PRELIMINARY BUSINESS

1.1 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were received from Councillor Sirajul Islam.

Apologies for lateness were received from Councillor Eleanor Kerslake.

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

The Deputy Mayor was in the chair for this meeting. He announced the deaths of ex-Councillors Marjorie Henriquez, Derek Partridge and Denise Capstick.

The Deputy Mayor expressed his condolences on the passing of the former councillors.

Councillors Ian Wingfield and Nick Johnson spoke on Marjorie Henriquez's life.

Councillors Dora Dixon-Fyle and David Noakes spoke on Derek Partridge's life.

Councillors Peter John and Damian O'Brien spoke on Denise Capstick's life.

The meeting held a minute's silence in their memory.

Councillor Leo Pollak apologised for his actions in not being transparent about a Twitter account that he managed, which commented on housing-related issues.

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

The Mayor agreed to accept item 2.2, Setting the council tax 2021-22, as late and urgent.

At this juncture, the meeting agreed the programme motion.

That the meeting be conducted as follows:

Time	Business
7.00pm – 7.20pm	1. Preliminary business and announcements
7.20pm – 10.00pm	Item 2.1 Policy and Resources Strategy 2021-22 - Revenue Budget
NOTE: 5 minute breaks at 8.00pm and 9.00pm	<ol style="list-style-type: none">1. Consideration of this item is not time limited but the meeting is subject to the guillotine.2. Debate to include:<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Nine questions on the report• Councillor Rebecca Lury to present recommendations (10 minutes)• Councillor Nick Johnson to reply on behalf of opposition (5 minutes)• Four amendments to be moved and seconded

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Report and amendments to be debated as a single debate (all speakers 3 minutes each) • Reply to the debate from Councillor Rebecca Lury (3 minutes) • Separate vote on each amendment • Recorded vote on substantive motion. <p>Members can only speak once, except for Councillor Rebecca Lury, who will reply to the single debate.</p> <p>This report has a legal requirement to take a recorded vote on the substantive motion.</p>
	<p>Item 2.2 Setting the Council Tax 2021-22</p> <p>This report has a legal requirement to take a recorded vote on the substantive motion.</p>
	<p>Item 2.2 Capital Strategy and Treasury Management Strategy 2021-22</p> <p>To be considered as normal.</p>
	<p>Item 2.4. Capital Programme Refresh for 2020-21 to 2029-30</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Consideration of this item is not time limited but the meeting is subject to the guillotine. 2. Debate to include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Two questions on the report

Item 2 Reports for decision

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

1.4 DISCLOSURE OF INTERESTS AND DISPENSATIONS

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

The following councillors were granted a dispensation by the monitoring officer to vote on Amendment C:

Councillors Humaira Ali, Peter Babudu, Jack Buck, Victor Chamberlain, Sunil Chopra, Karl Eastham, Richard Leeming, Eliza Mann, James McAsh, Hamish McCallum, David Noakes, Damien O'Brien, Jane Salmon and Dan Whitehead.

1.5 MINUTES

The minutes of the council assembly meeting held on 25 November 2020 were agreed as a correct record.

2. REPORT(S) FOR DECISION FROM THE CABINET

2.1 POLICY AND RESOURCES STRATEGY 2021-22 - REVENUE BUDGET

There were nine questions on the report, the written responses to which were circulated at the meeting. There were nine supplemental questions.

There were five amendments to this report.

In accordance with council assembly procedure rule 1.14.9, Councillor Rebecca Lury, cabinet member for finance, business and jobs, moved the report.

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

Councillor Jasmine Ali, seconded by Councillor Stephanie Cryan, moved Amendment A.

Councillor Graham Neale, seconded by Councillor Victor Chamberlain, moved Amendment B.

Councillor Damian O'Brien, seconded by Councillor Dan Whitehead, moved Amendment C.

Councillor William Hougbo, seconded by Councillor Hamish McCallum, moved Amendment D.

Councillor Humaira Ali, seconded by Councillor David Noakes, moved Amendment E.

Following debate (Councillors Kath Whittam, Cleo Soanes, Alice Macdonald, Eliza Mann, Peter Babudu, Richard Livingstone, Jane Salmon, Radha Burgess, Johnson Situ, Evelyn Akoto, Anod Al-Samerai, Helen Dennis, Jack Buck, Catherine Rose and Kieron Williams) Councillor Rebecca Lury exercised her right of reply.

Amendment A – Carried

Amendment B – Lost

Amendment C – Lost

Amendment D – Lost

Amendment E - Lost

At this juncture the clerk explained that the Local Authorities (Standing Orders) (England) (Amendment) Regulations 2014, which had come into force on 25 February 2014, required a recorded vote on key budget decisions by local authorities. The regulations required a

recorded vote on decisions only. Therefore in accordance with council assembly procedure rule 1.16(4) (a roll call recorded vote), an announcement was made at the beginning and end of one minute, after which the vote was taken.

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

In favour of the substantive motion (48):

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

Abstained (14):

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

Absent (1):

Councillor Sirajul Islam

The Mayor declared that the substantive motion was carried.

RESOLVED:

That Council Assembly:

1. Agreed to increase the Southwark element of the council tax for 2021-21 by 1.99%.
2. Agreed to use the flexibility offered by the government to support Adult Social Care through a precept equivalent to 3% of council tax on the basis that these additional funds will be used exclusively for adult social care.
3. Agreed the recommendations of the 2 February 2021 cabinet for a general fund budget requirement (after specific grants) for 2020-21 of £293.120m.

The New Youth Deal: no young person in Southwark should be left behind

Council assembly noted:

4. Southwark is a youthful borough with a large diverse population of children and young people who make up over 20% of the total population. We have nearly 50,000 children between the ages of 11-19.

5. Young people in the borough have been disproportionately hit by the economic effects of Covid-19 and the poor decision making of our government, with those under 25 in the UK over twice as likely to have lost their job due to the pandemic as over 25s.
6. Young people have been hit with a growing mental health crisis, with one in four in the UK currently feeling 'unable to cope', according to the Prince's Trust. The combined impact of extortionate university fees, stagnating wages and unaffordable housing is leaving many young people feeling that a better life is out of reach.
7. More than 200 young people have accessed Southwark's new free mental health drop in service for children and young people, The Nest, since it opened online in April and physically opened the doors in August 2020.

Council assembly further noted:

8. That the council has numerous distinct funding channels which empower, support and incentivise young people to be their best, including:
 - a. Southwark Works – of which £390,000 is allocated annually for employment work with young people
 - b. Southwark Scholars – the annual commitment of £525k spent paying for young people from low income backgrounds to attend University
 - c. Positive Future for Young People Fund -- £600k made up of the previous Youth and Play Grant Scheme at £100k, and the Positive Futures Fund which provided £500,000 in 2020-21 to provide inspiring opportunities for young people that divert them away from crime
 - d. Paid Internships – which the council funds £150,000 worth of for young people
 - e. Mental Health support - £2.5 million towards our offer for children, young people and families, with a focus on prevention.
9. That on 8 December 2020 Cabinet approved the Strategic Review of Youth Services report, seeking to 'ensure that the voices of young people are at the heart of future decision-making'. This amendment is a result of the report's recommendations.

Council assembly therefore resolved to:

10. Launch a New Youth Deal to make sure no young person is left behind during and after the pandemic, by promoting young people's mental health and wellbeing and enabling young people to access education, training and jobs.
11. Create a new Youth Parliament made of up young people who live in Southwark; this Youth Parliament will have ultimate oversight of the New Youth Deal and the money that is spent on young people in the borough.
12. Consolidate all the funding streams listed above (in point 5) into a single fund titled

the New Youth Deal and dedicate an additional £100,000 for resources and support to co-ordinate the new role of the Youth Parliament and this new way of working.

13. Dedicate £100k towards carrying out the other recommendations of the aforementioned Youth Review as part of the New Youth Deal.
14. Establish a committee to be led by the Deputy Leader & Cabinet Member for Children, Young People & Education, and include the Cabinet Member for Finance and the Cabinet Member for Public Health and Community Safety. The committee will facilitate this move to put young people in control of their funding and of their futures.
15. In light of growing mental health pressures due to Covid, and the increased demand across the borough for mental health services, the council will commit £200,000 to expanding the free mental health drop in service (The Nest) to Southwark schools. This will become part of our commitment to support 100% of children and young people with mental health needs.
16. This £200,000 will be the first priority of all new Covid grant money allocated to the council in the new financial year, and in the event that this funding is not available then the Strategic Director of Finance and Governance will be asked to make appropriate provision from earmarked reserves.

Reinstating the Pioneers Fund

Council assembly noted:

17. That the Southwark Pioneers Fund was launched in 2019 as a way of finding and elevating the entrepreneurs of the future. The scheme was an opportunity for residents to start or grow social enterprises or businesses delivering positive and innovative social outcomes for Southwark resident.
18. That the scheme delivered one round of funding totalling £49,597 before Covid-19 struck and the money was repurposed as an emergency business hardship fund.

Council assembly resolved to:

19. Reinstating the Southwark Pioneers Fund at a cost of £950,000, in order to support the borough's economic renewal post-Covid.

2.2 SETTING THE COUNCIL TAX 2021-22

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

The substantive motion was put to the vote, and the votes having been recorded,

the Mayor declared the result as follows:

In favour of the substantive motion (62):

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

Absent (1)

Councillor Sirajul Islam

The Deputy Mayor declared that the substantive motion was carried.

RESOLVED:

1. That the 2021-22 Southwark element of the council tax for band D properties in Southwark, including an increase of 4.99% be set at **£1,164.14**.
2. That the 2021-22 formal resolution for Southwark council taxes in 2021-22 be approved (appendix A).
3. That no discount be applied to properties in the former parish of St Mary Newington for 2021-22.
4. That no discount be applied to properties in the former parish of St Saviour's for 2021-22.
5. That council assembly notes the Greater London Authority (GLA) proposal to set a precept level of **£363.66** at band D, which the GLA will consider on 25 February 2021.
6. That the existing local war disability and war widow/widowers' schemes for housing benefit be continued in 2021-22.
7. That council assembly establishes a council tax setting committee, to set the council tax for the year 2021-22, in accordance with section 67(3) of the Local Government Finance Act 1992, and agrees the role and functions, matters

reserved and political composition as set out in appendix D.

8. That council assembly appointed Councillors Jasmine Ali, William Hounbo, Rebecca Lury, Alice Macdonald, Jane Salmon, Johnson Situ Kieron Williams and Adele Morris (reserve) to serve on the council tax setting committee.
9. That council assembly appointed Councillor Rebecca Lury as chair and Councillor Jane Salmon as vice-chair of the council tax setting committee.
10. The special council tax setting committee will meet at 10am on Friday 26 February 2021. This will allow council tax notices to be issued in line with the normal statutory timetable.

2.3 CAPITAL STRATEGY AND TREASURY MANAGEMENT STRATEGY 2021-22

As the guillotine had fallen, members had up to 15 minutes to debate the report.

Councillor Rebecca Lury, cabinet member for finance, business and jobs, formally moved the report.

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

RESOLVED:

That council assembly noted:

1. That the council continues to invest in an ambitious long term capital programme that provides significant ongoing benefits throughout the borough and revenue streams to support council services.

That council assembly approved:

2. The Capital Strategy 2021-22 as Appendix A of the report.
3. The Treasury Management Strategy Statement 2021-22 as Appendix B of the report.
4. The Investment Management Strategy 2021-22 as Appendix C of the report.
5. The Minimum Revenue Provision Statement 2021-22 as Appendix D of the report.
6. The Prudential Indicators for 2021-24 as Appendix E of the report.

2.4 CAPITAL PROGRAMME REFRESH FOR 2020-21 TO 2029-30

As the guillotine had fallen, members had up to 15 minutes to debate the report.

There were two questions on the report, the written responses to which were circulated at the meeting. There were two supplemental questions.

Councillor Rebecca Lury, cabinet member for finance, jobs and business, presented the report.

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

RESOLVED:

20. That Council Assembly noted the refreshed general fund capital programme for the period 2020-21 to 2029-30 as approved by Cabinet on 2 February 2020 (Appendix 1).

3. AMENDMENTS

Amendments are set out in supplemental agenda no. 2.

The meeting closed at 10.25 pm.

CHAIR:

DATED: