

MARKETS COMMITTEE

Minutes of the meeting of the Markets Committee Virtual Public Meeting on

Wednesday, 15 July 2020 at 12.00 pm

Members Present:

| | |
|--------------------------------|--------------------------------------|
| James Tumbridge (Chairman) | Gregory Lawrence |
| John Chapman (Deputy Chairman) | Deputy Edward Lord |
| Matthew Bell | Wendy Mead |
| Peter Bennett | Deputy Robert Merrett |
| Mark Bostock | Deputy Brian Mooney (Chief Commoner) |
| Deputy David Bradshaw | Deputy Joyce Nash |
| John Edwards | John Petrie |
| Deputy Kevin Everett | John Scott |
| Helen Fentimen | Deputy Dr Giles Shilson |
| Alderman David Graves | Deputy Philip Woodhouse |
| Michael Hudson | Dawn Wright |

Officers in Attendance:

| | |
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| Jon Averbs | - Director of Markets & Consumer Protection |
| Donald Perry | - Markets and Consumer Protection Department |
| Mark Sherlock | - Markets and Consumer Protection Department |
| Debbie Howard | - Markets and Consumer Protection Department |
| Peter Young | - City Surveyor's Department |
| Anna Dunne | - City Surveyor's Department |
| Steven Chandler | - City Surveyor's Department |
| Leyla Dervish | - Chamberlain's Department |
| Andrew Fothergill | - Comptroller & City Solicitor's Department |
| Jenny Pitcairn | - Chamberlain's Department |
| Paul Wright | - Rememberancer's Office |
| Laura Scothern | - City Surveyor's Department |
| Shani Baron-Annand | - Town Clerk's Department |
| Antoinette Duhaney | - Town Clerk's Department |

1. APOLOGIES

Apologies for absence were received from Nicholas Bensted-Smith, Alderman Bronek Masojada, Mark Wheatley, and from John Scott for lateness.

2. MEMBERS' DECLARATIONS UNDER THE CODE OF CONDUCT IN RESPECT OF ITEMS ON THE AGENDA

There were no declarations.

3. **PUBLIC MINUTES**

Resolved – That the public minutes of the meeting held on 04.03.20 be approved as a correct record.

Matters arising

- Action Log - The Chairman requested that an action log be produced to allow Members to monitor progress with outstanding actions agreed by the Committee.
- Energy costs – The Chairman referred to previous concerns raised at previous meetings in respect of energy costs for market traders. Despite the lengthy delay in sending correspondence to traders, the Chairman gave assurances that this matter was being monitored closely and further updates would be provided to the Committee in due course. A copy of the letter sent to traders would be circulated to Committee Members for information.
- Smithfield Market Parabolic Dome – The Chairman requested an update on the justification for appointing a particular contractor to undertake this work.

4. **SUPERINTENDENT UPDATES (ORAL REPORT)**

BILLINGSGATE

COVID-19 Impact

Income generation opportunities had reduced substantially during the COVID-19 pandemic, especially for filming on site. Parking income had also decreased and some permit charges had been refunded. Rental payments from advertising hoardings had been withheld by the tenant whose revenues from the site had fallen significantly and may be at risk.

COVID-19 Testing

Part of the site had been used to host COVID-19 testing facilities when the market was not trading.

Staffing

Although Fisheries Inspectors were not currently on site, a CoL Environmental Health Officer was attending to provide advice and support to tenants and traders

NEW SPITALFIELDS

COVID-19 Impact

Visitor levels had remained static during the pandemic and wholesale trade had not been affected much. However, catering had been severely impacted and some businesses were not operating. Social distancing measures were in place and PPE packs had been issued to tenants and traders.

Barrier

The entrance barrier had been operational since 4th February 2020 and was generating income. There were a few outstanding technical issues and the payment machine had been converted to accept cash. There were also technical issues with the pedestrian gate and turnstile and it was anticipated that this would be operational by early autumn. Officers were liaising with the Comptroller's Department to draft a letter making a case for compensation from the contractors in lieu delays in supplying/fitting equipment. *(The Chairman requested that a copy of the letter be circulated to Committee Members)*

Air Quality

No air quality measuring was taken place due to limited staffing resources

Energy Saving

Replacement LED lighting was being installed which would reduce energy costs after the initial 2 year payback period.

SMITHFIELD**COVID-19 Impact**

Traders were working in challenging conditions and approximately 200 market employees were on furlough. However, this number would decrease over the coming weeks as staff were recalled to cover holiday absence and as the furlough support scheme tapered away. CoL market staff had remained constant throughout with little effect on service levels during the pandemic.

Cash-flow for traders at the Market was a continuing challenge. Approximately 80% of debt owed to traders before prior to lock-down was still outstanding and two business had issued redundancy notices in recent days.

Car Park

Car parking income had decreased significantly primarily as a result of COVID-19. However, this had been further exacerbated by the recent increase in the Congestion Charge fee and the widening of the hours and days of operation. Income to the end of June 2020 was £77,000 less, compared to the same period last year and it was anticipated that this trend would continue for the foreseeable future.

Smithfield Projects

Plans for works to the annexe building, general market, tunnel lids and poultry market domed roof were progressing in West Smithfield. A written summary of all the local works has been communicated to all Market tenants. This would be followed up by monthly progress newsletters and regular meetings with tenants to raise any concerns.

5. **MARKETS COMMITTEE RISK UPDATE**

The Committee considered a report of the Director of Markets & Consumer Protection providing the Markets Committee with assurances that appropriate risk management procedures are in place within the Department of Markets and Consumer Protection to satisfy the requirements of the Corporate Risk Management Framework.

In responses to questions and comments from Members, Officers advised that the COVID-19 risks had been closely monitored to ensure that the markets were able to continue operating and protect food supply chains. Officers also flagged up the financial risks associated with reduced income generation opportunities

The Chairman appreciated the concerns of Members and stated that at the very start of the pandemic, COVID-19 associated risks were rated as red. However, given that the situation was more stable and there were robust measures in place to support tenants, on balance, given the current circumstances, the amber rating was appropriate. The Chairman reiterated that Officers were watching closely to ensure that the risks were ranked appropriately.

Resolved – That the report be noted.

6. **REVENUE OUTTURN 2019/20**

The Committee considered a joint report of the Chamberlain and the Director of Markets & Consumer Protection comparing the 2019/20 revenue outturn for the services overseen by the Markets Committee with the final budget for the year.

Officers advised that in response to a question from a Committee Member prior to the meeting, an updated table 2 had been circulated to Members (page 20 of agenda pack)

Officers highlighted the considerable impact of COVID-19 on the 2020/21 budget and it was also confirmed that the underspends listed on page 26 of the agenda pack had been carried forward.

Resolved – That the report be noted.

7. **QUESTIONS ON MATTERS RELATING TO THE WORK OF THE COMMITTEE**

There were no questions.

8. **ANY OTHER BUSINESS THAT THE CHAIRMAN CONSIDERS URGENT**

Revised September meeting date – The Chairman advised that following consultation with the Deputy Chairman, the next meeting of the Committee has been brought forward (from 23.09.20) to **9.30am on 11.09.20**. This was to facilitate early appointment of the new Committee Chairman and Deputy Chairman and also to allow more input from Markets Committee Members on MCP related reports prior to any decisions being made by Policy & Resources Committee and Court of Common Council.

9. **EXCLUSION OF THE PUBLIC**

RESOLVED – That under Section 100A(4) of the Local Government Act 1972, the public be excluded from the meeting for the following items of business on the grounds that they involve the likely disclosure of exempt information as defined in Paragraph 3 of Part I of Schedule 12A of the Local Government Act as follows:-

| Items | Paragraph |
|---------|-----------|
| 10 - 17 | 3 |

10. **NON-PUBLIC MINUTES**

The non-public minutes of the meeting held on 4th March 2020 were approved as a correct record.

11. **CITY'S WHOLESALE MARKETS CONSOLIDATION PROGRAMME (MCP) - INTERIM BUSINESS CASE AND BUDGET**

The Committee considered a joint report of the City Surveyor and the Director of Major Projects providing an update on the MCP.

12. **BILLINGSGATE SITE - REVISED STRATEGY PROPOSAL**

The Committee considered a report of the City Surveyor updating Members on the emerging revised strategy for the future of the current Billingsgate Market site.

13. **VARIATION TO APPROVED TERMS FOR THE INSTALLATION OF A RAPID VEHICLE CHARGE POINT AT BILLINGSGATE MARKET**

The Committee considered a joint report of the City Surveyor and the Director of Markets and Consumer Protection seeking a variation to the previously approved terms for installing Electric Vehicle charge points.

14. **MARKETS DEBTS ARREARS - PERIOD ENDING 31ST MAY 2020**

The Committee considered a report of the Director of Markets and Consumer Protection highlighting levels arrears for invoiced income in excess of 31 days as at 31st May 2020.

15. **REPORT OF ACTION TAKEN UNDER URGENCY - MARKET TENANTS AND COVID 19 - PROPOSALS FOR ADDITIONAL SUPPORT**

The Committee considered a report of the Town Clerk outlining action taken under urgency to provide support to tenants during the COVID-19 pandemic.

16. **NON-PUBLIC QUESTIONS ON MATTERS RELATING TO THE WORK OF THE COMMITTEE**

There were no questions.

**17. ANY OTHER BUSINESS THAT THE CHAIRMAN CONSIDERS URGENT
AND WHICH THE COMMITTEE AGREES SHOULD BE CONSIDERED
WHILST THE PUBLIC ARE EXCLUDED**

The Committee considered one urgent item of business.

The meeting ended at 1.23 pm

Chairman

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