

PLANNING AND TRANSPORTATION COMMITTEE

Tuesday, 5 March 2024

Minutes of the meeting of the Planning and Transportation Committee held at the Guildhall EC2 at 10.30 am

Present

Members:

Deputy Shravan Joshi (Chairman)	Deputy Brian Mooney
Graham Packham (Deputy Chairman)	Deborah Oliver
Deputy Randall Anderson	Aldерwoman Susan Pearson
Brendan Barns	Judith Pleasance
Mary Durcan	Ian Seaton
Deputy John Edwards	Hugh Selka
Anthony David Fitzpatrick	Luis Felipe Tilleria
Deputy John Fletcher	William Upton KC
Amy Horscroft	Jacqui Webster

Officers:

Zoe Lewis	- Town Clerk's Department
Fleur Francis	- Comptroller and City Solicitor's Department
Philip Saunders	- Remembrancer's Department
Ola Obadara	- City Surveyor's Department
Joanne Hill	- Environment Department
Ian Hughes	- Environment Department
Bruce McVean	- Environment Department
Rob McNicol	- Environment Department
Ola Obadara	- City Surveyor's Department
Gwyn Richards	- Environment Department
Bob Roberts	- Interim Executive Director Environment
Aled Thomas	- Environment Department
Peter Wilson	- Environment Department

1. APOLOGIES

Apologies were received from Ian Bishop-Laggett, Deputy Michael Cassidy, Deputy Marianne Fredericks, Jaspreet Hodgson, Alderman Robert Hughes-Penney, Deputy Alastair Moss, Alderwoman Jennette Newman, Deputy Henry Pollard, Alderman Simon Pryke and Shailendra Umrada.

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

In relation to Agenda Item 5 - Salisbury Square Development - Appropriation for Planning Purposes, Deborah Oliver and Graham Packham declared that they were Members of the Police Authority Board and Deputy Randall Anderson and Alderwoman Susan Pearson declared that they were Members of the Capital Buildings Board.

3. **MINUTES**

RESOLVED, that the public minutes of the previous meeting held on 31 January 2024 be approved as a correct record.

4. **OUTSTANDING ACTIONS***

The Committee received a report of the Town Clerk, setting out a list of the outstanding actions.

RESOLVED – That the report be noted.

5. **SALISBURY SQUARE DEVELOPMENT - APPROPRIATION FOR PLANNING PURPOSES**

The Committee considered a report of the City Surveyor, which sought approval for the appropriation of land for planning purposes (Section 203 of the Housing and Planning Act 2016) to facilitate the redevelopment of Salisbury Square. Members noted that the report had been updated to reflect the current position, since being deferred from the meeting on 12 December 2023.

The report set out that approval was sought for the appropriation of land for planning purposes under Section 12 of the 1949 Act, in order to engage the provisions of Section 203 of the Housing and Planning Act 2016 to facilitate the carrying out of the redevelopment of Salisbury Square. Members were informed that the item was before the Planning and Transportation Committee, as several years ago the Court of Common Council had delegated decisions on appropriation of land and the operation of Section 203 to the Planning and Transportation Committee. Members were also informed that those with Rights of Light that were infringed, were entitled to compensation. Some had agreed offers of compensation and some negotiations were ongoing and would continue.

RESOLVED, that -

1. The Main Development Site be deemed no longer required for the purpose for which it was acquired;
2. The Main Development Site be appropriated for the planning purpose of the development (in its current form or as it may be varied or amended); and
3. all existing offers made to rights holders be honoured.

6. **HISTORIC BUILDINGS RETROFIT TOOLKIT**

The Committee considered a report of the Interim Executive Director, Environment, in respect of the Historic Buildings Retrofit toolkit, which would provide a resource to allow building owners to confidently start the process of responsible retrofit, build a business case and deliver any necessary adaptations.

Officers gave a presentation during which the following points were made:

- The toolkit was the result of a project undertaken as part of the Climate Action Strategy to explore the potential carbon reduction and

opportunities for strengthening climate resilience of heritage buildings in the square mile.

- Decarbonising heritage buildings in the square mile was a major challenge. There were 600 listed buildings and 28 conservation areas, all with their own particular characteristics.
- A route map for those seeking to undertake retrofit projects within heritage buildings was included within the guidance.
- The toolkit focused on the eight typologies of heritage buildings within the square mile to identify common features, common challenges and opportunities.
- The toolkit drew on existing practice in the City.
- There would be a launch event on 21 March. There was strong alignment between the toolkit and Historic England guidance and Historic England would be involved in the event. Follow-up workshops could be held after the event.
- Officers were keen for the toolkit to be promoted and used internally within the City of London Corporation and externally with organisations seeking to retrofit buildings.
- The development of a community of practice where people could share knowledge, information and experiences was being considered and case studies would continue to be collected.

A Member commented that the toolkit lacked detail and was more of a concept study. An Officer stated that the document was to help those working with historical buildings and provide inspiration. It sat within a suite of other documents including the Planning for Sustainability SPD and the Retrofit Guidance as well as the Retrofit First Policy in the emerging City Plan. The Officer stated that he would meet with the Member to look at reflecting his experience in the document.

A Member raised concern about some of the language in the report. The Chairman stated that the work was a result of a data-driven approach in understanding the impacts on historic buildings. An Officer stated that the language would be amended to reflect the commitments the City of London Corporation had made in the Climate Action Strategy.

In response to a Member's suggestion that the document could include advice on when it was appropriate to consult the planning division, an Officer stated that signposting could be included within the document.

A Member queried whether the toolkit would impact upon current maintenance and preservation plans and timelines for sites such as the Golden Lane Estate. The Member also asked whether it would impact upon the procurement of maintenance contracts and how it could be embedded across departments. The Officer stated that the document was designed to be for information and to embed the consideration of retrofitting historic buildings by various stakeholders. The toolkit had been developed with City Surveyors and other departments. It would be promoted further among departments and would provide the opportunity to share learnings and bring them together with other expertise e.g. that of Historic England. Whilst other parts of the organisation

had their own decision-making processes and protocols, this would be a helpful document rather than a set of prescriptive rules. The Officer added that in relation to Golden Lane, there were listed management guidelines published by the Corporation which covered the maintenance and conservation approach to those assets.

A Member asked for clarification on the difference between retrofit, refurbishment, renovation and retrofit. An Officer stated that refurbishment was used for more light touch interventions and retrofit was both deep and light touch interventions. He added that there was further detail in the report.

In response to a Member's question as to why the Planning and Transportation Committee was being asked for approval, the Officer stated that although this would not become a piece of planning guidance, it did fall within the remit of the Committee. The Chairman stated that when looking at new developments there were quantifiable measures in relation to embodied and operational carbon but this was not the case with heritage assets. He added that it was important to have baseline documents to help inform and enable greater understanding within the market of the expectations and the direction of travel.

A Member commented that whilst he considered the document to be useful, it could be more joined-up.

The Chairman asked Officers to note the comments of Members and as the document evolved and was further promoted, comments be addressed within the report. He also asked that Officers map out how the deeper dive, more detailed work would be achieved.

RESOLVED, that –

1. The Heritage Building Retrofit toolkit for publication and dissemination be approved;
2. The planned next steps relating to promotional and knowledge-development actions be noted;
3. The forthcoming 'Heritage Building Retrofit' event on 21 March 2024, to promote the Toolkit and associated actions, be noted; and
4. That Members comments be noted and the toolkit be amended accordingly.

7. COMMERCIAL BUILDING REFURBISHMENT - GUIDANCE AND CASE STUDIES

The Committee considered a report of the Interim Executive Director, Environment in respect of the 'Refurbishing the City – Insights from Current Best Practice' Report, which was one of the actions in the Climate Action Strategy's Square Mile Project Plan for 2023/24. The report presented evidence of current policy and practice in the refurbishment and retrofit of commercial buildings in the City, London and beyond.

Officers gave a presentation during which the following points were made:

- There was an ambition for the square mile to be net zero by 2040.
- Commercial buildings accounted for 65% of the emissions.

- There was a shift towards retention of building or building elements in the City, in Central London and beyond, driven by landlords, developers, tenants and investors with their own sustainability goals and also being shaped by policy and regulatory framework.
- The report pulled together 17 case studies from the City and beyond in different types of major commercial developments.
- Publishing the report would highlight current policy and best practice and contribute to discussions and knowledge sharing.
- The recommendations from the report would feed into planning guidance, and in particular the Sustainability SPD which would shortly be out for consultation.

A Member asked for clarification on the chart related to air conditioning. He also asked for the glossary. Officers advised they would circulate a response and the glossary to Members of the Committee.

RESOLVED, that -

1. The report be approved for publication;
2. The intention to develop a series of Square Mile Refurbishment Case Studies, drawing on the template set out in the report, be noted; and
3. The proposal to share and discuss the findings through a dedicated event be noted.

8. TRANSPORT FOR LONDON - LOCAL IMPLEMENTATION PLAN FUNDED SCHEMES 2024/25

The Committee considered a report of the Interim Executive Director, Environment, in respect of the provision of Transport for London (TfL) Local Implementation Plan (LIP) funding to the City of London Corporation for the year 2024/25.

A Member stated she welcomed the inclusion of Moor Lane.

RESOLVED, that -

1. The allocations up to the maximum of £514,000, for the 2024/25 financial year 2024/25 be approved;
2. Authority be delegated to the Interim Executive Director, Environment, in consultation with the Chairs and Deputy Chairs of the Planning & Transportation Committee and of the Streets & Walkways Sub-Committee, to allocate any additional funds which are made available by TfL in the 2024/25 financial year;
3. Approval be granted to spend any funds awards for Principal Road Renewal, for the year 2024/25; and
4. Authority be delegated to the Interim Executive Director, Environment to reallocate the TfL grant between the approved LIP schemes, should it become necessary during 2024/25, up to a maximum of £150,000.

9. DRAFT HIGH-LEVEL BUSINESS PLAN 2024/25 – ENVIRONMENT DEPARTMENT

The Committee considered a report of the Interim Executive Director, Environment, which presented the Draft High-level Business Plan for the Environment Department for 2024/25.

An Officer stated that this was a top-level strategic plan. It presented an overview of the priority workstreams and how they would be progressed in 2024/25 and measured by key performance indicators. The plan showed how services aligned with and supported the Corporate Plan and other key strategies and policies. During the course of the year, services would align with the new Corporate Plan and with any new strategies and policies that were introduced, as appropriate. The Officer stated that the Committee would receive regular reports on the progress made against the workstreams and performance indicators in the plan.

A Member asked why the utilisation of electric vehicle parking chargers was so low and whether it was worth the investment. An Officer stated that 4.5% utilisation was the figure from 22/23 and this predated the opening of the rapid charging facility at Baynard House Car Park. Contractors had also been changed after concerns about underreporting and about some of the equipment. The 23/24 figures were therefore likely to be higher but there was a need to raise awareness, particularly of the Baynard House facility in relation to servicing vehicles that required a charge top-up.

A Member commented that it would be helpful the business plan to set out the changes in priorities from the previous plan, rather than just the statutory changes section on the first page.

A Member commented on there being 26.3km of Pedestrian Priority Streets and asked what proportion of the total number of streets this was and how the figure compared to previous years. An Officer stated that this was set out in the Transport Strategy and was monitored as a key performance indicator. The Officer would provide a written answer to the Member and would circulate the extract from the Transport Strategy. The Chairman requested that Officers include comparatives in future business plans.

In response to a Member's question about why data was aggregated into one Environment Department, an Officer stated that the data was not broken down any further than to departmental level and to break it down further would identify individuals. She also stated that some divisions reported to more than one committee so to break it down to committee level would be difficult.

RESOLVED, that -

1. The factors taken into consideration in compiling the Environment Department's Business Plan be noted; and
2. Subject to the incorporation of any changes sought by this Committee, the Departmental Business Plan for 2024/25, covering the service areas for which the Planning and Transportation is responsible, be approved.

10. CITY CORPORATION MANAGED CAR PARKS – TARIFF CHANGES

The Committee considered a report of the Interim Executive Director, Environment in respect of car parking tariffs for the four car parks within the Environment Department (Baynard House, Minorities, Tower Hill and London Wall) and the car park within Markets (Smithfield). The report sought approval of an emissions-based charging system for visitors, which has operated for on-street Pay & Display parking bays since 2017 and proposed new tariff levels for a three-year period.

An Officer stated that the report set out a three-year strategy which included moving towards the emissions-based charging tariff that had been successfully implemented on-street since 2018. He stated that this aligned with the Transport Strategy. Zero emission vehicles would pay the same tariff as currently and the strategy would ensure costs were covered and the City remained competitive. The Officer informed Members that the tariffs remained lower than the on-street tariffs to encourage parking in car parks rather than on the street.

In response to a question as to whether pricing could be lower on Monday and Fridays to try and encourage more people into offices, the Officer stated that the strategy, which predated the Transport Strategy but was also embedded within it, was to provide facilities for those who serviced the square miles rather than for commuters and those driving in. They were instead encouraged to use public transport.

A Member requested that consultation take place before any changes were made to resident season tickets. She stated that whilst the Barbican, Golden Lane Estate and Middlesex Street Estate had car parks, many other developments did not and it was important that there was reasonable car parking provision for those who needed a car. The Officer stated that there were discussions taking place with colleagues to understand the nature of parking provision on the major estates and there would also be consideration of provision for those living elsewhere. A report would be brought back to the Committee for approval.

A Member suggested that in the future, a similar scheme to the one recently introduced in Paris where large SUVs were charged for entering the City, could be considered. She raised concerns that larger and wider cars parked in bays were harder for cyclists to cycle pass. The Officer stated that there was a review about five years ago which looked at expanding the size of parking bays to accommodate larger vehicles. Consideration would be given to different vehicle types entering the City in the Transport Strategy Review.

A Member commented that air quality was important and electric, hydrogen and hybrid vehicles were not zero emission vehicles and that they produced higher particulate emissions than an equivalent petrol or diesel car. He stated that weight of vehicles should be a consideration. The Officer stated that this was being considered and although there were limits to the way technology could be used, the different classifications of vehicle would be considered within the Transport Strategy.

RESOLVED, that -

1. A change in approach to the car parking tariff for Baynard House, London Wall, Minorities and Tower Hill car parks, to encourage a shift towards less polluting or zero-emissions capable vehicles, be approved;
2. The three-year pricing strategy for parking charges from 2024, as set out in the report, be approved; and
3. It be noted that the Smithfield Wholesale Market has delegated authority to the Smithfield General Manager, in consultation with the Smithfield Market Tenants Association, to make decisions about tariff pricing within Smithfield car park.

11. CITY CORPORATION RESPONSE TO GOVERNMENT CONSULTATIONS ON BROWNFIELD LAND PRIORITISATION AND PERMITTED DEVELOPMENT RIGHTS

The Committee considered a report of the Interim Executive Director, Environment, in respect of the Government's two recently launched consultations relating to Strengthening Planning Policy within the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) for brownfield development, and changes to Permitted Development (PD) rights in relation to air source heat pumps, electric vehicle (EV) charging and residential extensions. The report set out the proposed consultation responses, highlighting areas of interest or concern to the City of London Corporation.

A Member stated that whilst he approved of the installations of air source heat pumps, he had concerns about them being installed under permitted development as acoustic shrouds could then not be conditioned. The Officer stated that, in the City of London Corporation's view, prior approval should be sought for air source heat pumps that were within a metre of a boundary and this would be part of the recommended approach in the consultation response. In addition, there was a noise standard which had recently been consulted on, and this would need to be complied with as part of any permitted development.

A Member commented that the aim of making the installations of air source heat pumps a permitted development right, was to remove it from planning applications and therefore to put it back in to control noise seemed detrimental. He considered that the Committee should instead state that noise standards should have to be appropriate and enforceable. The Officer stated there was a judgement to be made and the planning system did exist in part to consider issues such as noise and impact. The Officer added that the government wanted to give more certainty to people wanting to install air source heat pumps whilst also having an independent standard that ensured the noise impacts of those would not be detrimental. The Officer stated that the Committee might consider that due to the nature of the City, with its highly built-up and constrained nature, that the right approach would be a prior approval system being put in place. He also stated that equally, the Committee could consider that the system the government was seeking to put in place would be sufficient and would allow and encourage the installation of more air source heat pumps.

A Member requested that a decibel rating of 10 decibels under standard be incorporated into the wording. The Officer stated that the two ratings would be considered and this assurance could be added if this was not included within the government standard.

In response to a Member's comment, the Officer stated that where there were yes or no responses in the consultation, a comment would also be provided.

Members discussed supporting the inclusion of air source heat pumps within permitted development but asked for the wording to be amended to reflect the suggestions of Members in relation to noise standards. Officers confirmed that the wording would be amended.

RESOLVED, that subject to the amendment of wording in accordance with Members' comments on noise standards in relation to air source heat pumps, the proposed responses to the government's consultations on: 'Changes to Various Permitted Development Rights' and 'Strengthening Planning Policy for Brownfield Development' be approved.

12. **CONSIDERATE LIGHTING CHARTER UPDATE***

The Committee received a report of the City Surveyor and the Interim Executive Director, Environment in respect of the Considerate Lighting Charter ('Charter'), which the City Corporation encouraged those involved in lighting in the City; i.e. - owners, managers and occupiers of existing buildings, to commit to.

A Member asked for the outcome of the discussion on the report which was submitted to the Resource Allocation Sub-Committee meeting in January 2024 and raised concern about the timeline. The Officer stated that the discussion largely focused on the works that were required to the City Corporation's own buildings in order to be able to sign up to the Charter. The Officer advised that the report also went to the Communications and Corporate Affairs Sub-Committee on the 28 February where it received broad support. The Officer stated that in terms of the timeline and next steps, work was being undertaken by the City Surveyors in relation to the nature of the works required to the City of London Corporation's own buildings in order to give assurance to the appropriate committee to be able to sign up to the Charter and be the first signatory on the Charter. Alongside this work, the Planning team were bringing together a round table in April 2024 of building managers, occupiers, and businesses, to understand the appetite for signing up to the Charter and any barriers that might be in place. Information would then be provided to colleagues in the Communications team so they could consider whether there was a role for a communications campaign to promote the Charter.

A Member asked if a pilot could be considered and the Officer confirmed this would be considered as recommendations were made to Communications colleagues. The Officer added that with the round table, consideration would be given to using business owners and building managers to provide expertise and feedback.

A Member commended the thorough work that was being undertaken. Another Member also commended the work. He asked for a timeline and Officers stated that this would be circulated to Members of the Committee.

A Member stated that, particularly with the increase in energy prices, there would be an economic return on being a member of the Charter and the City should work to sign up as soon as possible.

RESOLVED, that the report be noted.

13. **LEVELLING UP AND REGENERATION ACT***

The Committee received a report of the Remembrancer in respect of the planning aspects of the Levelling Up and Regeneration Act 2023.

RESOLVED, that the report be noted.

14. **GENERAL MICROMOBILITY UPDATE AND ACTIONS FOR IMPROVING DOCKLESS BIKE HIRE IN THE CITY***

The Committee received a report of the Interim Executive Director, Environment in respect of Micromobility; i.e. - transportation using lightweight, low speed vehicles such as bicycles or scooters, especially electric ones, which may be borrowed as part of a self-service scheme in which people hire vehicles for short-term use.

A Member suggested that the report, if it had not already been, could be shared with the City of London Police and suggested that they could add insight and possibly support for the action plan. An Officer stated that there was regular discussion with the City of London Police and dockless bikes were discussed. It was important not to add extra burden to a stretched police force in terms of helping to manage the bikes and the parking of the bikes. He added that issues around behaviours were discussed and there were campaigns about work that was being undertaken jointly. The Member stated that it was important for the police to have knowledge of the legal framework they were operating within and stated that the Police Authority Board could be interested in the report. The Officer stated that he would ensure the police were aware of the legal framework around the parking of dockless bikes. He would also offer the report as a for information report to the Police Authority Board. A Member stated that it should be emphasised that there was no expectation for the police to take action in relation to dockless bikes.

RESOLVED, that the report be noted.

15. **BUSINESS PLAN 2023/24 PROGRESS REPORT (PERIOD 2, AUGUST – NOVEMBER 2023)***

The Committee received a report of the Interim Executive Director, Environment which provided an update on progress made during Period 2: 2023/24 (August-November) towards delivery of the Environment Department's High-level Business Plan (2023/24) for the service areas which fall within the remit of the Planning and Transportation Committee.

RESOLVED, that the report be noted.

16. RISK MANAGEMENT UPDATE REPORT*

The Committee received a report of the Interim Executive Director, Environment which sought to provide assurance that risk management procedures in the Environment Department are satisfactory and meet the requirements of the Corporate Risk Management Framework.

RESOLVED, that the report be noted.

17. PUBLIC LIFT & ESCALATOR REPORT*

The Committee received a report of the City Surveyor, which set out the availability and performance of publicly accessible lifts and escalators, monitored and maintained by the City Surveyor, in the reporting period 24 November 2023 to 16 February 2024.

RESOLVED, that the report be noted.

18. TO NOTE THE MINUTES OF THE PLANNING APPLICATIONS SUB-COMMITTEE - 26 JANUARY 2024*

RESOLVED, that the minutes of the Planning Applications Sub Committee of 24 January 2024 be noted.

19. TO NOTE THE DRAFT PUBLIC MINUTES OF THE STREETS AND WALKWAYS SUB-COMMITTEE - 30 JANUARY 2024*

RESOLVED, that the draft minutes of the Streets and Walkway Sub Committee of 30 January 2024 be noted.

20. QUESTIONS ON MATTERS RELATING TO THE WORK OF THE COMMITTEE

A Member queried which provision of the Scheme of Delegations had been relied upon in granting planning permission for a new application for the redevelopment of 81 Newgate Street, which she considered was of broad interest. She asked why this application was not brought to committee, as happened with a previous one for the same redevelopment four years ago.

An Officer stated that the Court of Common Council approved the scheme of delegation in 2021. It set out the parameters in which delegated decisions could be taken. The Officer stated that in terms of the 81 Newgate Street application, it was granted under the scheme of delegation by delegated authority in September 2023 as it was compliance with planning policy and there were no broad interests considered. He advised that the scheme was a full application which comprised amendments to a scheme that was previously consented by the committee in 2021, which had been approved unanimously by 23 votes, with no abstentions.

The Officer stated that only three objections and two letters of support were received. The Officer stated that 9 objections were required for an application to be considered by the Planning Applications Sub-Committee. The Officer had discussed the matter in detail with the Chairman of the Planning and

Transportation Committee who concurred that there was no broader interest and this application should be considered under delegated authority, which it was.

In relation to concern raised by the Member that she was not aware of the application or decision until after it had been granted, the Officer stated he would look into this as the lists of consents issued and applications received were included within the agenda packs sent to Members.

A Member asked for clarification on whether the Chief Planning Officer accepted direction from the Policy Chairman. The Officer stated that the Policy Chairman reasserted the approach that planning in the City had to be positive, non-adversarial and solution-focused, and this was why it was an attractive place for developers and investors. The Officer added that the local plan proactively aimed to accommodate development, and increase the amount of office space. He stated that developers and investors were key to delivering those schemes so they delivered the economic benefits, the prosperity and jobs to maintain the City's international position. Therefore, they were valued stakeholders and customers and complemented the City's strategic policy objectives. The Officer added that as public servants, planning officers were proud of being impartial and independent and offered objective planning advice based on policy and planning, judgement and ultimately the decision on planning rested upon the committee. The Officer stated that developers and investors formed part of a wider ecosystem of stakeholders and customers, all of whom Officers treated with fairness and impartiality.

The Member raised concern that this had not been considered to be of broad interest when the original planning application was of broad interest. She commented that there was a major change from the original application which would affect Destination City, in the loss of the roof terrace for the public to be able to view St Paul's Cathedral and the surrounding area plus the loss of retail on the ground floor.

An Officer stated that the provision of the public terrace was part of the original scheme and was negotiated through robust negotiations by planning officers. The omission of that roof terrace was not a breach of policy and there was not a policy requiring such a terrace. Also, the roof terrace was not there to mitigate heritage harm. In addition, on the site originally, there were no retail units and so the loss of retail was not considered to be contrary to policy. The Member stated that whilst not against policy, she considered that this application should have been brought to committee for debate.

The Chairman stated that the correct process had been followed and the scheme of delegation had been approved by Members at the Court of Common Council.

A Member asked if, with the loss of the roof garden, compensatory benefits had been negotiated. The Officer confirmed that there was a very substantial contribution to the lighting of St Paul's Cathedral as well as other environmental enhancements.

In relation to the matter of broad interest, the Officer stated that this was a matter of judgement and therefore Officers had engaged very closely with the Chairman of the Committee.

In relation to a Member's question about tenancy, an Officer stated that the potential tenancy could not be given any weight in planning terms.

A Member stated that the London Wall lift had been out of service for several weeks. It was not a City lift but was part of the planning permission for London Wall Place. The Member asked if action could be taken to require the lift to be kept in service. Officers confirmed that would look into this matter.

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

1. Digital Planning

The Chairman updated the Committee as follows:

- The City of London Corporation had been successful with both of their applications to the Digital Planning Programme Funding rounds and were one of only 11 local planning authorities to put in successful bids for both funds – the Digital Planning Improvement Fund and the PropTech Innovation Fund.
- The former was a fund designed to support the City Corporation planning team with their advancements in digital maturity and would see the team undertake a Digital Maturity Assessment and form an action plan to further their technological improvements.
- In a joint bid with Southampton City Council, the Innovation Fund would focus around developing a pioneering public facing 3D webmap, which would help explain complex policies to the public, enhancing their understanding and engagement in the planning process. As part of the funding bid the City Corporation would be measuring the impact of these exciting interventions, to continue to improve how planning information was shared with external stakeholders.
- The work that would be undertaken as part of these two successful funding bids was part of a wider programme of Digital Planning work spanning the next 12 months.

2. M&S Decision

The Chairman stated that at the Planning Applications Sub-Committee meeting on 21 July 2023, a Member asked a question about the M&S, Oxford Street being refused permission to demolish the building and rebuild it as a retail and office development. The application had been approved by Westminster City Council; had not been overturned by the Mayor of London; and had been recommended for approval by the Planning Inspector following a public enquiry.

The Chairman stated that on 1 March 2024, the Planning Court (part of the High Court) quashed the Secretary of States's decision. An Officer stated that the presiding judge had decided that the Secretary of State had misinterpreted the National Planning Policy Framework and failed to explain why he disagreed with the inspector's conclusions or adequately explain his own reasoning. The

Officer stated that as with the original decision by the Secretary of State, it was important not to give this decision undue importance. It was just one legal decision, albeit a high-profile one, and did not change national policy or the policies in the Development Plan. The decision did not in any way undermine the current approach – seeking to ensure retention was considered as the starting point for development options, through the process set out in the City Corporation’s Carbon Options Guidance, or the emerging City Plan, which sought to put the ‘retrofit first’ approach into local plan policy. The Officer added that the M&S decision would need to be re-considered by the Secretary of State (unless he choose to appeal the judgement).

22. 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.

23. TO NOTE THE DRAFT NON-PUBLIC MINUTES OF THE STREETS AND WALKWAYS SUB-COMMITTEE - 30 JANUARY 2024*

RESOLVED, that the draft non-public minutes of the Streets and Walkways Sub-Committee of 30 January 2024 be noted.

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

There were no non-public questions.

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

There was no urgent business to be considered in the non-public session.

The meeting closed at 12.05 pm

Chairman

Contact Officer: Zoe Lewis
zoe.lewis@cityoflondon.gov.uk