

PORT HEALTH & ENVIRONMENTAL SERVICES COMMITTEE

Tuesday, 19 September 2023

Minutes of the meeting of the Port Health & Environmental Services Committee held at the Guildhall EC2 at 11.00 am

Present

Members:

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|---------------------------------------|----------------------------|
| Mary Durcan (Chairman) | Deputy Marianne Fredericks |
| Deputy Peter Dunphy (Deputy Chairman) | Wendy Hyde |
| Timothy Butcher | Jason Pritchard |
| John Edwards | |

Officers:

| | |
|-----------------|---------------------------|
| Gavin Stedman | - Environment Department |
| Jenny Pitcairn | - Environment Department |
| Rachel Pye | - Environment Department |
| Bob Roberts | - Environment Department |
| Blair Stringman | - Town Clerk's Department |

1. APOLOGIES

Apologies were received from Steve Goodman, Mandeep Thandi, and Henrika Priest.

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

There were no declarations.

3. MINUTES

The minutes and non-public summary of the meeting held on 30 May 2023 were received.

A correction to the minutes was agreed to list Henrika Priest, and not Andrew McMurtie, as the trustee for Thames 21.

The Committee heard one matter arising from the minutes, which was the presence and removal of graffiti in the City of London. A Member had raised this as a question at Court of Common Council. The Member asked if the graffiti would be removed from City Corporation properties. The response was that officers would provide a follow-up and update on City Corporation properties which had graffiti.

RESOLVED – That the public minutes and non-public summary be approved, as corrected.

4. **OUTSTANDING ACTIONS**

Members received the Committee's Outstanding Actions.

The Committee heard that there were no further updates to the Outstanding Actions.

5. **ANNUAL TERMS OF REFERENCE REVIEW**

The Committee received a report of the Deputy Town Clerk to consider any changes to the Committee's terms of reference.

A Member enquired if building safety was covered in the Committee's terms of reference. Officers would investigate this matter and would provide a response.

A Member enquired which committee would have responsibility for human health. The response was this was the Health and Wellbeing Board, with public health and integrated care arrangements shared with Hackney Council. Some aspects of human health, such as air quality, was the responsibility of the Committee.

6. **AIR QUALITY ANNUAL STATUS REPORT FOR 2022**

The Committee received a report of the Executive Director (Interim) for Environment providing the statutory Annual Status Report in air quality for 2022. Questions and comments were made on the report, as follows:

A Member raised that some nitrogen dioxide and fine particles had risen between 2020 and 2022. The response was that the Covid-19 pandemic had caused reduced traffic in 2020. After the lifting of lockdowns, the levels had risen as traffic returned to the City. However, there had not been a return to pre-pandemic levels. It was raised that a recent Greater London report had reported that 20mph speed limits could increase pollution levels. The response was that the difference was not being measured, and slower traffic meant lower acceleration levels from tailpipes. Electric vehicles, including taxis, had reduced the nitrogen dioxide levels, but take up of electric vehicles was slow.

In response to a question regarding work undertake to reduce levels, the Committee heard that there had been roadside emissions test to identify gross-emitting vehicles. There had also been tests for particulate levels, which had identified commercial cooking as a source of pollution. There was also use of the Private Members Bill to gain legislative powers to deal with non-transport pollutants. The Air Quality Strategy would also be updated.

The Committee heard that current national limits were based on World Health Organization (WHO) guidelines produced in 2005. WHO has since reissued new guidelines, but Central Government had not yet incorporated these into domestic legislation.

A Member asked how the City Corporation were encouraging TfL to reduce the particulates from the tube network in the City of London. The response was that Air Quality Management Partners, which included TfL, would demonstrate how they would commit to improve air quality in the new Air Quality Strategy.

Officers would be reviewing and monitoring pollution and emissions in high-residential areas such as Aldersgate, including the use of three pollution monitors.

It was conformed that the proportions between different sources of pollution, such as buildings and traffics, would be provided in the new Air Quality Strategy.

RESOLVED – That the report be received and its contents noted.

7. **MEDIUM AND HIGH-RISE BUILDING SAFETY PROGRAMME**

The Committee received a report of the Executive Director (Interim) for Environment, concerning data gathered on privately owned residential high-rise blocks of flats. Questions and comments were made as follows:

The categories used created a prioritisation list. High-risk buildings would be considered first ahead of medium-risk buildings. Uncategorised buildings were those buildings of which the City Corporation had no information and were currently investigating. Once categorised, they would be added into the building safety programme. If required, more resources could be made available to address urgent work for the building safety programme.

The speed of the work of the building safety programme would depend on the resources available and would have to factor in any legal processes required.

RESOLVED – That the report be received and its contents noted.

8. **RESOLUTION FROM THE WARD OF PORTSOKEN**

The Committee received a report of the Executive Director (Interim) for Environment, to consider a resolution on environmental anti-social behaviour made at the wardmote meeting for the Ward of Portsoken, which had been considered at the Grand Court of Wardmote and Licensing Committee.

A Member enquired on the strategy for educating anti-social patrons in the City of London area. The response was that the City Corporation were working with the City of London Police, cleansing services, and licensed premises to raise awareness.

Officers would provide data on the numbers of fixed penalty notices issued for street urination.

The Committee heard that reactive work on anti-social issues included a 24-hour noise service and a rapid response for cleansing issues. It was found that early interventions worked best in the City of London, and weekly meetings were held to discuss current issues and address upcoming events that may have an impact on street cleansing.

It was raised that authority could be delegated to bodies such as Park Guard for enforcement and issue of penalty notices. The Committee heard that officers in Environment were working with Community & Childrens Services and the Police Authority for a report to be received at the Policy & Resources Committee on adoption of powers from the Community Safety Accreditation Scheme. This would propose the ability for Local Authority officers or contractors to issue penalty notices and take enforcement, across a range of anti-social issues. Funding routes were also being explored to expand the Park Guard service.

The Committee heard that the Safer City Partnership provided the strategic approach with strategy and an action plan for anti-social issues, such as street urination. It was overseen by the Crime & Disorder Scrutiny Committee. The membership of the Partnership and Scrutiny Committee would be shared with Members. The Strategy would also be circulated.

The Committee discussed the reduction in resources for street cleansing and increasing resources to address street cleansing issues. It was agreed for a report to be received at the Committee's next meeting concerning a financial deep dive on budget and resources were available, and what additional resources would be required to improve street cleansing. A Member raised that the Planning and Transportation Committee were due to receive a report from a consultancy on steps required for Destination City, and this would have implications for street cleansing. Officers would follow up on this and provide a report to the next meeting of the Committee.

RESOLVED – That the report be received and its contents noted.

9. REVENUE OUTRRUN 2022/23

The Committee received a joint report of the Chamberlain and Executive Director (Interim) for Environment concerning the revenue outturn for the services overseen by the Committee for 2022-23.

RESOLVED – That the report be received and its contents noted.

10. BORDER TARGET OPERATING MODEL UPDATE (VERBAL UPDATE)

The Committee received a verbal update of the Executive Director (Interim) for Environment on the Border Target Operating Model.

The Committee heard that it had previously received an update on the new draft Border Target Operating Model, which set out the approach for border controls for food, feed, plants, seeds, and live animals. It would also provide information on authorities' responsibilities in the new border regime. It would take a risk based approach and ensure consistent application for rest of world and EU trade. Following consultation feedback with stakeholders, Defra had released the new Border Target Operating Model in August 2023. The implementation dates for the new regime would begin on 31 January 2024. Importers would have to provide pre-notification paperwork for medium-risk food, feed, plants, and seeds. From 30 April 2024, there would be documentation, physical, and identity checks on food and feed. In October,

there would be a single trade window in which documentation would be submitted via one online portal. In October 2024, controls on high-risk live animal imports would come into effect.

Officers were working with the information provided by HMRC, Defra, and customs to assess the impact of the new Border Target Operating Model to provide the resources required for the services. Officers were awaiting for further information before they could determine the appropriate resources. Work needed to be done in relation to the funding and resources programme, as it was likely that more employees would be required for the additional border controls. The Committee would then receive an update at its next meeting.

A Member enquired whether documentation would be electronic. The response was that the Port Health Authority already operates as a paperless office, and there was a move to make the process electronic, they that this would also require a change in legislation.

The Committee heard that 8 members of staff were funded by Defra. There needed to be further understanding of the impact of the additional work, but it is estimated the services could increase up to 40 additional staff. Under the current regime, Defra were providing funding to ensure that the authority was prepared for implementation, but it would not become cost neutral until the controls take effect in April 2024.

RESOLVED – That the verbal update be received and noted.

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

A Member raised that residents who did not live on Golden Lane Estate did not have access to the electronic and clothing recycling banks. It had been confirmed that non-residents could access those recycling banks, and the Member thanked officers for their assistance. The Committee heard that the only recycling stream which non-residents did not have access to was small electricals. It was confirmed that officers would work to make signage clearer and monitor flytipping activities.

A Member report issues of contractor First Mile commercial waste collection trucks have liquid leakage issues onto the street. This was an issue for both old and newer trucks and were not equipped to deal with liquid leakage. The response was refuse collection vehicles should have liquid refuse containment and have highlighted the issue with First Mile, and would charge if cleaning was required. Officers would investigate if Fixed Penalty Notices could be issued.

A Member raised that the Port Health Rowing Team competed in the Great River Race and congratulated organisers on the success of the event.

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

The following items were heard:

- The ban on single use plastic would come into force on 1 October 2023.
- The Chair reminded the Committee of upcoming events.

- It was requested that methods reporting of graffiti be shared with the Committee.

13. EXCLUSION OF THE PUBLIC

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

14. NON-PUBLIC MINUTES

RESOLVED – That the non-public minutes of the previous meeting held on 30 May 2023 be approved as a correct record.

15. PORT HEALTH AND ENVIRONMENTAL SERVICES DEBTORS - PERIOD ENDING 30 JUNE 2023

The Committee received a report of the Executive Director (Interim) for Environment, concerning debtors for the period ending 30 June 2023.

16. HARC UPDATE (VERBAL UPDATE)

The Committee received a verbal update of the Executive Director (Interim) for Environment concerning the Heathrow Animal Reception Centre (HARC).

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

Questions were raised in relation to Appendix 2 of Agenda Item 7.

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

There were no items of non-public urgent business.

The meeting closed at 1.00 pm

Chairman

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