

## **PLANNING AND TRANSPORTATION COMMITTEE**

**Tuesday, 6 October 2020**

**Minutes of the meeting of the Planning and Transportation Committee held via Microsoft Teams at 10.30 am**

### **Present**

#### **Members:**

Deputy Alastair Moss (Chair)  
Oliver Sells QC (Deputy Chairman)  
Munsur Ali  
Randall Anderson  
Peter Bennett  
Mark Bostock  
Deputy Keith Bottomley  
Henry Colthurst  
Deputy Peter Dunphy  
John Edwards  
Marianne Fredericks  
Tracey Graham  
Graeme Harrower

Sheriff Christopher Hayward  
Christopher Hill  
Alderman Robert Hughes-Penney  
Deputy Jamie Ingham Clark  
Alderwoman Susan Langley  
Oliver Lodge  
Deputy Brian Mooney (Chief Commoner)  
Barbara Newman  
Graham Packham  
Susan Pearson  
Judith Pleasance  
Alderman Sir David Wootton

#### **Officers:**

Gemma Stokley	- Town Clerk's Department
Julie Mayer	- Town Clerk's Department
Leanne Murphy	- Town Clerk's Department
Rhiannon Leary	- Town Clerk's Department
Shani Annand-Baron	- Media Officer
James Gibson	- IS Services
Dipti Patel	- Chamberlain's Department
Deborah Cluett	- Comptroller and City Solicitor's Department
Paul Wright	- Deputy Remembrancer
Alison Bunn	- City Surveyor's Department
Jessica Lees	- City Surveyor's Department
Carolyn Dwyer	- Director of the Built Environment
David Horkan	- Department of the Built Environment
Elisabeth Hannah	- Department of the Built Environment
Craig Stansfield	- Department of the Built Environment
Gordon Roy	- District Surveyor
Craig Stansfield	- Department of the Built Environment
Paul Monaghan	- Department of the Built Environment
Ian Hughes	- Department of the Built Environment
Bhakti Depala	- Department of the Built Environment
Peter Shadbolt	- Department of the Built Environment
Toni Bright	- Department of the Built Environment
Gemma Delves	- Department of the Built Environment

Neel Devlia	- Department of the Built Environment
Thomas Creed	- Department of the Built Environment
Kieran Mackay	- Department of the Built Environment
Joanna Parker	- Department of the Built Environment
Ted Rayment	- Department of the Built Environment
Emmanuel Ojugo	- Department of the Built Environment
Amrith Sehmi	- Department of the Built Environment
Holly Smith	- Department of the Built Environment
Kurt Gagen	- Department of the Built Environment
Rachel Pye	- Markets and Consumer Protection
Robin Whitehouse	- Markets and Consumer Protection
Ruth Calderwood	- Markets and Consumer Protection

### **Also In Attendance:**

Alderman Alison Gowman

Amir Eden - Executive Chair of Living Bankside

Tony Bartle - Head of Real Estate at Nomura Bank, Angel Lane,

Heather Sibley - Man Group, Swan Lane

Councillor Adele Morris - representative of Borough and Bankside Ward and Vice Chair of Planning Sub-Committee A and Licensing Committee, Southwark

Michelle Lovric - Living Bankside

Barnaby Collins – DP9

### **Introductions**

The Town Clerk opened the meeting by introducing herself and stating that the Committee was quorate.

A roll call of Members present was undertaken.

The Town Clerk highlighted that the meeting was being recorded as well as live streamed and would be made available on the City Corporation's YouTube page for a period of time after the meeting had concluded. With this in mind, it was confirmed that participants in the meeting had all individually agreed and given their consent to being recorded and that all personal data would be processed in accordance with the Data Protection Act 2018. The Town Clerk highlighted that, for further information on this, viewers could contact the City Corporation using the details provided on the public webpages.

### **1. APOLOGIES**

Apologies for absence were received from Shravan Joshi, Natasha Lloyd-Owen, Andrew Mayer, Sylvia Moys, Henry Pollard and James de Sausmarez.

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

There were no declarations.

### **3. MINUTES**

The Committee considered the public minutes and non-public summary of the virtual meeting held on 8<sup>th</sup> September 2020.

## **MATTERS ARISING**

**Princes Street** (page 24) – A Member who had raised concerns around trip hazards on the pavements at Princes Street at the last meeting thanked Officers for responding to her on this point. She stated that she had since had the opportunity to send them some photographs of the site and the issues here.

**22 Bishopsgate** (page 24) – A Member who had raised concerns around the size of the trees installed at 22 Bishopsgate stated that she was yet to have a response from Officers on this point and asked that they look into this matter and report back.

**Any Other Business that the Chair considers urgent and which the Committee agrees should be considered whilst the public are excluded** (page 26) – A Member stated that, whilst further discussion had taken place on the Tulip Inquiry during non-public session at the last meeting, there was no justification for the matters discussed to remain non-public and asked that this therefore be moved into the public minutes of the last meeting ahead of these being finalised and published. The Chair agreed with this proposed amendment which was also seconded. The Town Clerk undertook to make the amendment.

**RESOLVED** – That, subject to the amendment above and moving the minutes of the non-public discussion on the Tulip Inquiry into the public minutes of the virtual meeting held on 8<sup>th</sup> September 2020, they be approved as a correct record.

### **4. OUTSTANDING ACTIONS**

The Committee received a report of the Town Clerk detailing the Committee's outstanding actions.

## **RECEIVED.**

### **5. SWAN LANE PIER, 1 SWAN LANE LONDON EC4R 3TN**

The Committee considered a report of the Interim Chief Planning Officer and Development Director regarding an application for Swan Lane Pier, 1 Swan Lane, London EC4R 3TN, specifically the erection of a new pier within the River Thames at Swan Lane, to comprise a refurbished landside access platform; new canting brow and pontoon; dredging and filling of river bed; repair and reinstatement of camphed and riverbank; replacement of mooring pile and installation of additional mooring pile.

The Town Clerk drew Members' attention to the fact that a supplementary document pack containing additional background papers had also been circulated and published yesterday afternoon.

Officers presented the application to Members reporting that the site in question was located at the end of Swan Lane, between London Bridge and Cannon Street railway bridge. It was highlighted that, adjacent to the pier itself, was Riverbank House – an office building – with Seal House situated to the right-hand side of this, which had recently received planning permission for

redevelopment. Members were informed that a pier had previously existed on this site but had fallen out of use in 2012 with only two dolphin structures and a landside access platform now remaining at the existing site. Officers reported that the application sought permission for the erection and reinstatement of a new pier with associated works. The extent of the works would include a refurbished landside access platform, a new canting brow and pontoon, a replacement and a new mooring pile, the dredging and filling of part of the riverbed and the repair and reinstatement of the campshed and riverbed. The application stated that the works would provide a multi-use pier with two berths for embarking and disembarking only. One berth would be used primarily as a mooring for larger event charter vessels. The application also stated that the pontoon berth would have the capacity to support freight operations, charter vessels and passenger ferry services such as river taxis and cruises as well as emergency response operations. It was noted that one particular vessel was referred to throughout the application – namely the Ocean Diva – which had been the subject of the majority of objections received.

Members were shown an image of the existing elevation at low tide which showed the existing dolphins in the riverbed. The proposed elevation at low tide depicted the canting brow, the pontoon and the two mooring piles to the left. The proposed elevation at high tide depicted how the pontoon would raise up and that the majority of the proposed structures (with the exception of the canting brow) would be the same height as the river wall. Further images showed an existing cross section of the site at low tide and the existing relationship between the existing dolphin and the riverbank. The same cross section was then shown with the proposed pontoon and pier at low tide and, similarly, at high tide. Members were also shown an image of a close up of the pontoon itself, depicting access via the canting brow to the first of two levels and a smaller access ramp down to the lower level. It was proposed that larger vessels would moor to the left-hand side of the pontoon as shown in the image. Some CGIs of the proposed pier and pontoon were also shown. Close up images of the land access platform were shown. Here, the proposed platform lift was also visible which would provide level and inclusive access to the pier itself. An image depicting the access point as you approach Swan Lane Pier at the end of Swan Lane was shared. This showed the access platform and the existing steps up to the platform itself leading to the canting brow.

Officers went on to share images depicting the extent of the dredging that would be required as well as the area to be infilled in the riverbed to accommodate the camp shed which would enable vessels to be moored at this location.

In terms of the representations received, Officers reported that a total of 836 objections had been lodged across three separate consultations – 238 of these in response to the latest consultation exercise. A detailed summary of these were set out within the report but Members were informed that the principal issues related to noise disturbance (primarily from the Ocean Diva) as well as the adverse impact of passengers embarking and disembarking from the vessels onto the pier. With regard to the principle of the development, Officers reminded the Committee that both the London Plan and the City's Local Plan

supported the use of the river for transport and recreation, highlighting that Local Plan Policy actually went as far as to encourage the reinstatement of Swan Lane Pier itself. The principle, therefore, of a new pier and associated works was acceptable, subject to its versatility to allow for freight operations. It was noted that the application did contain a freight proposal but this was only designed for the smallest type of cargo bike and was not therefore considered to offer a sustainable and feasible freight operation facility and, as such, failed to meet the policy requirements. With regard to noise and disturbance, it was acknowledged that the operation of any pier had the potential to generate issues in this respect. However, it was considered that adequate controls could be secured by way of condition and Section 106 agreement to minimise the impact of this. Such measures might include, for example, limiting the number of passengers in any vessels, the frequency of use of the pier, the length of time permitted for mooring, restriction of music when moored and management plans around the embarkation and disembarkation of passengers and restrictions on the servicing of any vessels from the pier. With controls such as these in place, it was considered that the impact from any vessel and its use of the pier could be adequately mitigated such that there would not be a significant adverse impact on the amenity of the area. With regard to trip generation, it was noted that whilst there was the potential for a large number of people to be embarking and disembarking at the pier, an Event Management Plan had been submitted with the application which, amongst many other measures, specified that there would be staggered arrivals and departures as well as designated pick-up and drop-off points via a booking system for disembarkation. It was therefore not considered that the proposal would have a significant adverse impact on the capacity of the network or on the public transport system.

In conclusion, Officers stated that the proposal was considered unacceptable as it would not provide a sustainable and feasible freight operation when it was considered that this was an absolute requirement when seeking to reinstate Swan Lane Pier. For this reason, it was recommended that planning permission be refused.

The Chair thanked Officers for their presentation. The Town Clerk introduced four registered objectors (Amir Eden, Executive Chair of Living Bankside, Tony Bartle, Head of Real Estate at Nomura Bank, Angel Lane, Heather Sibley, Man Group, Swan Lane and Councillor Adele Morris, representative of Borough and Bankside Ward and Vice Chair of Planning Sub-Committee A and Licensing Committee, Southwark) and invited them each, in turn, to address the Committee.

Mr Eden began by underlining that the scheme had attracted 836 objections with over 2,200 people signing a petition against it. Objectors included Southwark Cathedral, Tower of London, Shakespeare's Globe Theatre, the River Thames Society and the London Wildlife Trust. It had also been called in by the Mayor of London because of strategic concerns and failed to comply with the London Plan. Mr Eden went on to comment that few would object to the installation of a truly green pier with a gentle footprint on the Thames that was policy compliant and offered public transport, connectivity, healthy

journeys, viable light freight, enhanced biodiversity and increased accessibility to the river. He emphasised that this, however, was not that pier. He noted that this pier was co-funded by and bespoke designed as a City of London base for Europe's biggest party boat – the Ocean Diva. It was not the reinstatement of a historic pier but the reinvention of an entire city foreshore to serve a mega party boat. Mr Eden showed an image of how the size of the Ocean Diva would dwarf the pontoon but commented that objections today were not about the boat per se and were actually about the scheme's overall impact on the environment, public realm, offices and homes as well as the burden it would place on the emergency services. Mr Eden highlighted that for those wanting to see an image of the Ocean Diva they could not, underlining that, in all of the CGIs provided, the pier fades to white where the Ocean Diva would be. However, without the Ocean Diva, there would be no need for a dredge of 2,200 meters to create a private, underwater harbour with even the applicant admitting that this sediment would be too toxic to dispose of at scene. Mr Eden noted that there was no compensatory biodiversity enhancement offered as required by the London Plan. He added that archaeologists feared for the foreshore of Roman London under these proposals. The proposed use of this private pier also entailed the unwelcome colonisation of prime City public realm. The City of London Police had raised concerns about crowds, noise and disorder and Mr Eden commented that partygoers were not commuters and often brought loud noise, litter, urination, vomiting and safety risks to others as well as to themselves. He went on to state that light and noise pollution would become a problem for hundreds of long-term riverside residents including children trying to live, work and sleep well with earshot of this scheme. As an agent of change, the scheme offered insufficient mitigation to protect amenity. In Mr Eden's opinion, the applicant had inaccurately suggested that noise would be reduced over water. However, he commented that the science showed that it was, in fact, amplified. He added that Londoners also had a right to decent air quality and noted that, whilst ULEZ did not cover the river, marine emissions, sadly, did not know the difference between the river and nearby offices, schools or homes and neither did noise or light pollution. Mr Eden went on to refer to the applicant's green claims for a new electric Diva but questioned where the substantiation for its construction, use of futuristic tech, recharging infrastructure and draw on the City grid came from. He added that objectors were very concerned that these green claims would not and could not be fulfilled for years and that there would be minor variations made later that would revert back to the use of old, dirty tech.

Mr Eden concluded by reporting that, at a public meeting last May, all of the objectors' worries were dismissed with the applicants stating that they run a 'superb' operation and that there would therefore be no noise, light or air problems. Given that the Ocean Diva was currently based in Amsterdam, objectors had subsequently reached out to citizens there.

Mr Eden reported that the response received from them had been to instruct objectors here to fight this application to save their public realm.

Mr Bartle began by reporting that the old Swan Lane Pier had closed in 2012 after many issues with party boats. Disappointingly, this scheme reverted back to the party boat model but on a massively increased scale.

Mr Bartle went on to state that none of the highways, environmental or amenity issues raised by the Mayor had been resolved and, in his opinion, they could not be. He commented that the applicants were trying to insert their business into a location that was deeply incompatible with their operation: incompatible with policy, security, health and safety requirements and incompatible with safeguarding the amenity of existing City firms. He remarked that, currently, office workers in the vicinity enjoyed fresh air and views from the Riverside Walkway but highlighted that this was a narrow space with no parking, no cycle racks, no drinking fountain and no public toilets. With the addition of 1000 or even just 200 Ocean Diva partygoers, this public realm would quickly become impassable and intolerable. Mr Bartle too commented on the fact that none of the CGIs showed this pier doing the one thing it was specifically designed to do: embark and disembark up to 1500 Ocean Diva passengers. Congestion on the Riverside walk was inevitable. Whilst the applicants state that servicing would take place at Newham, they also state that fresh food and flowers would come via Swan Lane. Mr Bartle commented that food and flowers for 1000 people certainly seemed like servicing, yet he noted that this scheme offered no Service Management Plan. Mr Bartle reported that local public transport here halved at 1am but noted that the applicants downplay the number of taxis and Ubers that the Ocean Diva would draw here. He added that the Mayor had wanted 'robust measures' against the taxi problem. Instead, what was being offered were 'dream scenarios' of marshals controlling up to 1000 as they arrive and exit on a timed basis. This would inevitably lead to the blocking of the Red Route with the arrival of multiple taxis and Ubers and make the local area intolerable.

Mr Bartle noted that the City of London Police have said, 'the area is not equipped to deal with the large numbers of people leaving the main party boat, regardless of the projected dispersal arrangements. He added that he found the applicants offers for noise reduction to be equally unrealistic on the core issue of partygoers' elevated voices and unsociable behaviour on the Riverside Walk. The applicants claim to have made concessions yet limiting parties to 1000 people four times a year would simply mean that up to 999 people would be permitted at all other times of the year and with no litter or cleansing plan proposed. Another concession offered by the applicants was to spend longer at Swan Lane between events but this would mean that, for up to eleven hours a day, a party-boat as big as a building would be moored yards from our 24-hour offices. He commented that, at high tide, the top of the boat and partygoers on top deck would be eye-to-eye with his staff up to level 2.

Mr Bartle concluded by stating that this scheme would degrade the functionality, privacy, safety and thus the value of adjacent properties, reducing their attractiveness for tenants. The City's Local Plan provides that office stock and quality must be protected.

Ms Sibley began by highlighting that Swan Lane is a small, busy dead-end road that services Riverbank House and Seal House. She added that it would also be the only vehicular access to the Pier and that, with no turning circle, the

potential for congestion was clear. Ms Sibley underlined that access must be retained at all times for vehicles servicing Riverbank House and that any waiting vehicles – whether food delivery, taxi set-down or pick-up, or cargo bikes – would reduce Swan Lane to single track lane. Access to Man Group's car park and loading bay could be severely impeded as a result and impeding access to the car lifts here would lead to other vehicles backing up, maybe even onto Upper Thames Street, a Red Route. Air quality would also be reduced by the inevitable idling vehicles.

Ms Sibley went on to report that this scheme failed to take into account that Seal House at 1 Swan Lane is currently empty pending redevelopment and that Seal House's loading bay is also on Swan Lane. Once this 11-storey building is fully occupied with a retail outlet on Riverside Walk, congestion in Swan Lane will intensify greatly.

It was noted that the applicants claim that freight is a cornerstone of their scheme, yet freight had been marginalized to a single small daily delivery. In some reports, the applicants claim that there is a sorting office on the pier, but others say that freight would arrive pre-sorted. Some reports say that the bikes would ride down to the pontoon - others say that they cannot. In any case, Ms Sibley highlighted that the pier's design allowed for only smaller bikes and so larger bikes would need to use Riverside Walk or Swan Lane for both waiting and loading, thereby adding further to congestion. Couriers would need to carry manual loads up and down the brow which would not be an efficient or streamlined form of last-mile delivery. Ms Sibley commented that this scheme would take some vans off of the City's roads each year, however, the number would be vastly overshadowed by the traffic generated by Ocean Diva passengers accessing the site via taxi and car hire.

Ms Sibley concluded by stating that this scheme was a lost opportunity for a sustainable, truly river-related mixed-use pier with a meaningful freight service and that she therefore welcomed the Planning Officer's recommendation to refuse.

Councillor Morris began by stating that whilst this application was for the pier, it was also to facilitate the Ocean Diva. She referred to the fact that the Mayor had mentioned the impact on navigation and that the current plan was to back the Ocean Diva under London Bridge into its Swan Lane berth. She highlighted that the Millennium of Peace had wedged under Westminster Bridge last year causing major disruption and that, in Venice, the MSC Opera had crashed into the embankment. Just last year, 27 people had died in a Budapest leisure boat collision. Councillor Morris commented that an incident on a vessel this big would put an unprecedented burden on the emergency services and questioned how 1000 partygoers could be evacuated with any urgency onto a pier that was just a quarter of the size of their boat. It was noted that the London Plan stated terror and crime must be designed out of new schemes, however it is not clear how this has been considered either with the pier or the boat.



Councillor Morris reported that the City's Environmental Health Officer wanted this pier closed by 11pm and no events on Sunday but that the applicants have asked for permission to operate until 1am, seven days a week. She added that the alcohol licence for the Ocean Diva would be issued by Newham Council and could permit the boat to continue causing disturbance along the river until 3am, docking back in Newham.

Councillor Morris noted that the London Port Health Authority (LPHA) is charged with river noise enforcement but that they now wanted this done by riparian councils. However, it was reported that this is already a complex process for council noise teams to respond to the many complaints received about noise on the river from party boats – with moving noise particularly difficult.

Councillor Morris concluded by underlining that London does not need another luxury paywall pier. She stated that what London needs is a pier giving more public access to the river, more public transport and a viable freight offer and urged the Committee to accept the Officer recommendation to refuse this application.

The Chair thanked all four objectors for their contributions and invited questions from Members. The Town Clerk reported that the objectors were also joined by Michelle Lovric of Living Bankside who would assist in responding to any queries.

The Chief Commoner queried whether it would be possible for the Committee to be shown an image depicting the full scale of the Ocean Diva so that they might get a real idea of its proportions and size. Ms Lovric commented that the objectors had sought CGIs of the vessel in place at high tide or low tide but noted that none had been produced. The Chair suggested that Officers may also want to respond on this point in due course.

The Deputy Chairman also questioned why it was not possible to see CGI images of the Ocean Diva in situ at the Pier. He questioned whether it was the same vessel that was currently moored in Amsterdam. Ms Lovric responded by stating that the objectors were not entirely clear on this point. She reported that the applicants claimed that they were building a third boat that would run on lithium ion batteries, be carbon neutral and have a recharging facility somewhere on the Thames. However, the Clean Maritime Plan stated that such facilities would not be available for another ten years. Objectors were therefore unclear as to whether the boat had already been built and had serious concerns that permission for this pier, should it be granted, would be used as a place saver to bring in one of the two Ocean Divas that were already in existence. It was noted that the original Ocean Diva was 282 feet long and the Ocean Diva Futura was a little shorter but that both ran on the old, dirty fuels and combustion engines. All of the noise and air quality assessments that had been carried out around this project were based on a boat with no emissions and no noise.

The Town Clerk introduced Barnaby Collins, Board Director of DP9, speaking in favour of the application, and invited him to address the Committee.

Mr Collins reported that there had been a pier at Swan Lane for over 400 years with a long history of river related use. The City of London granted planning permission in 1989 for an additional pontoon and before this, in 1985, for the permanent mooring of a floating restaurant and functions venue. In 2012, the pier and pontoon were removed as both had fallen into disrepair, but the two dolphins and other parts still remained. Mr Collins underlined that the current planning application simply sought to reinstate the pier and pontoon to provide facilities for legitimate, river related activities such as freight and charter vessel embark and disembarkation – not permanent mooring. He highlighted that policy CS9 of the City Plan promotes “functional uses of the river through retaining Swan Lane Pier” and that the proposal before the Committee fully complied with the City’s adopted Local Plan. He added that policies VT4 and of the draft new City Plan also sought the reinstatement of Swan Lane Pier which is what the application proposes with the Officers report confirming that it is compliant. He went on to state that the City’s Transport Strategy promotes “a reinstated Swan Lane Pier as a point to transfer weight for last-mile delivery on foot or by cargo bike” and that the proposal aligned exactly with this objective.

Mr Collins commented that Swan Lane Pier would never be and should not be a fully-fledged freight transfer terminal. To accommodate the necessary construction materials for this and the full range of freight delivery would require a significantly larger pontoon, landside crange and HGV onward distribution which was not considered appropriate or desirable. Proposals here included light weight, last-mile goods delivery with goods received by boat, exactly as per the recent DHL launch at Millennium Pier, sorted and then delivered by cargo bike – all from the pontoon with no landside land required. At full capacity, this would be expected to remove between 2500-5000 van deliveries from the City’s roads annually. In addition, the proposals were for a zero emissions facility with all vessels, including charter vessels, attending required to be emissions free making these the first of their kind.

With regard to charter vessels navigating the Thames, Mr Collins underlined that planning authorities could not control matters such as noise and air quality but that, via this planning application for the pier, it was possible to condition such matters. The applicant had unilaterally proposed noise limitations to prevent disturbance and, as previously noted, has proposed zero emission vessel use only.

Mr Collins noted that the City’s transport Officers had objected to the proposal on the basis that it was not proven to be viable for a full variety of cargo cycles or freight operators however, this was not a policy requirement and no evidence had been produced to substantiate that the proposal is unworkable. In fact, the report noted that smaller cargo bikes could operate here successfully and it was highlighted that the applicant may wish to operate the facility itself using such bikes or in partnership with other providers such as DHL who, incidentally, use the smaller bikes proposed here at their operation at Millennium Bridge which was launched just last week.

In summary, Mr Collins stated that the application complies fully with the City's development plan and could make a significant contribution to the City's desire for more sustainable, last mile delivery. It would reinstate a 400-year-old pier, would utilise zero emission vessels, control noise emissions and take vehicles off of the City's roads. It was noted that there were no design objections and that the GLA were supportive of the proposal in principle, the EA were satisfied and the PLA supportive. He therefore expressed his surprise at the fact that the application was recommended for refusal.

The Chair thanked Mr Collins for his contribution and invited questions from Members.

The Deputy Chairman asked the same question of Mr Collins that he had previously asked of the applicant and asked whether an image of the Ocean Diva in relation to the proposed pier and the riverside was available. Mr Collins reported that he did not have an image to hand and reiterated that this application was for the pier itself and that any number of vessels would be able to use the pier including emergency vessels, charter vessels and freight delivery vessels. The Deputy Chairman responded by stating that the difficulty with this was therefore that this application potentially involved the mooring of a vessel of unlimited size. Mr Collins stated, once more, that this application was not for a particular vessel.

A Member questioned the enforcement measures and the protections that would be put forward via Section 106 to deal with noise and dispersal issues and whether the applicant had come across instances where these had been effective. She commented that they did not appear to be effective at Tower Pier in relation to the embarking and disembarking of party boats and underlined that the main issue appeared to be once passengers had left the boats it was very difficult to manage their behaviours once the boat had left the pier. She went on to report that, in her experience, boats moored at Tower Pier, disembarked very quickly and departed with a lot of passengers behind noisily trying to find onward transport. She therefore questioned how enforceable these conditions would be and who would enforce them. Finally, she commented that she did not think that the size of the boat would have anything to do with the noise that was generated by passengers as a small group could often be as problematic as a larger group. Mr Collins reported that, had the pier not been taken apart in 2012 and remained in existence, there would be nothing that the City could do as a planning authority to control noise disturbance from visiting vessels. However, because of the concerns now raised, the applicants had unilaterally proposed conditions or Section 106 obligations for things such as Event Management Plans, noise control measures and noise assessments thus enabling the City as a planning authority to have power through non-compliance with these conditions or legal agreements to enforce compliance as set out within the original agreements and allow them to have some form of control over the vessels themselves rather than over the pier only.

Another Member remarked that the applicants had, rather obviously, suggested that the pier would not be suitable for heavy freight and HGVs however, it

seemed that what was being proposed was the absolute minimum offering that might be termed as light freight. He therefore questioned why they had not taken the opportunity, in light of the City's policy, to put forward a significant light freight offering. Mr Collins responded by reiterating that this was not an appropriate site for anything more than light freight delivery which meant parcels that could ordinarily be delivered by hand or by cycle. He added that the pontoon itself could handle 45,000 litres of light freight goods per day which was expected to take between 2,500-5,000 vans off of the City's roads. Heavy freight would require landside crange to take goods off of the pontoon and take them landside with vehicles larger than cargo bikes then required for onward delivery which was not felt to be appropriate.

A Member commented that, as she understood it, there were no mooring piles on the site at present, she therefore questioned whether the new mooring piles were going to be placed/spaced as proposed due to the size of the Ocean Diva or whether this particular vessel would still be able to moor here if they were to be placed elsewhere. She also went on to question, with regard to freight bikes, whether these would sit in Swan Lane with light freight being carried up to them given that there was only a small disabled lift proposed for the pier. Mr Collins reported that he understood that there was one existing mooring pile on site and that the second pile proposed would be spaced so that it could allow a very broad range of vessels to embark and disembark here. Mr Collins went on to share images of the DHL bullet cargo bikes that were launched at Millennium Pier last week. These were 145litre sized bike and the images produced as part of the application showed how these particular bikes could be cycled down the canting brow onto the pontoon to be loaded with freight and either pushed or cycled back up again. Bikes would therefore not be left queuing on the riverside.

Finally, Officers reported that whilst there were various images available of the Ocean Diva, this application was for the pier itself and so no images of the vessel at this location had been provided in either the applications or the objections. A good indication, however, was the plan showed within the Officer presentation showing the extent of dredging proposed and the campshed which demonstrated that it was intended that a large vessel would be able to moor against the pier.

Seeing no further questions of Mr Collins, the Chair asked that Members now move to any general questions they might have outstanding and to debate the application.

A Member spoke to state that he agreed with the Officer recommendation and did not support this application which he viewed as a missed opportunity in terms of freight. He commented that the majority of the objections received related to noise and light pollution, access and hourly limitations and noted that all of these issues would need to be faced in future if there were real ambitions to turn this location into a freight hub.

Another Member remarked that the Officer report recommended refusal but only on the narrow ground that the proposed pier would not "provide for a

sustainable freight offering” which would mean that it was not compliant with planning policy. However, he doubted whether this point was uppermost in the mind of the 836 people who had submitted objections and the 2200 people who had signed the petition. He went on to state that the notion of the river Thames as a major freight thoroughfare belonged to the past although he accepted that some greater use of the river for this purpose was desirable as reflected in planning policies. The objector presentations today had set out more intuitive causes for concern and included material planning considerations such as the problems caused by up to 1000 partygoers disembarking down a narrow lane after having consumed alcohol and competing for cabs. However, this matter was dismissed within the report as something that could be managed through an Operational Management Plan to be agreed with the applicant – he stated that he found this to be unconvincing and added that the City of London Police, on whom the bulk of any failure to comply with the plan would inevitably fall, stated that “the area is not equipped to deal with the large numbers of people leaving the main party boat regardless of the projected dispersal arrangements”. This significant representation did not, however, appear to be taken into account in the report. The Member clarified that he intended to vote against this application and in favour of the officer recommendation to refuse not only on the narrow ground of the proposed pier not being viable for meaningful freight traffic but also on the more important grounds of amenity, noise from crowds landside, pedestrian congestion, potential disorder and others raised by the objectors. He suggested that other Members sharing these same concerns should voice them so that, if this application were to be refused and the applicant were to subsequently appeal the decision, the reasons for refusal were broadly based and not based solely on one instance of non-compliance with policy.

Another Member spoke to state that he agreed with all of the reasons for refusal set out by the previous speaker and remarked that this was a very unique application in that it was the first time that he could recall being asked to deliberate over an application for a pier as opposed to a building. Simply put, he stated that he felt that this was the wrong application in the wrong place. He added that he was not against the reinstatement of Swan Lane Pier, neither was he against the greater use of the River Thames for carrying light freight, nor would he be against the introduction of a pier that facilitated business commuters coming into the City. What he was against, was something which could end up as a ‘noose around the City’s neck’ where the Committee were essentially being asked to grant permission for a huge party boat to moor in what was also a residential area. He added that he took great exception to not being able to see images of the Ocean Diva and that way in which it had been faded out in the CGIs submitted and found this to be very suspicious. He concluded by stating that he felt that the applicant had put forward a weak case and that he felt that the Committee would therefore be unanimous in refusing this application and would want to avoid inflicting a problem on the City, its residents and its businesses that they could well do without.

The Deputy Chairman spoke to endorse the words of the previous speaker and added that he was sad to see that this application had been made in this way

given that there were so many better things that could have been done by the applicant at this site for the community as a whole. This, however, appeared to be an entirely self-centred, commercial proposal of the worst kind that did nothing for the City as a whole. He reiterated that being unable to see the nature of the vessel that would be going up and down the river was disappointing and underlined that no assurances or clarity had been given by the applicants' representative today on this matter. He concluded by stating that this application should therefore be refused.

Another Member spoke to state that she had previously fought long and hard for increased use of the river, particularly in terms of freight and fully appreciated that this application was not about a specific vessel but about a pier. She went on to say that she was therefore deeply saddened to see that this opportunity to use this pier for some meaningful freight operation had been pushed aside in favour of the party boat experience. She added that Swan Lane Pier was an incredibly important pier, one of the oldest piers on the river and, reported that in the old days of London Bridge, passengers would take a boat to Swan Lane Pier, disembark and cross the bridge to get to the other side and on to another boat because the currents under the bridge were too treacherous for the lightermen to sail through. She added that the issue here was the suggestion that an Event Management Plan was enforceable when it was clearly not and was practical. She stated that, for all the Section 106 agreements and license conditions that vessels may have, they sailed in, disembarked rapidly and left piers leaving local authorities to deal with issues around noise and any disorderly behaviour. The Member therefore agreed that one of the main reasons for refusing to grant this application was this. She underlined that the City's planning team had just one Enforcement Officer and that it was impossible for him to be everywhere at once and that, by the time breeches were brought to his attention, the nuisance had passed.

The Chair asked that Officers give some thought to the various amenity issues that were now being raised by Members during the debate and how these might be reflected in any decision should the application be refused.

The Chief Commoner spoke to endorse everything that had already been said during the debate in objection to this proposal. He commented that there was actually documentary evidence to suggest that Swan Lane Pier was older than 400 years old and that Thomas Moore had had to disembark here and walk further on to the Tower of London because of the powerful undercurrents here. He added that the proposed number of partygoers that would frequent the Ocean Diva was simply unsustainable and unmanageable. He also agreed that the applicants' failure to show the Committee the full extent of the vessel was suspicious.

Another Member spoke to underline that it was important that the City's various departments worked together on matter such as this and that it was therefore important to heed the representations made by the City of London Police on this application. Secondly, he underlined the fact that it was important to take into consideration City residents and, as a long-standing resident himself, he was of the opinion that this proposal totally excluded those living in and around

the vicinity of the site. For this reason, he would also be voting to refuse the proposal.

An Alderman commented that Mr Collins had seemed to suggest that the scale of freight that could be managed under this proposal would not, in fact, be a breach of planning policies. He sought clarification from Officers on this point. Officers responded by reporting that the various policies both within the existing Local Plan and the emerging Local Plan as well as the London Plan did require pier proposals to provide for river transport which included freight operations. It was also noted that the Transport Strategy, whilst not a policy document, also set out the City's ambitions for transport across the City generally and referred to the importance of freight transport. It was reported that colleagues in Transportation had had significant dialogue with logistics companies as to how this might operate and that it was important to ensure that any freight proposals did exactly as they were supposed to do and were technically proficient. In terms of meeting those policies, Officers were satisfied that the freight offering under this proposal did not provide a realistic freight option and was therefore not compliant.

Another Member spoke to state that he did not understand how arrivals would be managed under the proposals and commented that they would seemingly involve a substantial number of taxis, a larger number than was suggested within the report. He commented that this should also therefore be considered as a ground for refusal unless there was as specific policy reason as to why this was inappropriate.

The Chair highlighted that the table at paragraph 40 of the report set out a number of regulatory issues and this Committee's locus of control as local planning authority against its powers as highway authority, the PLA, the Marine Management Organisation, the Maritime Coastguard Agency and Port Health Authority and where certain remits lie. What Members had underlined, unanimously, however was that not only is there an issue regarding freight but that they wanted to expand this by stating that they did not believe that the impact on amenity (particularly residential) could be sufficiently ameliorated by the proposal. The Chair asked Officers for their thoughts on this. Officers stated that, as set out within the report, the impact of the proposals on general amenity of the area and nearby residents was a material planning consideration and this was why Officers had reverted back to the applicant on a number of occasions to inform them that they would need to demonstrate what the actual impact of the number of people using this pier would actually be. Ultimately, the applicant had responded with additional details including an Event Management Plan and Operational Management Plans and Officers had considered this although they had not set out all of the specific conditions and specific Section 106 obligations that would be required and would need to be very tightly controlled. It was, however, considered that this may mitigate the adverse impacts on local amenity. With regards to the concerns raised by Members today, it was reported that these would need to be taken into account. Therefore, if the application were to be refused, it was suggested that Officers draft some words to reflect these concerns and seek final approval for these from the Chair and Deputy Chairman before any refusal was issued. Officers

read a form of draft wording as follows “ that the impact of the proposal in respect of the embarkation and disembarkation of a significant number of passengers would result in significant noise disturbance and inconvenience and have a detrimental impact on amenity of nearby occupiers contrary to

The Committee then proceeded to vote on the recommendations before them within the report. The vote was conducted by rollcall led by the Town Clerk with those Members present and eligible to vote asked to also confirm that they had been present for and able to hear the entirety of this item.

Votes were cast as follows: IN FAVOUR – 23 votes  
OPPOSED – 0 votes  
There were no abstentions.

The application was therefore unanimously refused.

**RESOLVED** – That the application be refused for the reason set out in the attached schedule but that this also be expanded upon to increase the grounds for refusal to include amenity, transport and servicing issues as debated today with the final wording around the grounds for refusal to be delegated to the Interim Chief Planning Office and Development Director in consultation with the Chair and Deputy Chairman.

**6. LONDON WALL CAR PARK - VENTILATION, ELECTRICAL, FIRE ALARM AND SPRINKLER WORKS - GATEWAY 2**

The Committee considered a Gateway 2 – Project Proposal Report of the City Surveyor in respect of London Wall Car Park – Ventilation, Electrical, Fire Alarm and Sprinkler Works.

Members noted that the project would involve the installation of a new ventilation system, upgrading the power supply, the replacement of the current electrical installation (including the replacing of lighting to LED) and would also see the replacement of the sprinkler system, carbon monoxide and fire alarm system at the site. Officers clarified that the project was to address the main areas identified within a recent Fire Risk Assessment and compliance issues that have been raised and would complete works identified as being due within the Forward Maintenance Plan as well as future proofing the car park itself.

Members were informed that the structure of the car park was a highways structure and so funding was also being requested to instruct fire and structural consultants to review the design to ensure that it was compliant. Members were being asked to approve a sum of £240,000 to enable works including a detailed M&E survey, detailed design, upgrade of the electrical supply and to complete tender documents for the next Gateway. Finally, Members were asked to note that there was a current total estimated cost for the project of £1.1million excluding risk.

**RESOLVED** – That the Committee:

1. Approve a budget of £240,000 be to carry out enabling works, including an upgrade of electrical supply and more detailed surveys to prepare the M&E design and tender documents to reach the next Gateway;



2. Note that the total estimated cost of the project is £1,155,000 (excluding risk);
3. Note that here is a Costed Risk of £260,000 (post-mitigation);
4. Note that the total estimated cost of the project is £1,415,000 (including risk); and
5. Note that an element of funding for this project was approved 'in principal' by the Resource Allocation Sub Committee, with draw down subject to further approval at the next Gateway.

**7. CAR PARK & ON-STREET PARKING BAY TARIFFS**

The Committee considered a report of the Director of the Built Environment in respect of Car Park and On-Street Parking Pay tariffs. Members noted that it had been over three years since the last full-scale parking tariff review, and with demand for parking places increasing as the City moves towards recovery from Covid-19, a review was timely.

Officers reminded Members that, earlier this year, they had brought forward a report on how the Transport Strategy related to carparking and on-street parking bays going forward and, at the time, Officers had set out that there would be a further report later in the year in relation to reviewing carparking and pay and display tariffs. Officers reported that the long-term strategy for the City had, for many years now been about discouraging commuting by car – something that was reiterated within the Transport Strategy.

Members were reminded that the most recent change introduced in terms of tariffs had been a move to emissions based on-street parking in terms of pay and display. It was noted that this had been successful and well received both within the industry and with the public as well as contributing to a reduction in the number of high polluting vehicles using these bays.

Officers reported that the costs of the City's operations, particularly in terms of carparks continued to gently rise as a result of things such as the organisation's commitment to the London Living Wage for staff operating here. It was highlighted that, were it not for COVID-19, this report would be a relatively straightforward continuation of the Transport Strategy. However, the current pandemic had clearly had an impact on the way that people were now choosing to work and travel into the City with all of the data currently available showing a significant rise in those choosing to come into the City by car as opposed to public transport. The City and TfL's position on this was that they could not rely upon a car-led recovery longer-term and that there were simply not enough parking spaces to accommodate all those who may wish to drive in. With this in mind, it was highlighted that pricing remained a legitimate means of addressing capacity issues particularly as the City was now reaching the point where some of its carparks were full and pay and display bays were reaching approximately 90% capacity at peak times during the day. In addition to this, it was also noted that emissions from vehicles in the City were on the rise again.

Officers concluding by stating that the recommendation within this report was essentially a continuation of the long-term strategy of the Transport Strategy through this process, to continue to manage demand, to use necessary

mechanisms to reduce emissions by encouraging the use of less polluting vehicles and to continue to drive a differentiation in on-street parking bays between high-polluting and low-polluting vehicles. Officers were aware of the need for a degree of flexibility given that the situation was very dynamic and underlined that they would continue to monitor the way in which vehicles return to the City.

A Member referred to the Car Park Tariff Benchmarking document at Appendix 1 and commented that it appeared that, for short-term parking, the City were significantly less expensive than the vast majority of other locations but, for longer-term or all day parking, the City charged significantly more. He questioned the reasons for this. Officers reported that longer-term parking for a day was just an extension of the hourly rate. In commercial car parks, however, you tended to find that they would discount so that the longer you park, the cheaper the rate. This had been something that City policy had traditionally gone against in an attempt to discourage the idea of commuting by car.

Another Member questioned whether, in an attempt to work towards zero emissions, the City had considered making more of a statement by freezing the costs of parking for zero emissions vehicles and modelling the differential onto all other types of traffic. Officers responded by reporting that what they were looking to do was to continue to align with the long-term strategy which was that, eventually, the City wanted to try and reduce all vehicle emissions and car journeys beyond anything other than essential. In this respect, the ability of the system to have differential pricing bands for three different kind of emissions to date had been a real technological advantage and had allowed this messaging to continue. Officers reported that, when looking to introduce emissions charges, TfL had discovered that, eventually, you would reach a position where there would be lots of clean vehicles on the roads but that this would still pose issues in terms of congestion. The longer-term message was around wanting cleaner vehicles but also fewer vehicles on the City's streets.

A Member questioned whether the City would be continuing to allow coaches to use the Tower Hill Coach carpark free of charge for the first half an hour for drop-offs and pick-ups. She also questioned why, considering that the City wanted to encourage more vehicles to use its carparks to ensure that there was free thoroughfare through its streets, it was currently cheaper for coaches to park in bays as opposed to the dedicated coach park at Tower Hill which covered a whole floor and therefore impacted on income. Officers confirmed that the short, free of charge period for drop-offs and pick-ups for coaches would continue at Tower Hill in an attempt to discourage them for parking up elsewhere in the vicinity for this purpose. In terms of differential rates between Tower Hill and on-street bays, Officers reported that these were, to an extent, historical and had evolved from the charges at the coach park at St Paul's when it had been in existence and the parking that had been in place around the Barbican Centre with those rates more akin to on-street parking as opposed to rates for coach parking at the Tower. Members were informed that coach parking at Tower Hill was very specific in that it was driven by the need to facilitate pick-ups and drop-offs and longer term parking requirements for those visiting the Tower of London and Tower Bridge and that charges here were

therefore equivalent to other comparable facilities elsewhere in London. Very different requirements and priorities had been considered in setting these two particular tariffs.

The Comptroller and City Solicitor spoke to clarify that there was reference in the report to the use of on-street parking reserve and that, whilst this was fine in terms of off-street parking, as far as on-street parking tariffs were concerned, there was a judgement that clarified that the availability of on-street parking reserve and how it should be spent was not relevant in terms of setting parking tariffs.

**RESOLVED –** That the Planning and Transportation Committee:

1. Approve the three-year pricing strategy for on-street parking bays, as set out in paragraph 19 of this report with effect from January 2021; and
2. Approve a three-year pricing strategy for parking charges in relation to Baynard House, London Wall, Minories and Tower Hill public car parks, as set out in paragraph 19 of this report, with effect from January / February 2021.

**8. HIGHWAYS ACT 1980 LICENCE AND CONSENT CHARGES**

The Committee considered a report of the Director of the Built Environment recommending a new set of charges for the Highways Act 1980 licences and consents and setting out a rationale for their calculation so that they can be updated more regularly and on a consistent basis going forward.

A Member noted that the charges had not been reviewed for at least 20 years and suggested that this Committee ought to therefore agree an appropriate period of review going forward. He added that he felt that it was very important for the City to recover costs when undertaking work for developers. The Chair welcomed this suggestion for more regular reviews. Officers accepted that the charges ought to be reviewed more frequently and reported that they had actually been reviewed approximately 8 years ago but were unsure as to why that review had not resulted in a report to this Committee to reform the charges at that time. It was suggested that in future an annual review of the charges reflecting changes in officers' charge out rates and any other relevant changes in the financial context would be preferable.

**RESOLVED –** That Members agree the recommended charges set out in the summary table at Appendix 1 to this report for section 176(1) licences (in relation to bridges); section 177(1) licences (in relation to buildings); section 179(1) consents (in relation to vaults, arches, cellars and building foundations); section 180(1) consents (in relation to openings into cellars and vaults); and section 180(2) consents (in relation to pavement lights and ventilators)

**9. LOCAL FLOOD RISK MANAGEMENT STRATEGY 2021-27**

The Committee considered a report of the Director of the Built Environment in respect of the Local Flood Risk Management Strategy 2021-27.

A Member raised a question on the impact of the completion of the Thames Tideway Tunnel and whether, once this work was complete, the tunnel would reduce the likelihood of sewers backing up and causing flash floods in the Blackfriars foreshore area. Officers reported that they did not expect these works to have a significant impact on surface water flooding. It was reported that Tideway had undertaken some modelling on this, and that Officers could look to share the results of this with Members outside of the meeting.

Another Member questioned why the Committee did not have, as a companion to this report, the City Corporation's Risk Management Strategy, to see how the new Flood Risk Management Strategy might change the mitigation strategies going forward and how that might reduce any ongoing risk in this particular area on the Corporate Risk Register. Officers undertook to liaise further on this matter.

Another Member commented that she did not feel that the Thames Tideway works would resolve flooding issues and highlighted that Tideway had themselves indicated, at the outset of this project, that it would not deal with all of the flooding issues. Surface run off was also an important issue and necessitated the use of things such as green roofs. The Member went on to note that along the riverside there was a significant issue with drainage particularly the area around Millennium Bridge which flooded frequently. She underlined that the regular maintenance of street drains was extremely important. The District Surveyor responded to comment on flooding along the Embankment and at Millennium Bridge House and reported that Officers had carried out investigations here and found that the drain carrying this water went in through an electrical intake part of the building. With the redevelopment of this site, this defect would be corrected in due course.

Another Member sought assurances that this document had been cross referenced and fully aligned with the Climate Action Strategy which was going to the Court of Common Council for final approval later this week. Officers confirmed that the two documents had been cross referenced and that there were links to the Climate Action Plan within the Local Flood Risk Management Strategy document itself.

The District Surveyor commented that the Thames Tideway Tunnel project was principally to remove pollution that flooding can cause in the system where it was currently discharging directly into the Thames. It would not, however, necessarily reduce the overall impact of actual flooding within the City or prevent flooding in the system.

**RESOLVED** - That Members approve a 6 week public consultation of the City of London's Local Flood Risk Management Strategy 2021-2027, in line with the requirement in the Flood and Water Management Act Section 9 (6) which states that: *"A lead local flood authority must consult the following about its local flood risk management strategy— (a) risk management authorities that may be affected by the strategy (including risk management authorities in Wales), and (b) the public"*

**10. BUSINESS AND PLANNING ACT 2020**

The Committee received a report of the Remembrancer in respect of relevant provisions of the Business and Planning Act 2020, which came into effect on 22 July, as it affects the interests of the Planning and Transportation Committee.

Members noted that the Act introduced a new temporary regime for table and chair licences intended to help food and drink outlets trade and comply with social distancing guidelines. It also automatically extended on-sales alcohol licences to permit off-sales, allowing the sale of alcohol for consumption off-premises during the times that on-sales are permitted.

**RESOLVED** - That the requirements of the temporary regime be noted.

**11. PUBLIC LIFT REPORT**

The Committee received a public lift report of the City Surveyor for the period 22/08/2020 – 17/09/2020.

A Member expressed concern around issues with the new lift at Blackfriars Bridge and questioned who paid for the necessary repairs to this. The City Surveyor reported that Officers were working on the lift and that the City paid for these repairs but that there was a sum set aside from the developer that they were able to draw down on for these. She clarified that these funds were in place for the lifespan of the lift. The City Surveyor went on to report that some of the City's lifts were experiencing issues associated with lack of use during the current pandemic and, as a result, Officers were now considering if the maintenance regime ought to be amended and increased in frequency to help address this.

Another Member highlighted that the Blackfriars Bridge lift and the Millennium Inclinator had both been out of service at the same time and commented that this had a real impact on disabled access down onto the riverside. She questioned whether the City were clearly identifying alternative accessible routes in these circumstances. The City Surveyor reported that such signs were posted whenever lifts were out of service. It was reported that the Inclinator was now back in service, but that Officers had to bear in mind that it would be out of service for a period of time whilst it was replaced. This would make the effective functioning of the Blackfriars Bridge lift all the more important. The Member came back on this point to question whether the developer would be offering any assistance in terms of costs whilst the Inclinator was out of service ahead of its replacement to ensure that access to the riverside was adequately maintained. The City Surveyor reported that she was in active discussion with the developer on the replacement offering but was unaware that this point had been explicitly covered. She undertook to raise this with them going forward.

The Chief Commoner commented that it was his understanding that the developer would be offering a parallel operation whilst the Inclinator was taken out of service. The City Surveyor undertook to gain absolute clarity on this point in future discussions with the developer.

**RESOLVED** – That Members note the report.

**12. DELEGATED DECISIONS OF THE CHIEF PLANNING OFFICER AND DEVELOPMENT DIRECTOR**

The Committee received a report of the Interim Chief Planning Officer and Development Director providing Members detailing development and advertisement applications determined by the Interim Chief Planning Officer and Development Director or those so authorised under their delegated powers since the report to the last meeting.

**RESOLVED** – That Members note the report.

**13. VALID PLANNING APPLICATIONS RECEIVED BY DEPARTMENT OF THE BUILT ENVIRONMENT**

The Committee received a report of the Interim Chief Planning Officer and Development Director providing Members with a list detailing development applications received by the Department of the Built Environment since the report to the last meeting.

Officers reported some major applications had been received since the report to the last meeting – namely Custom House for a new proposed hotel scheme and 55 Gracechurch Street for an office-led development scheme. It was anticipated that these would come to Committee in due course and it was expected that further, similar, large applications would be coming forward in the coming months.

The Chair thanked Officers for all of the work that was continuing to happen behind the scenes at both application and pre-application stage.

The Chief Commoner questioned whether Officers were seeing continued vitality in term of planning applications and whether they had any sense as to whether the City was likely to return to full occupancy going forward. Officers reported that the Planning Department remained very busy in terms of pre-application discussions and that, at the present time, they were seeing an almost unprecedented level of new schemes coming forward at the pre-application stage. Officers and developers were hopeful that these pre-application discussions came forward as planning applications. The Chair added that he felt that it was important that Members vocalised this point as much as possible. He added that there were some sound policies coming forward in the form of the new City Plan, the Transport Strategy and others and it was evident here that both international and UK based developers were still very much interested in investing in development in the City in the medium and longer term.

Another Member requested that some publicity and press coverage be given to the two large applications reported by Officers now that they were in the public domain as the receipt of these applications would appear to be encouraging in present circumstances.

Members discussed the need to balance residential and office developments going forward as part of the City's recovery. The Chair commented that emerging policies were very clear on where certain types of development were and were not appropriate and that the current pandemic had increased focus on the most efficient use of available space in all sorts of ways. The City would respond to demands as they emerged although it was not expected that any changes going forward would be so seismic that office space for businesses would no longer be required.

In response to comments around a return to Guildhall, the Director of the Built Environment underlined that a number of her staff had been present in the City throughout the pandemic delivering vital services such as cleansing and waste collection. She added that the Guildhall was now open for staff to return if necessary and that a lot of her team were now visiting the City to carry out things such as site and building control inspections and were now also taking the opportunity to access the Guildhall too.

Members also suggested that the amenities made available to both residents and businesses in the City would need careful consideration going forward – this included access to free Wi-Fi and the provision of supermarkets and other essential stores.

*At this point, the Chairman sought approval from the Committee to continue the meeting beyond two hours from the appointed time for the start of the meeting, in accordance with Standing Order 40, and this was agreed.*

**RESOLVED** – That Members note the report.

**14. REPORT OF ACTION TAKEN**

The Committee received a report of the Town Clerk advising Members of action taken by the Town Clerk since their last meeting in consultation with the Chair and Deputy Chairman and in accordance with Standing Order Nos 41(a) and 41(b).

**RESOLVED** – That Members note the report.

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

**Thames Tideway Tunnel and Tower Bridge**

A Member commented that a recent press report had stated that the boring machine was edging towards Tower Bridge itself and there were concerns that it might have an impact on the bridge. She questioned whether there was any truth in this and how the impact of these works was being monitored. She also mentioned the recent failure of the Bridge when it became stuck open and questioned whether the Committee might, at some point in future, have a report on Tower Bridge.

The Chair commented that there were various reports on Tower Bridge that came to this Committee but asked that he and the Member seek to discuss this

specific point further outside of the meeting and consider how a more holistic report might be produced.

**16. ANY OTHER BUSINESS THAT THE CHAIR CONSIDERS URGENT**

**Zahur Khan**

The Chair reported that Zahur Khan, Director of Transportation, was due to leave the organisation shortly and he wished to place on record the Committee's thanks to him for all of his work and for leading from the front on transportation issues, particularly with regard to Ludgate Circus and Beech Street which was currently under Judicial Review. The Chair wished Zahur the best of luck on his promotion with another Local Authority.

**17. 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.

<b><u>Item No(s)</u></b>	<b><u>Paragraph No(s)</u></b>
18	3
19-20	-

**18. NON-PUBLIC MINUTES**

The Committee considered the non-public minutes of the virtual meeting held on 8 September 2020 and approved them as a correct record.

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

There were no questions raised in the non-public session.

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

There were no urgent, additional items of business considered in the non-public session.

**The meeting closed at 12.42 pm**

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Chairman

**Contact Officer: Gemma Stokley**  
**tel. no.: 020 7332 3414**  
**[gemma.stokley@cityoflondon.gov.uk](mailto:gemma.stokley@cityoflondon.gov.uk)**



