

PORT HEALTH & ENVIRONMENTAL SERVICES COMMITTEE

Tuesday, 23 November 2021

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

Present

Members:

Deputy Keith Bottomley (Chairman)
Mary Durcan (Deputy Chairman)
George Abrahams
Rehana Ameer
Alexander Barr
Adrian Bastow
John Bennett
John Chapman
Deputy Kevin Everett
Helen Fentimen
Alderman Gregory Jones QC

Alderwoman Susan Langley
Vivienne Littlechild
Deputy Edward Lord
Deputy Andrien Meyers
Deputy Brian Mooney (Chief Commoner)
John Petrie
Deputy Henry Pollard
Jason Pritchard
Deputy Elizabeth Rogula
Jeremy Simons

Officers:

Jon Averbs	- Director of Markets & Consumer Protection
Gary Burks	- Superintendent & Registrar, City of London Cemetery & Crematorium
Ruth Calderwood	- Air Quality Manager
Paul Chadha	- Chief Lawyer
Jim Graham	- Department of the Built Environment
Gerry Kiefer	- Open Spaces Business Manager
Tony Macklin	- Assistant Director, Environmental Health & Trading Standards
Jenny Pitcairn	- Chamberlain's Department
Rachel Pye	- Pollution Control Team Manager
Gavin Stedman	- Port Health & Public Protection Director
Leanne Murphy	- Committee and Member Services Officer

1. APOLOGIES

Apologies were received from Deputy Wendy Hyde, Peter Bennett, Deputy Robert Merrett, Anne Fairweather, Deputy Peter Dunphy, Christopher Hill, Henrika Priest, John Edwards, Tijs Broeke and Shravan Joshi.

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

There were no declarations.

3. MINUTES

RESOLVED, that the public minutes and non-public summary of the meeting held on 27 September 2021 were approved as an accurate record subject to one attendance correction.

4. **OUTSTANDING ACTIONS AND WORK PLAN**

The Committee received a report of the Town Clerk setting out the current list of outstanding actions:

Electric Vehicle Charging

Officers confirmed they had circulated leaflets to residents regarding the offer and no response had been received from residents to date. Officers would continue to work with the Estate Office to advertise free car park access for electric vehicles. Despite attempts, Officers had been unable to liaise with Guinness Trust concerning Mansell Street and continued to understand what facilities were needed by the estate need.

In response to a query asking if facilities were available to members of public, it was confirmed that Electric Vehicle Charging was available to anybody as a daily user. Only residents of the Square Mile could purchase a season ticket or entitled to free entry to the car park.

A Member enquired how many charging stations were available in the car park and was informed that there were currently five, with potential for more to be included in Baynard House. So far, no locations had been overwhelmed by demand. It was also noted that users could look up online what bays were available.

In response to queries concerning the average cost to charge a vehicle and prices across London, Members were informed that the Company used had a footprint across London which offered the same market rate tariff. Officers agreed to share information regarding costs.

Measurement and mitigation options for operational rail noise from London Underground affecting the Barbican Estate

The Chairman relayed feedback received from residents that the noise had gotten worse over last four weeks, and the latest knowledge report and photos showing poor rail condition was concerning. The Chairman confirmed the City Corporation was doing all it could to escalate the situation and the CPR supported a letter to the GLA and London Underground requesting a meeting on site.

Members were very concerned, especially as the loaded carriages got heavier with more worker coming back to the City and hoped funding would be found to resolve the issues concerning tube noise which was seriously impacting the wellbeing of residents. It was noted that where to move the track was key issue rather than the costs and the Town Clerk agreed to share with Members the letter received by the Chairman from Transport for London.

Busking at Southwark

Members were advised that there had been a number of meetings and a leaflet had been developed which Officers agreed to share with Members when received.

Members hoped that Southwark would become stricter regarding busking pitches and amplified music and suggested using byelaws and licensing. Officers confirmed the continued to engage with buskers and involve them in conversations to assist with a long-term solution. It was noted that public space protection orders might be deemed necessary in the future if issues were not resolved.

Lighting Guidance Note

Officers hoped the new planning guidelines would encourage occupiers and new business to improve lighting. Members were informed that the trailblazing guidance had no baseline, and the process would require cross-departmental input. Officers confirmed the requested paragraphs in the meantime would be shared as soon as possible.

5. BREXIT UPDATE

The Committee received an oral update from the Port Health and Public Protection Director concerning the UK's impact of leaving the EU (Brexit) on Port Health & Public Protection.

Members were informed that the Heathrow Animal Reception Centre (HARC) and the ports have continued to sustain a high level of throughput this year and it is forecast to continue moving forward.

On the 18 November, the Government released an updated Border Operating Model aiming to prevent further damage on the 1 July 2022 by a further phasing of border controls.

From 1 July 2022, certification and physical and identity checks will be introduced for:

- All remaining regulated animal by-products
- All regulated plants and plant products
- All meat and meat products
- All remaining high-risk food not of animal origin.

From 1 September 2022, certification and physical checks will be introduced for all dairy products.

From 1 November, certification and physical checks will be introduced for all remaining regulated products of animal origin, including composite and fish products. Live animal checks will also begin in stages incrementally moving from the point of destination to border control posts from 1 July 2022 as facilities become available and are appropriately designated.

It was noted that this phased approach would not replace any existing import controls already in place and Officers would continue to the engage with port operators and develop sites, systems and processes.

Port Health still await final confirmation of funding to July 2022, which was expected by the end of the calendar year. An underwriting has already been in place for 2021/22 and the latest extends this further. It is then assumed that

income from charges will offset delivery costs; however, a similar underwriting for 2022/23 has been requested due to the further phased introduction of controls and the continued uncertainty regarding throughput.

The unintended consequence of Brexit was that it opened the potential for competition at HARC. The City Corporation continues to engage with Government agencies and Heathrow Airport as the service aims to demonstrate and plan to ensure that it has the capacity to handle the anticipated post-Brexit throughput.

6. NEW WORLD HEALTH ORGANISATION AIR QUALITY GUIDELINES

The Committee considered a report of the Executive Director Environment regarding the New World Health Organisation Air Quality Guidelines.

Members were provided with the headlines concerning the new guidelines which were more in-depth and covered black carbon. Since the publication, the City Corporation has been involved in a series of meetings with Defra and engaging officials from UK100 to discuss the implication of the Environment Bill.

A Member challenged the focus on the black carbon pollutant as delivering the best health outcomes noting that the table identified nitrogen dioxide as double the outcome. Members were advised that the data was surprising, and Officers awaited WHO's plans and were working to deliver the best impact with best health benefits. WHO guidance would be adopted separately for the devolved countries, with the Corporation only looking at the numbers set for England.

In response to a query concerning whether there were choices of researchers for commissioned research, Officers confirmed there were options but they were limited and competitive quotes were being sought.

It was noted that the Committee had previously received scientific talks from experts on relevant topics and it was agreed a scientist be invited to talk at a future meeting regarding pollution.

RESOVLED, that Members approve the commission of research, at a cost of £20,000 - £30,000, into locally derived sources of PM2.5, to formulate a plan to reduce levels in line with new statutory obligations, and for maximum health and climate benefits following the publication of the latest WHO Air Quality Guidelines.

7. REVENUE AND CAPITAL BUDGETS 2022/23

The Committee received a joint report of the Chamberlain and Executive Director Environment concerning the Revenue and Capital Budgets 2022/23.

A Member voiced disappointment concerning the state of City streets following the Lord Mayor's show and cleanliness of pavements in general and saw this as lowering the City's clean reputation. Officers agreed to feed this back noting that difficult choices were made concerning cuts in service and budget. This would continue to be revisited to meet need and efficiency of the service.

With regards to the £634k allocation from the Finance Committee contingency towards costs of Fishmonger's Hall Inquest, Members requested confirmation that this would be recoverable from central Government and services would not be affected. Officers confirmed they were in discussion with the Ministry of Justice and this would be a central cost.

Members were advised that a Business Plan was being developed for the Environment Department and there was a commitment to a zero-based budgeting exercise for 2023/24. When this was agreed, funding allocation would be reviewed. Members were supportive of the five-year plan which would put the Corporation in a better position for future planning whilst acknowledging that there was still uncertainty over the next two years which would impact on operations.

RESOLVED, that Members:

- review and approve the proposed revenue budget for 2022/23 for submission to Finance Committee;
- review and approve the proposed capital budgets for 2022/23 for submission to Finance Committee;
- authorise the Chamberlain, in consultation with the Executive Director Environment, to revise these budgets to allow for any further implications arising from subsequently approved savings proposals, Target Operating Model (TOM) implementation, changes to the Cyclical Works Programme, or changes to the resource envelope; and
- agree that amendments for 2021/22 and 2022/23 budgets arising from changes to recharges during budget setting be delegated to the Chamberlain.

8. **49TH CITY OF LONDON THAMES FISHERY RESEARCH EXPERIMENT**

The Committee received a report of the Executive Director of Environment regarding the 49th City of London Thames Fishery Research Experiment.

RESOLVED, that Members:

- Note the content of this report;
- Review and approve the grant from City's Cash to partially fund the 2022 Experiment;
- Approve the 50th City of London Thames Fishery Research Experiment to take place in 2022 (date to be confirmed).

9. **COMMERCIAL ENVIRONMENTAL HEALTH SERVICE PLAN**

The Committee considered a report of the Executive Director Environment regarding the Commercial Environmental Service Plan.

RESOLVED, that Members approve the Commercial Environmental Health Service Plan 2021-2023 (Appendix A).

10. **SERVICE CHANGES AND OUTCOMES FROM THE CLEANSING SERVICE 2021/22 BUDGET SAVING**

The Committee noted a report of the Executive Director Environment regarding Service Changes and Outcomes from the Cleansing Service 2021/22 Budget Saving.

Members shared concerns about the feel and cleanliness of the City, in comparison to its historic cleanliness, and asked how best to engage with Officers regarding hotspot areas of concern. Members were told to contact the Business Performance & Transport Group Manager.

RESOLVED, that the report be noted.

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

Discharge of sewage into the Thames

Following significant recent media coverage, a Member was concerned by the discharge of sewage into the River Thames and requested an update to ensure the Committee understood what was happening.

Members were informed that the Thames Tideway Tunnel, the main scheme for central London, was already underway and would go some way to relieving the pressure on the Thames, but the latest estimate was that it would not be operational before 2025. It was also noted that Officers had provided evidence for the Thames in a recent study which included discharges into the river.

Members were advised that enforcement around sewage was not a PHES or City Corporation responsibility, it was the responsibility of the Environment Agency. Officers confirmed they had been in contact with the Environment Agency, who were also concerned, and it was recommended that the Committee express their concern over the Government's response by making a representation through the Policy & Resources Committee.

A Member noted that there had been media interest in whether the size of pipes of the Thames Tideway Tunnel would be sufficient in managing extreme rainfall and weather events in the future. Members were informed that the tunnel was based on previous projections prior to the ZSL study findings, and it was likely this would have an impact in the future.

In response to a query regarding whether there was any data on how often sewage was dumped into the Thames, Officers confirmed that the Environment Agency had relevant data on the number of discharges and the quantity which could be shared with Members.

Members expressed serious concern over the number of occasions on which raw sewage has been discharged into the River Thames and the devastating impact this could have on the biodiversity of the river. It was agreed that a

formal resolution from the Committee go to the Policy & Resources Committee (P&R) expressing Member's concern and calling on P&R to make representations, as appropriate, to the relevant authorities calling for stricter controls over the discharge of sewage into natural waterways.

RESOLVED – That a resolution be made to the Policy & Resources Committee demonstrating the Port Health & Environmental Services Committee's concern regarding the discharge of sewage into the Thames and request for representations to the relevant authorities regarding the Government's response.

12. ANY OTHER BUSINESS THAT THE CHAIRMAN CONSIDERS URGENT

The Chairman and previous Chairman gave thanks to Jon Avern who was retiring as the Director of Consumer Protection & Markets Operations after 32 years with City Corporation.

These thanks were echoed by Members and Officers.

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 meeting held on 27 September 2021 were approved as an accurate record.

15. PORT HEALTH AND ENVIRONMENTAL SERVICES DEBTORS - PERIOD ENDING 30 SEPTEMBER 2021

The Committee received a report of the Executive Director Environment regarding the Port Health and Environmental Services Debtors for the period ending 30 September 2021.

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

There were no questions.

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

There was one item of business.

The meeting closed at 12.52 pm

Chairman

Contact Officer: Leanne Murphy
leanne.murphy@cityoflondon.gov.uk