

## PORT HEALTH & ENVIRONMENTAL SERVICES COMMITTEE

Monday, 27 September 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)	Aldерwoman Susan Langley
Alexander Barr	Deputy Robert Merrett
John Bennett	John Petrie
Peter Bennett	Deputy Henry Pollard
John Chapman	Henrika Priest
Deputy Peter Dunphy	Jason Pritchard
John Edwards	Deputy Elizabeth Rogula
Deputy Wendy Hyde	George Abrahams

#### **Officers:**

Juliemma McLoughlin	- Executive Director of Environment
Gary Burks	- Superintendent & Registrar, COL Cemetery & Crematorium
Colin Buttery	- Director of Open Spaces & Heritage
Paul Wright	- Deputy Remembrancer
Ruth Calderwood	- Air Quality Manager
Gerry Kiefer	- Open Spaces Business Manager
Gavin Stedman	- Port Health & Public Protection Director
Paul Chadha	- Chief Lawyer
Jenny Pitcairn	- Senior Accountant, Chamberlains Department
Vincent Dignam	- Business Performance & Transport Group Manager
Karen Tillett	- Trading Standards Officer, Built Environment
Robin Whitehouse	- Pollution Team Manager, Built Environment
Kristina Drake	- Media Officer, Town Clerk's Department
Leanne Murphy	- Town Clerk's Department

### **1. APOLOGIES**

Apologies were received from Tijs Broeke and Deputy Edward Lord.

### **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 13 July 2021 were approved as an accurate record.

### Matters arising

With regards to the previous request for practical advice for Members to share concerning office lights, Members were advised that a formal procedure was being developed by the City Corporation. A voluntary code of practice was also being developed which could be shared with constituents. The Chairman requested Officers to provide some paragraphs for Members to share regarding light nuisance whilst this was in development.

## 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 electric charging points had been made available to residents and this matter was being followed up with the Planning & Transportation and Community & Children's Services Committees. Pressure continued to be put on the Landlord and a long-term plan was received. Members welcomed the arrangements made by the City Corporation and thanked Officers.

A Member noted that the arrangement was for four weeks only, and this needed to be communicated with residents, so they were aware of their options. The Member highlighted the need to help low-income residents and their transport needs. Officers agreed to share communications with residents and continue to apply pressure.

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

The Chairman advised that he had a meeting with Nickie Aiken, MP for Cities of London and Westminster, who had a shared interest on tube related noise disturbance which was an issue across London. Members were advised that they were joining up with other MPs to deal with the issue.

Members were advised that an update was received from TfL with further details to follow in the coming weeks. A meeting took place at the beginning of September between TfL, Officers and Members and a number of issues were raised including the noise, delays, communications and noise measuring at Brandon Mews. Residents would be contacted regarding access.

A Member enquired if the works had been resolved at Defoe House. Officers were not certain as these were ongoing works over years and only some joints had been removed from the track.

The Chairman stated that TfL needed to be held to their promises to residents and they needed to understand the effect of the new timetables. The Deputy Chairman was disappointed there were still no noise measurements as they were led to believe it would happen quickly and encourage Officers to keep pushing for this information. It was noted the next meeting would be held in a flat on site.

### **Busking at Southwark**

Members were advised that two meetings had taken place between Members, Officers, residents and Southwark and Officers continued to engage with buskers. It was noted there was also an issue with leafletting and there would be a meeting on Friday to resolve issues.

Members requested that Southwark be pushed to enforce on noise nuisance and take resident concerns seriously.

### **5. ENVIRONMENT BILL UPDATE**

The Committee received an oral update from the Deputy Remembrancer concerning the Environment Bill.

Members were informed that the Bill was going through its final stages at the House of Lords; the City Corporation had submitted an amendment the desired outcome was not achieved despite a strong collaboration with DEFRA and Cross-Party support. Officers continue to work in collaboration with others and push this agenda forward.

Members discussed and agreed for the need to push the use of green technology and non-mobile road machinery/enforcement power.

With regards to a question concerning controls for generators, Officers were looking at generators and emissions targets set by DEFRA. The Bill would not require electric-based generators but was expected provide trajectory. It was noted that WHO guidelines also supported this, and it was hoped these guidelines would be used to apply pressure.

A Member enquired if companies could buy back the power from the power supply company to get revenue. Officers confirmed this was being explored.

The Chairman was pleased and optimistic the City Corporation was pushing the Government and leading the agenda on air quality in London.

### **6. COVID-19 AND BREXIT UPDATE**

The Committee received an oral update from the Port Health and Public Protection Director concerning COVID-19 and the UK's impact of leaving the EU (Brexit) on Port Health & Public Protection.

Although airline activity at HARC during the period was around 25% of pre-COVID levels, greater numbers of pets continue to arrive on each flight, with the team dealing with a record number of animals each month. Port Health has also not slowed down with throughput 30% up on last year, a continuing upward trend.

Members were advised that DP World had announced a £300m investment in a fourth berth at London Gateway Port demonstrating their confidence in the UK and the opportunities it presents.

On 14 September, the Government confirmed there would be a further delay to the implementation of border controls on EU food and feed. Under the revised timetable:

- The requirements for pre-notification of Sanitary and Phytosanitary (SPS) goods, which were due to be introduced on 1 October 2021, will now be introduced on 1 January 2022;
- The new requirements for Export Health Certificates, which were due to be introduced on 1 October 2021, will now be introduced on 1 July 2022;
- Phytosanitary Certificates and physical checks on SPS goods at Border Control Posts, due to be introduced on 1 January 2022, will now be introduced on 1 July 2022;
- Safety and Security declarations on imports will be required as of 1 July 2022 as opposed to 1 January 2022;
- Full customs declarations and controls will be introduced on 1 January 2022 as previously announced.

This would give the ports and trade more time to prepare for border controls although in practice, no enforcement role would be undertaken and no levy charges likely until July 2022.

Members were informed that the Port Health service had recruited well with only three posts still to recruit and for which there are live recruitment processes. An additional 10 staff have been requested based on the latest Defra/HMRC projections, which could more than double the current workload.

The issue of funding for 2022/23, until the border controls are implemented, was raised with Defra who are discussing continued support with the Treasury. Officers await further details next month. This would also have an impact on live animal checks, which are now unlikely to come into force until the end of 2022.

In response to a question regarding the challenges of animal feed on the south of the river, Officers confirmed two ports on the south coast and facilities were being developed to accept high risk food and feed. As there were less vessels in Kent, the ports could be used strategically.

## **7. UPDATE ON THE IMPACT OF BUDGET CUTS ON THE CLEANSING SERVICE**

The Committee received an oral update from the Assistant Cleansing Director concerning the impact of budget cuts on the cleansing service.

Members were advised that there had been significant work since January and feedback so far suggested there had been a drop in standard. This was being reviewed and resources rescoped appropriately. Whilst the City is performing better than neighbouring boroughs, an increase of graffiti and flyposting, increased demonstrations from Extinction Rebellion and cleaning up after the Euros have had an impact.

Members felt Officers did a good job dealing with graffiti. A Member enquired how much it cost to clean up following Extinction Rebellion events, e.g. the paint on Guildhall, and whether it was environmentally friendly to clean. Officers confirmed they were collating the costs to be included in a report in November. Whilst no chemicals were used, only hot waterpower washing, lots of water and manpower were needed to remove the paint. Members were pleased to learn that the City Corporation were taking Extinction Rebellion to Court for these costs. An application was also being made to convict against protesters.

8. **BUSINESS PLANS 2021/2022: PROGRESS REPORT (PERIOD 1)**

The Committee considered a report of the Executive Director of Environment providing an update on progress made during Period 1 (April-July) against the High-Level Business Plans 2021/22 for the three service areas.

The Committee were determined to protect front line services which could not be done if they kept on being cut. A reprioritisation of spending was therefore required to maintain and improve services.

With regards to food product, a Member questioned why there was an unhappy face for imported food. Officers advised this was the result of a number of reasons as trade had jumped significantly and paperwork was not being delivered in a timely fashion. It was hoped this would improve quickly.

In response to a question concerning Trading Standards complaint numbers, Members were informed that there were many scams and covid incidents in period 1 and it was hoped this again would improve. Officers agreed to provide exact figures.

*Post meeting note: For 1 April 2021 to 30 September 2021, 1,607 complaints were received and for the same period in 2020 there were 1,348, an increase of 19.2%*

Members enquired about enforcement activities against repeat offenders and Officers advised that they were considering what further action appropriate including injunctions and criminal behaviour orders when necessary.

RECEIVED.

9. **ADOPTION OF LETTINGS ENFORCEMENT POLICY**

The Committee considered a report of the Director of Markets & Consumer Protection concerning the adoption of a Lettings Enforcement Policy.

Members were informed that the proposed Policy would mainly deal with breaches of legislation and provided guidelines for setting penalties for breaches.

**RESOLVED** – That Members agree to the adoption of the Lettings Enforcement Policy

10. **DRAFT CITY OF LONDON CONTAMINATED LAND INSPECTION STRATEGY 2021-2030**

The Committee considered a report of the Director of Markets & Consumer Protection concerning the City of London Contaminated Land Inspection Strategy 2021-2030.

Members were advised that it as a requirement to adopt a new strategy which now included changes from all relevant committees.

A Member enquired if there was currently any contaminated land or areas of concern for the City Corporation on the register of contaminated land. Officers confirmed there were not any areas of concern and reminded Members that only areas inside of the City of London or the City Corporation's ownership were within its statutory requirements. This was monitored and the Corporation worked with other Local Authorities when necessary.

**RESOLVED** – That Members approve the proposal set out in paragraph 10 that the attached contaminated land inspection strategy 2021-2030 (Appendix 1) is adopted from the 1 October 2021.

11. **DELEGATED AUTHORITY REQUEST - REPLACEMENT OF THE LADY AILEEN'S ENGINES**

The Committee considered a report of the Director of Markets & Consumer Protection requesting delegated authority to the Town Clerk regarding the replacement of the Lady Aileen's engines.

Members were informed that the Lady Aileen was over 20 years old, and whilst the hull was in good condition, the engines were of an even older design and deteriorating with parts harder to source. Replacement of the engines with the latest technology would improve efficiency and reduce emissions and carry forward from 2020/21 had been agreed for this purpose.

The proposal would be considered by the Corporate Projects Board and Projects Sub Committee and delegated authority was requested in order that the project could be progressed promptly. This request was approved by Members.

**RESOLVED** – that Members delegate authority to the Town Clerk, in consultation with the Chairman and Deputy Chairman, to approve the Gateway 1-4 Project Proposal and Options Appraisal for the replacement of the Lady Aileen's engines.

12. **RISK MANAGEMENT - PERIODIC UPDATE REPORT**

The Committee received a report of the Executive Director Environment providing assurance that risk management procedures in place within the Department of the Built Environment, Department of Markets and Consumer Protection, and the Open Spaces Department are satisfactory and that they meet the requirements of the corporate Risk Management Framework. Risk is reviewed regularly within each department as part of the ongoing management of operations.

The Committee was provided with an update on the management of risks faced by the departments.

**RESOLVED** – That Members note the report and the actions taken by each service area to monitor, mitigate and manage effectively risks arising from their operations.

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

Speed boats

A Member asked the Committee and Officers to take note of the excessive noise from speed boats on the river at the upcoming Committee River Inspection and asked if this could be reviewed. Officers confirmed this had been raised with the Port of London Authority as to what could be legally done on this matter. Officers agreed to follow up with the Chief Executive.

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

Thames Fishery Research Experiment

The Chairman highlighted the successful City of London Thames Fishery Research Experiment on 18 September 2021 and thanked Officers for organising the event.

Launch of the new World Health Organisation (WHO) Air Quality Guidelines

Members were advised that guidelines were last published in 2006 and there had been lots of movement since leading to significant changes. The guidelines were not legally binding but provided a great evidence base. It was noted that the new Environment Bill set national targets supported by these guidelines and the City Corporation was already well on track to reach the targets. Officers would consider the implications for the Corporation and bring a report to the Committee for consideration.

**15. 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.

**16. NON-PUBLIC MINUTES**

**RESOLVED**, that the non-public minutes of the meeting held on 13 July 2021 were approved as an accurate record.

**17. PORT HEALTH AND ENVIRONMENTAL SERVICES DEBTORS - PERIOD ENDING 30 JUNE 2021**

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

**18. NON-PUBLIC APPENDIX: RISK MANAGEMENT REPORT - RISK REGISTER**

The Committee received a non-public Risk Register appendix to be read in conjunction with item 12 concerning Risk Management.

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

There were no questions.

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

There was no other business.

**The meeting closed at 12.49 pm**

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Chairman

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