

PORT HEALTH & ENVIRONMENTAL SERVICES COMMITTEE

Tuesday, 7 May 2024

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

Present

Members:

Mary Durcan (Chairman)	Deputy Marianne Fredericks
Deputy Peter Dunphy (Deputy Chairman)	Steve Goodman OBE
George Abrahams	Wendy Hyde
Alderman Alexander Barr	Henry Jones
Deputy Timothy Butcher	Deputy Elizabeth King BEM JP
Deputy John Edwards	Gregory Lawrence
John Foley	Luis Felipe Tilleria
Dawn Frampton	Jacqui Webster

Officers:

Gavin Stedman	- Environment Department
Joe Kingston	- Environment Department
Peter Brett	- Environment Department
Ruth Calderwood	- Environment Department
Ian Hughes	- Environment Department
Susie Pritchard	- Environment Department
Rachel Pye	- Environment Department
Joanne Purkiss	- Environment Department
Jenny Pitcairn	- Chamberlain's Department
Frank Marchione	- Comptroller and City Solicitor's Department
Kate Doidge	- Town Clerk's Department

MATTERS ARISING

It was moved by Chief Commoner Deputy Peter Dunphy, and seconded, that Alderman Alexander Barr take the Chair until Item 4, Election of Chairman.

1. APOLOGIES

Apologies were received from Alderman Kawsar Zaman, Shahnaz Bakth, Deputy Christopher Boden, Caroline Haines, Jaspreet Hodgson, Andrew McMurtrie, Deborah Oliver, Deputy Henry Pollard, Hugh Selka, Deputy Dr Giles Shilson, Mandeep Thandi, and Glen Witney.

Caroline Haines, Andrew McMurtrie, Deputy Henry Pollard, Deputy Dr Giles Shilson, and Mandeep Thandi observed the meeting virtually.

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

There were no declarations.

3. **COURT ORDER**

The Committee received the Order of the Court of Common Council dated 25th April 2024, appointing the Committee and setting its Terms of Reference.

The Town Clerk notified the Committee of an error in the Order, which that the number of years served on the Committee for Deputy Dr Giles Shilson should be four years, not three years as listed.

4. **ELECTION OF CHAIRMAN**

The Committee proceeded to elect a Chairman in accordance with Standing Order No. 29. The Town Clerk informed the Committee that Mary Durcan, being the only Member expressing their willingness to serve, was duly elected Chairman of the Port Health and Environmental Services Committee for the ensuing year and took the Chair for the remainder of the meeting.

RESOLVED – That Mary Durcan be elected Chairman of the Port Health and Environmental Services Committee for the ensuing year.

5. **ELECTION OF DEPUTY CHAIRMAN**

The Committee proceeded to elect a Deputy Chairman in accordance with Standing Order No. 30. The Town Clerk informed the Board that no expressions of interest were received ahead of the one full working day deadline. However, one expression of interest had been received subsequent of the deadline. Nonetheless, the Town Clerk requested if there were any additional expressions of interest for the Deputy Chairman of the Port Health and Environmental Services Committee. Chief Commoner Deputy Peter Dunphy, being the only Member who indicated their willingness to serve, was duly declared to be Deputy Chairman of the Port Health and Environmental Services Committee for the ensuing year.

RESOLVED – that Chief Commoner Deputy Peter Dunphy be elected Deputy Chairman of the Port Health and Environmental Services Committee for the ensuing year.

6. **MINUTES**

The Committee received the public minutes and non-public summary of the previous meeting, held on 12th March 2024, for approval.

RESOLVED – That the public minutes and non-public summary of the previous meeting, held on 12th March 2024, be approved as a correct record.

The Committee discussed the following matters arising from the minutes, as follows:

Wooden Planters on London Bridge

The Committee heard that the wooden planters on London Bridge owned by the City Corporation and Transport for London (TfL) had been repaired or were in the process of being repaired.

Risk Register

It was confirmed that the Committee's comments on amending the risk register on flooding or fire at Walbrook Wharf would be incorporated into the next cycle of reporting the Port Health and Public Protection key risks.

Dog Littering

It was confirmed that the standard wording to provide to City residents had been circulated. Comments included that having dog litter bins present would send a message that families and their dogs were welcome, linking in with Destination City. Other comments included that it was more frequently residents not picking up dog litter than visitors, and that dog litter bins were often mis-used for regular litter. The response from officers was that a report was aimed to be received by the Committee in September 2024, which took a strategic view of the cleansing service following the introduction of additional street cleansing resources, and that this would consider a targeted approach on the placement of all types of bins, including dog litter. It was added that the additional resources included a staff post aimed at cleansing communications, such as signage and reporting.

7. **OUTSTANDING ACTIONS**

Members received the Committee's Outstanding Actions.

The Committee heard that a letter had been sent to TfL in April 2024, but no response had been received.

8. **APPOINTMENTS TO SUB COMMITTEES AND REPRESENTATIVES TO OUTSIDE BODIES**

The Committee received a report of the Town Clerk relative to the Committee's appointments to sub-committees and its representatives on outside bodies.

The Committee considered the following appointments:

Local Plans Sub-Committee

The Committee considered the appointment of one Member to the Local Plans Sub-Committee. The Town Clerk informed the Committee that no expressions of interest were received ahead of the meeting and invited any declaration of interest in the position. Deputy Elizabeth King, being the only Member willing to serve was duly appointed to serve on the Sub-Committee for the ensuing year.

RESOLVED – That Deputy Elizabeth King be appointed to the Local Plans Sub-Committee.

Streets and Walkways Sub-Committee

The Committee considered the appointment of one Member to the Streets and Walkways Sub-Committee. The Town Clerk informed the Committee that John Foley had indicated his willingness to stand and invited any other declaration of interest in the position. John Foley, being the only Member willing to serve was duly appointed to serve on the Sub-Committee for the ensuing year.

RESOLVED – That John Foley be appointed to the Streets and Walkways Sub-Committee.

Projects and Procurement Sub-Committee

The Committee considered the appointment of one Member to the Projects and Procurement Sub-Committee. The Town Clerk informed the Committee that no expressions of interest were received ahead of the meeting and invited any declaration of interest in the position. The Chairman, Mary Durcan, being the only Member willing to serve was duly appointed to serve on the Sub-Committee for the ensuing year.

RESOLVED – That Mary Durcan be appointed to the Projects and Procurement Sub-Committee.

Thames Estuary Partnership

The Committee considered the appointment of one Member as a representative on the Thames Estuary Partnership. The Town Clerk informed the Committee that no expressions of interest were received ahead of the meeting and invited any declaration of interest in the position. Deputy John Edwards, being the only Member willing to serve was duly appointed as a representative on the Thames Estuary Partnership for the ensuing year.

RESOLVED – That Deputy John Edwards be appointed as a representative on the Thames Estuary Partnership.

Thames21

The Committee considered the appointment of one Member as a trustee on Thames21's Board. The Town Clerk informed the Committee that no expressions of interest were received ahead of the meeting and invited any declaration of interest in the position. Deputy Timothy Butcher, being the only Member willing to serve was duly appointed as a trustee on Thames21 for the ensuing year.

RESOLVED – That Deputy Timothy Butcher be appointed as a Thames21 trustee.

Health and Wellbeing Board

Members noted that Deputy Marianne Fredericks would serve as the Chairman's representative on the Health and Wellbeing Board.

Crime and Disorder Scrutiny Sub-Committee

Members noted that the Chairman would be taking up her place on the Crime and Disorder Scrutiny Sub-Committee.

The Committee agreed that Mandeep Thandi would act as the Deputy Chairman's representative on the Crime and Disorder Scrutiny Sub-Committee.

RESOLVED – That Mandeep Thandi be appointed as the Deputy Chairman's representative on the Crime and Disorder Scrutiny Sub-Committee for the ensuing year.

RESOLVED – that the report be received, and the above appointments made.

9. **DRAFT AIR QUALITY STRATEGY 2025 TO 2030**

The Committee received a report of the Interim Executive Director for Environment, concerning the approval of the draft Air Quality Strategy 2025 to 2030's aims, and to approve the draft Strategy to go out to public consultation. Following the introduction to the Strategy, Members asked questions and made comments, as detailed below:

The recent data showed that the level of nitrogen dioxide was within the national targets. However, officers were aware of the areas and roads of concern referenced by Members, and the strategy contained specific action to address the areas that exceeded the targets. With specific regards to the re-routing of traffic at Bank Junction, several surrounding areas were being monitored to measure the impact of displacement. The specific data would be included in the next annual report received by the Committee and could be highlighted in the final report.

Members referenced the high percentage of nitrogen oxide originating from boilers and generators and commented that the balance of pollution from demolishing versus refurbishing buildings was absent from the Local Plan and should be included. Officers would speak with the Corporation's planning team on this point. Members also encouraged stronger wording on encouraging alternatives to diesel engines for generators. Later, Members heard that diesel generators were regulated to meet the latest Euro Standards, and that site visits take place to ensure best practice was being followed. However, there was currently no ultimate solution for diesel engines. Members also heard that a Private Member's Bill had been introduced to tackle this issue to assist London Local Authorities to tackle non-transport sources of pollution, which was used as a mechanism to discuss additional regulatory powers, but that the Corporation currently had no power to control generators.

It was noted that the Health and Wellbeing Board had received the draft Strategy and has made comments to expand upon the health issues and health benefits to improved Air Quality.

A study had been conducted to monitor the particulates from the Underground and its air vents. This study had not found a measurable number of particulates from the vents, and officers were liaising with Transport for London, who said that there would be more cleansing of the vents in the future. It was important to continue collaborating and working with other partners, such as the Port of London Authority, to address the pollution that originated from outside the Square Mile.

The pollutant PM_{2.5} formed 4% of the pollutants and originated from a number of sources. It was further explained that the minimum and maximum concentration of nitrogen dioxide ($\mu\text{g}/\text{m}^3$) was 20 and 52, and that 30 $\mu\text{g}/\text{m}^3$ was the aim for over 90% of the Square Mile, which was below the current national standard. It

was expected that this could reduce further following studies of the data from 2023.

Lastly, suggestions from Members for additions to the draft Strategy included comparisons from previous years, referencing cargo bikes with the Transport Strategy, and graphs showing the pollution drop off on pavements.

RESOLVED – That Members:

- Approve the aims of the draft Air Quality Strategy which set a direction of travel towards achievement for the 2021 World Health Organisation Air Quality Guidelines.
- Approve the draft Air Quality Strategy 2025 to 2023 for public consultation, subject to comments received at the meeting.

10. ANIMAL HEALTH TEAM - ADJUSTMENT TO FEES

The Committee received a report of the Interim Executive Director for Environment, concerning a required adjustment due to an unexpected increase for veterinary inspections contracted to a third party.

It was queried whether a certain percentage of adjustment to charges could be agreed under Delegated Authority, in conjunction with the Chairman and Deputy Chairman, to build a degree of flexibility and be able to be reactive to charges. The response was that officers would have to look further into the possibility of this query.

RESOLVED – That Members approve the adjusted Animal Health Team fees described in section 5 of the report and listed in Appendix 1.

11. COMMERCIAL ENVIRONMENTAL HEALTH SERVICE PLAN 2024-25

The Committee received a report of the Interim Executive Director for Environment, concerning approval for the Commercial Environmental Health Service Plan 2024-25 and the Port Health Service Plan 2024-25. It was explained to the Committee that the Plans set out how objectives would be delivered and what priorities were in place. It was prepared in conjunction with national regulators such as Food Standards Agency (FSA) and Defra, who expect Member-approved Service Plans.

A Member suggested that the Corporation's duties relating to imported food and feed and food premises be separated into two functions. The response was that this would be considered in future plans..

The backlog of food hygiene work in the lower risk food businesses categorised as 'D' for was highlighted. It was explained that the Corporation was still recovering from the pandemic, and an intervention programme demonstrated that most of these premises were still compliant. A 'D' standard business could range from a coffee shop to a caterer operating within a business.

It was queried whether there was a possibility of sanctions due to failure to plan and implement a programme of official food controls and health and safety interventions was possible. It was explained that the approval of the Services

Plans, and quarterly performance reports managing its objectives, would prevent these failures.

A Member commented that whilst the City Corporation is compliant with its food hygiene interventions, it should be encouraging the FSA to go into the neighbouring Local Authorities to ensure a level playing field across London, and that the City Corporation should not be prioritised over other Local Authorities. The Committee heard that all Local Authorities were expected to produce an agreed Service Plan, which is then reported back to FSA.

RESOLVED – That Members approve:

- The Commercial Environmental Health Services Plan 2024-25 (Appendix 1)
- The Port Health Service Plan 2024-25 (Appendix 2)

12. BREXIT READINESS - VERBAL UPDATE

The Committee received a verbal update of the Interim Executive Director for Environment concerning Port Health Brexit Readiness.

The Committee heard that on 30th April 2024, the second phase of controls on imported food and feed had been introduced, which included physical, sampling and identity checks. The new border control regime was projecting figures of throughout of approximately 140,000 consignments for the Port Health Service. Following the first day of the new regime, there had been some minor issues including IT issues, but these had since been resolved. There were no hold ups at the Ports, and the current position was good. In the coming months, the Service would be able to collect more data on imports which could be interrogated more closely to analyse progress.

RESOLVED – That the verbal report be received.

13. REPORT OF ACTION TAKEN

The Committee received a report of the Town Clerk, concerning details of delegated decisions taken under urgency between Committee meetings.

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

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

A Member of the Committee questioned what could be done to ensure a swift response for the removal of graffiti on Network Rail arches in the City, and what powers were available to escalate the removal. The response was for the specific case the Member referenced, a Community Protection Warning Notice has been issued, of which Network Rail had 28 days to respond. This formed part of the formal process to remove graffiti. Attempts for engagement were always the first step, however there could be difficulty if the property affected was vacant or owned by a third party employing a managing agent. If the Notice had not been responded to within 28 days, a further notice was issued to remove the graffiti. The legal process could take up to two months.

15. **ANY OTHER BUSINESS THAT THE CHAIRMAN CONSIDERS URGENT**
There were no public items of urgent business.
16. **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.
17. **NON-PUBLIC MINUTES**
RESOLVED – That the non-public minutes of the previous meeting held on 12th March 2024 be approved as a correct record.
18. **PORT HEALTH AND ENVIRONMENTAL SERVICES DEBTORS - PERIOD ENDING 31 MARCH 2024**
The Committee received a report of the Interim Executive Director for Environment, concerning the Port Health and Environmental Services debtors for the period ending 31st March 2024.
19. **WALBROOK WHARF UPDATE ON SOFT MARKET TESTING**

Note: During this item, the Committee agreed that, under Standing Order No.40, the meeting be extended by 10 minutes in order to conclude its business.

The Committee received a report of the City Surveyor, provide an update on the soft market testing for Walbrook Wharf.
20. **NON-PUBLIC QUESTIONS ON MATTERS RELATING TO THE WORK OF THE COMMITTEE**
There were no non-public questions.
21. **ANY OTHER BUSINESS THAT THE CHAIRMAN CONSIDERED URGENT AND WHICH THE COMMITTEE AGREES SHOULD BE CONSIDERED WHILST THE PUBLIC ARE EXCLUDED**
There were no non-public items of urgent business.

The meeting closed at 1.07 pm

Chairman

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