

PORT HEALTH & ENVIRONMENTAL SERVICES COMMITTEE

Tuesday, 21 July 2020

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

Present

Members:

Rehana Ameer
Deputy John Bennett
Deputy Keith Bottomley
John Chapman
Mary Durcan
Anne Fairweather
Sophie Anne Fernandes

Alderman Sir Roger Gifford
Deputy Jamie Ingham Clark
Alderman Gregory Jones QC (Chair)
Shravan Joshi
Vivienne Littlechild
Andrien Meyers
Deputy Joyce Nash
Jeremy Simons
Jason Pritchard

In attendance:

John Edwards

Officers:

Rofikul Islam	- Town Clerk's Department
Gemma Stokely	- Town Clerk's Department
Polly Dunn	- Town Clerk's Department
Leanne Murphy	- Town Clerk's Department
Kristina Drake	- Town Clerk's Department
Bukola Soyombo	- Chamberlain's Department
James Gibson	- Chamberlain's Department
Jenny Pitcairn	- Chamberlain's Department
Paul Chadha	- Comptroller and City Solicitor
Emmanuel Ojugo	- Department of the Built Environment
Carolyn Dwyer	- Department of the Built Environment
Joe Kingston	- Department of the Built Environment
Gavin Stedman	- Department of Markets & Consumer Protection
Tony Macklin	- Department of Markets & Consumer Protection
Gary Burks	- Department of Markets & Consumer Protection
Ruth Calderwood	- Department of Markets & Consumer Protection
Stephanie Hughes	- Department of Markets & Consumer Protection
Tony Macklin	- Department of Markets & Consumer Protection
Jon Avern	- Department of Markets & Consumer Protection
Richard Steele	- Department of the Built Environment

Martin Falder	- Open Spaces Department
Colin Buttery	- Open Spaces Department
Gerry Kiefer	- Open Spaces Department

1. **APOLOGIES**

Apologies for absence were received from Peter Bennett.

Vivienne Littlechild (Senior Commoner) moved that Alderman Sir Roger Gifford take the Chair.

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

There were no declarations.

3. **ORDER OF THE COURT OF COMMON COUNCIL**

The Committee received the Order of the Court of Common Council of Thursday 16 July 2020, appointing the Committee and approving its Terms of Reference.

4. **ELECTION OF CHAIRMAN**

The Committee proceeded to elect a Chairman in accordance with Standing Order No. 29. A list of Members eligible to stand was read and Deputy Keith Bottomley, being the only Member expressing willingness to serve, was duly elected Chairman for the ensuing year.

The Chairman welcomed both new and returning Members to the Committee and thanked those Members who are no longer on the Committee for their service. Furthermore, upon taking the Chair, the Chairman read out the vote of thanks to the outgoing Chairman of the Committee.

Vote of Thanks: at this point in the proceedings, the Chairman delivered a Vote of Thanks to the immediate past Chairman.

RESOLVED UNANIMOUSLY, That - at the conclusion of his three year term of office as their Chairman, of the Port Health and Environmental Services Committee, the Committee wish to extend to:

Jeremy Lewis Simons

their sincere thanks and appreciation for the manner in which he has presided over their deliberations and the detailed care and interest he has shown in all aspects of the work of the Port Health and Environmental Services Committee.

During his Chairmanship, Jeremy has been a real champion for air quality. He has made himself available to attend numerous events and has always been incredibly polite, helpful and constructive. Achievements have included the low emission neighbourhood in the north of the City with its pop-up garden, no idling initiatives, pioneering work to reduce pollution levels at the City's primary school, the City's Emissions Reduction Bill now progressing through parliament

and the Capital's first zero-emissions street. He is a real asset to the City Corporation and the Air Quality Team has appreciated his unwavering support and good humour.

Jeremy was responsible for the City of London Corporation becoming a signatory to the Royal Foundation of the Duke and Duchess of Cambridge's United for Wildlife Taskforce, an initiative with the financial and transport sectors to tackle Illegal Wildlife Trade.

Jeremy has also overseen significant increases in trade at the ports over the last three years, which has meant a large investment in developing staff resources and a move to new office accommodation. He has also been at the forefront of the City's EU exit responses and preparations.

Jeremy has supported the investigation into the causes and solutions to the operational rail noise experienced by residents of the Barbican Estate. He has been instrumental in negotiating improvements with London Underground in this technically complex challenge and his detailed consideration has been invaluable.

The City of London Crematorium currently meets all environmental and air pollution requirements. Under the guidance of the Chairman a one million pound project is now progressing for the replacement of the old cremators and the installation of new fully abated ones, to achieve twice the requirements of the legislation to abate (remove all mercury and other toxins) from cremations taking place at the beautiful City Cemetery. The process of cremator abatement creates a large amount of hot water, and during Jeremy's tenure the use of this hot water has increased, so that now the operational areas of the crematorium are heated at little or no cost.

Jeremy encouraged the Superintendent to invest cemetery income in the landscape, in new signage and in equipment, including an all-electric minibus for the public to move gently around the 200 acres of the Cemetery. Affordable cremation is another area of development where it has been possible to support families on low income by offering a fee structure that suits all. During the last three years the reuse of graves for further burial has become more mainstream and is now the second most popular choice for burials. This is an area where the City truly leads the country and is now being replicated in the private sector through private Acts of Parliament.

Jeremy oversaw the implementation and progress of the Plastic Free City Campaign, he chaired numerous panel discussions on the subject and was keen to engage with businesses and members alike. During Jeremy's tenure the scheme signed up over 100 businesses covering 90,000 city employees. Through actions that businesses have taken after signing up to the scheme they have avoided the use of twenty million single use coffee cups and twelve million items of single use plastic cutlery.

Jeremy was also a keen advocate of the City's Tech Takeback events which allow residents and City workers to safely recycle or make available for reuse or recycling, data bearing technology which would otherwise be thrown away. He even brought along some of his own items. The most recent event saw 663 items weighing over 1.3 tonnes collected.

Jeremy was involved with the award of the new waste collection and street cleansing contract, overseeing numerous officer discussions and debates as part of the tender moderation process. He has been extremely supportive of the City's drive towards mobilising the UK's first fully electric fleet of Refuse Collection Vehicles, providing invaluable technical insight and was also good company on a visit to the factory to witness the vehicles being built.

An enthusiastic supporter of the Port Health Rowing Team, Jeremy has been the passenger in many races, including the Great River Race and the Admiral of the Port Rowing Challenge - the Lord Mayor's race. He participated in the WW1 Anniversary Flotilla and Service of Remembrance and has escorted the Sheriffs on the River.

Jeremy has performed his role as Chairman with great passion and commitment. His unfailing willingness to provide support through the varied and interesting challenges that the Committee faces in the twenty-first century, has been greatly appreciated by the Members, staff, and stakeholders alike.

Finally, the Committee wish to thank him for his generous hospitality during his years in office and to convey to him their good wishes and to wish him future health and happiness.

5. ELECTION OF DEPUTY CHAIRMAN

The immediate past Chairman exercised his right under Standing Order No. 30. (3) (a) to serve in the position of the Deputy Chairman for the ensuing year and as such there was no election for the post of the Deputy Chairman.

6. ELECTION OF ONE MEMBER TO THE STREETS AND WALKWAYS COMMITTEE

The Committee sought to appoint a representative on the Streets and Walkways Sub Committee in accordance with Standing Order No. 30. No Members present expressed their willingness to serve.

The Chairman advised the Committee that he would write to Christopher Hill, the current representative, to ascertain whether he was willing to continue to serve as the Committee's representative on the Streets and Walkways Sub-Committee.

7. ELECTION OF ONE MEMBER TO THE THAMES ESTUARY PARTNERSHIP

The Committee proceeded to appoint a representative on the Thames Estuary Partnership in accordance with Standing Order No. 30. John Edwards, a past Member of the Committee, being the only Member expressing his willingness to serve was appointed for the ensuing year.

8. **MINUTES**

RESOLVED, that the Public Minutes of the meeting held on Tuesday, 3 March 2020 be approved as a correct record.

9. **OUTSTANDING ACTIONS**

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

Garden Waste Recycling

Members were informed that the Garden Waste Recycling has been postponed due to the ongoing Covid-19 pandemic, Officers undertook to reconsider the way forward in January 2021 and update Members accordingly.

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

Officers reported that a number of LUL's (London Underground Limited) current projects have been postponed due to the ongoing uncertainty following the COVID-19 pandemic and that the long-term financial package for TfL had yet to be agreed by the Government.

This directly affects the proposed rail noise mitigations under the Barbican Estate as follows –

- The new timetable has been deferred until March 2021 which in turn has deferred the introduction of a Temporary Speed Restriction (TSR).
- The proposed mitigation works to the Brandon Mews points and crossing have also been put on hold until the financial position is clearer.

An update will be provided once the financial position for TfL is confirmed, Officers hoped to be able to provide this to the Committee at their meeting in November 2020.

Historic drinking fountains and pumps

Members were advised that the historic drinking fountains and pumps can come off the outstanding actions, as they cannot be brought back into use again.

10. **UPDATE ON THE IMPACT OF THE UK LEAVING THE EU (BREXIT) ON PORT HEALTH & PUBLIC PROTECTION**

The Committee received a report of the Director of Markets and Consumer Protection on the update of the impact of the UK leaving the EU (Brexit) on Port Health & Public Protection.

The Committee was informed that the United Kingdom (UK) had left the European Union (EU) on 31 January 2020 and the country was currently in a transition period until the end of 2020. During the transition period, arrangements and controls at the UK border would not change.

The Committee was further informed that there will be a phased introduction of controls at the border for imports from the EU. From January this will include checks associated with live animals, organics and illegal, unreported and unregulated fishing. Checks on high risk food and feed both of animal origin and non-animal origin will commence in April 2021. The City of London is waiting for confirmation of the level and frequency of checks that will be required on EU imports. Current border controls for products imported into the UK from outside the EU will remain. The City of London needs to be prepared for all eventualities and, as a result, has made a number of funding bids including to the Food Standards Agency for staffing resources.

Additionally, the Committee were informed that the Government wanted to establish a number of freeports, which have different customs rules to the rest of the country, that are innovative hubs, boost global trade, attract inward investment and increase productivity. In doing so, the Government wants freeports to generate employment opportunities to the benefit of some of our most deprived communities around the UK.

A Member of the Committee queried if there was a legal view on the World Trade Organization rules for EU goods coming into the UK. Officers advised the Committee that the Government would lead on this, but that the Department Markets and Consumer Protection was engaged with the Government Departments regarding the negotiations.

Another Member asked if any of the City of London's supply route and staffing around Brexit were impacted due to COVID-19 and if this had been factored into the City of London's risk assessments. The Port Health and Public Protection Director informed the Committee that a number of measures have been put in place and trade continues to flow in through the ports.

Members were informed that risk assessments are in place and are regularly updated, this includes Port Operatives working from home where possible, working in 'pods' and ensuring that staff are adequately supplied with PPE.

The department is still awaiting news on the infrastructure funding for port operators.

RESOLVED – Members noted the content of the report.

11. **AIR QUALITY ANNUAL STATUS REPORT**

The Committee received a report of the Director of Markets and Consumer Protection on the Air Quality Annual Status Report.

The Committee was advised that since 2019, air quality has improved in the City of London; The Deputy Chairman thanked the Air Quality team on their efforts with the success of lowering the air pollution within the City of London.

A Member noted that areas around the Barbican benefited a lot more in terms of the air quality improvement in comparison to other areas within the City.

Officers advised the Committee that this was due to the fact that the Barbican area is situated in a backstreet with less traffic. Officers assured the Committee that a lot of work is happening around the improvement of air quality across the City.

A Member mentioned that the Green Finance Institute had published a new report around this, and that the Committee might benefit from a presentation from the Green Finance Institute in due course. The Chairman agreed that a presentation should be arranged for the future with the Institute.

RESOLVED – Members noted the content of the 2019 Air Quality Annual Status Report.

12. **CEMETERY & CREMATORIUM PERFORMANCE 2018/19**

The Committee received a report of the Director of Open Spaces on the Cemetery & Crematorium Performance 2020/2021.

The Committee was advised that the report title referring to 2018/19 was an error, however the content of the report reflected the Cemetery & Crematorium Performance 2020/21.

RESOLVED – Members noted the content of the report.

13. **CEMETERY & CREMATORIUM RISK MANAGEMENT**

The Committee received a report of the Director of Open Spaces on the Cemetery & Crematorium Risk Management.

RESOLVED – Members noted the report and approved the divisional risk register outlined in the report and at Appendix 2.

14. **THE COMMERCIAL ENVIRONMENTAL HEALTH TEAM SERVICE PLAN 2020-2021 & THE LONDON PORT HEALTH AUTHORITY FOOD SERVICE ENFORCEMENT PLAN 2020-2021**

The Committee considered a report of the Director of Markets and Consumer Protection on the Commercial Environmental Health Team Service Plan 2020-2021 and the London Port Health Authority Food Service Enforcement Plan 2020-2021.

The Assistant Director (Public Protection) apologised to the Committee for a drafting error on page 149 of the pack when the figures for last year's Food Standards work were omitted from the Commercial Environmental Health Service Plan. Members were advised that those figures are available and will be included in the final published version on the City London's website.

Furthermore, Members were advised that the Commercial Environmental Health Service Plan was noticeably different from previous years in that it was borne out of the COVID-19 pandemic and the various lockdown restrictions surrounding it.

The plan is configured around a 3-stage approach for which there were originally no dates, - these only emerged as the pandemic grew and national measures were introduced.

The 3-stage approaches are as follows:

Stage 1: Initial monitoring of businesses and activities posing the highest risks.

All planned food hygiene and food standards inspections were stopped nationally at the direction of the Food Standards Agency as priority was given to COVID-19 related advisory work and other urgent reactive work.

City of London Officers also checked-up on cooling tower sites to ensure they continued to be managed safely to prevent the growth and spread of *Legionella* sp. bacteria, the cause of Legionnaires disease.

Stage 2: Moving towards recovery

The Commercial Environmental Health Team have been supporting City businesses to recover from the effects of the pandemic and the team provides advice to City businesses on a wide range of Food Safety, Health & Safety, Pest Control and general trading matters, linking up with City of London in Trading Standards, Licensing and Pollution Control.

Stage 3: Return to (a new) normality.

This final stage of the Plan will see a return to more 'business as usual' once the Government has defined its policy for the next phase of the pandemic and as far as possible, the City will be undertaking more planned proactive interventions and projects as set out in the plan.

A Member questioned the fact that at least 5% of City of London businesses have an unsatisfactory rating and asked what the City was doing to improve and raise the standards of such businesses. Officers advised the Committee that the City of London coaches such businesses through advice, guidance and training opportunities. The Committee was further advised that visits to businesses with unsatisfactory ratings were carried out more frequently as opposed to annually.

RESOLVED – Members approved;

- a) the specific food safety and health & safety activities set out in the Commercial Environmental Health Team Plan 2020-2021; and
- b) the London Port Health Authority Food Service Enforcement Plan 2020-2021

15. UPDATE ON THE TEMPORARY ALTERATIONS TO CLEANSING SERVICE ACTIVITIES IN RESPONSE TO COVID-19

The Committee received a report of the Director of the Built Environment on the update on the temporary alterations to Cleansing Service activities in response to Covid-19.

The report outlines the action the Department had taken since the outbreak of COVID-19. The Committee was informed that the main priority of the Department at present was to ensure the safety of the public and City of London staff. Members were informed that the Department is working on ensuring that its priorities are maintained, and the level service has been adjusted.

The Committee was further informed that the City's water refill points remained out of service, as did a number of other services, such as the internal collection of bulk items from residential properties and the garden waste recycle trial.

The Assistant Director - Cleansing Operations and Street Environment - advised the Committee that the Department was looking at the re-opening of the City's four automatic public conveniences along with attended conveniences at Tower Hill and Paternoster Square opening first, with the intentions to open the Royal Exchange on a later date, if it is safe to do so. Members were advised that, at present, it was not considered safe to open the attended public convenience at Eastcheap.

A Member stated that the COVID-19 pandemic now seemed to be a long-term issue, and questioned whether this, coupled with the City's working population decreasing, would impact on the Department's budget. The Assistant Director - Cleansing Operations and Street Environment - advised the Committee that, as part of the cost savings the Department were no longer using any agency staff for the Cleansing Contract.

The Chairman thanked the team for their handwork during this difficult time.

RESOLVED – Members noted the content of the report.

16. CITY WATER REFILL POINTS

The Committee received a report of the Director of the Built Environment on the update of the City Water Refill Points.

Members were informed that a huge amount of work had gone into the City's Water Refill Points, with the Department looking at future KPI's being included in the Department of the Built Environment's business plan. At present, the water refill points remain closed due to the COVID-19 pandemic. Officers from the City of London are working with their counter parts across London to ensure that the water refill points are only reopened when it is safe for staff and members of the public.

A Member asked if the Department intended to install smart water meters at the water refill points where there are no smart meters at present. Officers assured the Committee that the plan is to ensure that all the City of London's water refill points have a smart reader, however, the installation of these had been delayed due to the COVID-19 pandemic.

Another Member commented that coffee outlets in the City were not accepting customers' own reusable mugs and thus having to use single use plastic cups,

he asked what impact this was having on the plastic free use of particles. Officers commented that the City of London would engage with local businesses on matters such as these as soon as possible after the COVID-19 pandemic.

RESOLVED – Members noted the content of the report.

17. **LICENSED STREET TRADING UPDATE**

The committee considered a report of the Director of Markets and Consumer Protection on the Street Trading Fees 2020/21.

RESOLVED – Members agreed the proposed fees for 2020/21 as set out in Appendix 1.

18. **MASSAGE & SPECIAL TREATMENT LICENCE FEES 2020/21 (REDUCTION FOR COVID-19 RESTRICTIONS)**

The Committee considered a report of the Director of Markets and Consumer Protection on the Massage & Special Treatment Licence Fees 2020/21 (Reduction for COVID-19 restrictions).

RESOLVED – Members agreed the proposed reduction of fees for 2020/21 as set out in Appendix 2 (column two).

19. **REVENUE OUTTURN 2019/20**

The Committee received a joint report of the Chamberlain, the Director of the Built Environment, the Director of Markets & Consumer Protection and the Director of Open Spaces on the Revenue Outturn 2019/20.

RESOLVED – Members noted the report, the proposed carry forward of local risk underspending, and the carry forward of local risk overspendings to 2020/21.

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

A Member asked what actions were being undertaken by the City of London in light of the pollution to the river, as due to COVID-19, there had been an increase of PPE including masks, gloves and wet wipes being thrown into the river.

Officers advised the Committee that London Councils were working to address this and that the City of London was working collaboratively with them on this matter. Members were informed that the City of London had asked London Councils to lobby TfL to provide information to commuters and increase awareness via their public announcement systems.

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

There were no additional, urgent items of business for consideration.

22. **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.

23. **NON-PUBLIC MINUTES**

RESOLVED, that the non public minutes of the meeting held on Tuesday, 3 March 2020 be approved as a correct record.

24. **PORT HEALTH AND ENVIRONMENTAL SERVICES DEBTORS - PERIOD ENDING 31 MARCH 2020**

The Committee received a joint report of the Chamberlain, the Director of the Built Environment, the Director of Markets & Consumer Protection and the Director of Open Spaces on the Port Health and Environmental Services Debtors – Period Ending 31 March 2020.

25. **MAINTENANCE CONTRACT FOR FOUR URILIFT (POP-UP TOILETS) IN THE CITY**

The Committee considered a report of the Director of the Built Environment on the Maintenance contract for four Urilift (pop-up toilets) in the City.

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

Two items were discussed.

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

There were no additional, urgent item of business for consideration in the non-public session.

The meeting closed at 12.49pm.

Chairman

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