

## PORT HEALTH & ENVIRONMENTAL SERVICES COMMITTEE

Tuesday, 22 September 2020

**Minutes of the meeting of the Port Health & Environmental Services Committee held via Microsoft Teams at 11.00 am.**

### **Present**

#### **Members:**

Deputy Keith Bottomley (Chairman)	Anne Fairweather
Jeremy Simons (Deputy Chairman)	Christopher Hill
Caroline Addy	Deputy Wendy Hyde
Alexander Barr	Deputy Jamie Ingham Clark
Deputy John Bennett	Alderman Gregory Jones QC
Peter Bennett	Shravan Joshi
Tijs Broeke	Vivienne Littlechild
John Chapman	Deputy Joyce Nash
Deputy Peter Dunphy	Jason Pritchard
Mary Durcan	Deputy Henry Pollard
Deputy Kevin Everett	Deputy Robert Merrett

#### **In attendance:**

Alderman Alison Gowman  
John Edwards

#### **Officers:**

Carolyn Dwyer	Department of the Built Environment
Elisabeth Hannah	Department of the Built Environment
Richard Steele	Department of the Built Environment
Stuart Wright	Department of the Built Environment
Zahur Khan	Department of the Built Environment
Jim Graham	Department of the Built Environment
Frank Marchione	Comptroller & City Solicitors
Colin Buttery	Open Spaces Department
Gary Burks	Open Spaces Department
Gerry Kiefer	Open Spaces Department
James Gibson	Chamberlain's Department
Jenny Pitcairn	Chamberlain's Department
Gavin Stedman	Department of Markets & Consumer Protection
Jon Averbs	Department of Markets & Consumer Protection
Rachel Pye	Department of Markets & Consumer Protection
Ruth Calderwood	Department of Markets & Consumer Protection
Kate Smith	Town Clerk
Rofikul Islam	Town Clerk
Gemma Stokely	Town Clerk
Polly Dunn	Town Clerk

1. **APOLOGIES**

Apologies for absence were received from Henrika Priest and Deputy Elizabeth Rogula.

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 of the meeting held on Tuesday, 21 July 2020 be approved as a correct record.

4. **OUTSTANDING ACTIONS**

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

**Electric Vehicle Charging**

The Electric Vehicle Charging installation had been impacted by the pandemic but is expected to go live by December 2020. Members will be kept informed as this develops in the future.

**Garden Waste Recycling**

Members were informed that the Garden Waste Recycling pilot has now been deferred till January 2021.

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

The Chair noted that it is very disappointing that the residents at the Barbican Estate continue to face the ongoing noise and disturbance. The City of London has to accept that TfL has a number of challenges ahead of them at present, not least their funding position and given that TfL are now being asked to run more train services in order to provide social distancing on the trains. It was noted that the City of London is not in a position at present to press TfL to get the temporary speed restrictions put in place or to progress the longer-term solutions.

A Member noted the concerns expressed by the Chairman and accepted the fact that we are now navigating through challenging times and the rail noise will have to remain on the agenda for now. The Member thanked the Chairman and the Officers involved for their work on this matter.

The Chairman assured the Member that the Measurement and mitigation options for operational rail noise from London Underground affecting the Barbican Estate will remain firmly on the agenda.

5. **CLIMATE ACTION STRATEGY**

The Committee received a report of the Town Clerk on the Climate Action Strategy. The Chairman introduced the report and noted that the Climate Action

Strategy is important to the Committee and despite the pandemic and other challenges, the Committee's commitment to the Climate Action Strategy remains an important priority, as it is a key issue affecting the country and the world.

The Climate Action Strategy provides the City of London with an opportunity to act decisively with the Committee having previously supported the development of a comprehensive strategy and actions rather than simply declaring a climate emergency. The Chairman noted that the Climate Action Strategy is deliverable and affordable with measurable action sets. The Chairman, along with a number of Members, have been working with Officers to support the development of the strategy which is data driven and grounded in a solid evidence-based action.

The Chairman informed the Committee that the Climate Action Strategy sets a date of 2027 for net zero on the City Corporation's own emissions with implementation starting in April 2021; once the funding put in place for year one is released. Funding has been identified for the next 5-years as part of the medium term financial plan, with a budget to be agreed annually for the Climate Action Strategy. The strategy targets net zero on the full value chain by 2040.

The Chairman confirmed that if the Climate Action Strategy is agreed by the Court of the Common Council then the Committee will be pushing this forward and ensuring that the impacts are reported to the Committee.

The Head of Corporate Strategy & Performance informed the Committee of the actions in relation to this committee, which were improving the ability to ensure resilience in relation to pests and diseases and resilience to climate generally, making sure that the City of London works collaboratively and has all the data that it requires to drive the strategy forward, ensuring that climate considerations are embedded into the public health agenda, which will require refreshing the 2017 Health and Wellbeing Strategy to include climate implications.

The Chairman informed the Committee that a test and learn approach will be taken to resilience in the first place. We will be doing more of the carbon emissions work in the first 5 years.

A Member thanked and commended Officers and Members on the well thought out paper which had brought forward the high-level priorities. The Member asked to ensure that the strategy imbeds the legal considerations which need to be adopted into policies when it comes to delivering the statutory requirements. The Head of Corporate Strategy & Performance responded that there are a lot of other policies and statutory duties that are encompassed in this strategy. We have taken the approach of auditing this, which is being led by a team of dedicated officers and Members working on the matter. Officers are keen to build climate change into their work, with the Local Plan Policy being one of the more important areas. Going forward every decision coming through will have to ensure that it has climate change factored into the workplan.

This was followed by a Member who had inquired if the City of London was behind in terms of their work around climate change and if the finance for the strategy will follow through. The Head of Corporate Strategy & Performance responded that the City of London had declared in 2010 that climate change was important to the City of London and has leapfrogged into gathering all the scientific evidence. This puts the City of London in a leading position which will allow the City of London to influence others too. In terms of the question in relation to the funding, the Chairman confirmed that this will follow through given the work that has already been done.

The Chairman informed the Committee that the City of London will seek to play a leading role in London on the Climate Action Strategy, working with the GLA and London Councils.

The Chairman noted that the Climate Action Strategy paper will be presented to the Court of the Common Council on the 8<sup>th</sup> October for its endorsement so that the work on the Climate Action Strategy can commence, once approved by the Court of the Common Council.

**RESOLVED** – Members noted the report, the draft strategy at Appendix 1 and the actions set by committee at Appendix 2.

6. **DEPARTMENT OF THE BUILT ENVIRONMENT RISK MANAGEMENT - PERIODIC REPORT**

The Committee received a report of the Director of the Built Environment on the Department of the Built Environment Risk Management – Periodic Report.

The Chairman introduced the report to Members and drew the attention of Members to the drivers check risk and the reasons behind the Department of the Built Environment Risk Management – Periodic Report being on the Committees agenda is because the City Transport Policy is administered by the Cleansing Transport Team. This in turn came about because they manage the (now much diminished) fleet of refuse collection vehicles and therefore at least one member of that team is required to hold the Transport Operators Licence which covers all Large Goods Vehicles operated by the City. The Cleansing Transport Team are therefore the corporate subject matter experts.

The Assistant Director - Cleansing Operations and Street Environment updated the Committee that this is one of the Health and Safety team's policies, however the expertise remains with the Department of the Built Environment's Cleansing team who in turn provide the expert advice, information and manage compliance for the Corporate Health Team.

The report author highlighted the COVID-19 risks as it is important that the service level risks are sighted by the Committee.

The report author noted that a report from the Committee went to the Establishment Committee in January 2020 with reference to the lack of a single point record containing a database of all the employees and volunteers for the

City of London. He asked if the Committee wishes to take the request back to the Establishment Committee on the same subject.

A Member commented that there is a need to address the red risks, as the City does not want to discourage volunteering activities. The Committee was unequivocal on this and expected progress, action and a timed plan to mitigate the risk. It was agreed that Officers are to agree a reference to the Establishment Committee with the Chairman and Deputy Chairman of this Committee.

**RESOLVED** – that Members noted the report and the actions taken in the Department of the Built Environment to monitor and manage effectively risks arising from the department's operations and that a note be sent to the Establishment Committee regarding driver checks.

**7. PERIOD 1 (APRIL - JULY 2020) CEMETERY & CREMATORIUM BUSINESS PLAN PERFORMANCE UPDATE**

The Committee received a report of the Director of Open Spaces on the Period 1 (April – July 2020) Cemetery & Crematorium Business Plan Performance update.

A Member observed that the City of London continued to maintain an open cemetery (following guidance from the City's Legal team) when other cemeteries and crematorium grounds were closed. The City's large spacious chapels enabled the City to allow 20 people to attend a funeral safely when many crematoria were limiting numbers to 5 or 10 people. The Member in question commended the Departments work around this, during a very difficult time.

The Deputy Chairman of the Committee mentioned that the team had been providing a number of services in addition to what is required of them. He mentioned that the Lord Mayor was very impressed with the services during his visit to thank the staff in person.

A Member asked for a comment around the budgetary position of the Cemetery and Crematorium. The Department's Business Manager responded that the Department has had an increase of income, which resulted in the increase of expenditure too, such as bringing in extra staff to cover those who are unwell or shielding. It is expected to maintain the same level of income unless there is a second spike. The Department is anticipating that it may go over their budget, in the event of a second wave of COVID-19.

The Superintendent & Registrar commented that it is hard to clarify where the Department's financial position may be towards the end of the year as it had to reduce the number of cremations due to the number of cremators being available, as a result of the replacement project. At present the Department has only one working cremator and this maybe the case until the first week of November 2020.

The Chairman informed the Committee that he had raised with the HR Director the matter of formal recognitions for staff who have been working exceptionally hard during this difficult time. There are plans in place for formal recognition on the pandemic related work, as well as the Freedom of the City of London, where possible.

The Chairman asked a question following on from the Lord Mayor's visit, that if the City of London was able to live stream services for families who cannot join the funerals physically but can join the services online. The Superintendent & Registrar responded that at present the cemeteries are not in good positions with the cellular reception. This has been raised with IT services in the City of London and there has been an ongoing dialogue which resulted in a site visit for inspections.

The Superintendent & Registrar informed the Committee that once, the Department is in a position to provide quality reception, we may be able to provide such services but at present the service is not up to the level of expectation that the City of London would expect. The Chairman offered his political support on this and agreed to write to the Director of IT and the Chairman of the Digital Services Sub Committee. This was welcomed by the Superintendent & Registrar.

This was followed by a Member who stated that the Members of this Committee will be happy to support the notion of having the services live streamed, as we will be seeing further restriction and he hopes that the budget will be made available so that the City of London's digital services can be up to speed to allow live feed for bereaved families.

The Director of the Built Environment also agreed to take up the IT issues with the Chief Officers and offer her support where possible.

**RESOLVED** – that Members noted the performance of the Cemetery and Crematorium during this April to July 2020 reporting period.

8. **DEPARTMENT OF THE BUILT ENVIRONMENT (CLEANSING SERVICES) BUSINESS PLAN PROGRESS REPORT FOR PERIOD 1 (APRIL - JULY), 2020/21**

The Committee received a report of the Department of the Built Environment on the Department of the Built Environment (Cleansing Services) Business Plan Progress Report for Period 1 (April - July) 2020/21.

A Member commented that he observed from the news, that Suez is going into a merger with Veolia and if this will impact the City of London's KPI with Veolia. The Assistant Director - Cleansing Operations and Street Environment confirmed that he was informed that Veolia's is looking to merge with Suez, and the City of London will continue to monitor its local performance, he further advised that he did not anticipate any problems with the City's contract with Veolia or service delivery as a result of the merger.

This was followed by another Member who commented that they had tried to use the City of London's public toilets but faced difficulties due to not having a 50p coin and asked if there are any plans to go cashless. The Assistant Director - Cleansing Operations and Street Environment confirmed that there are cash points in all the City of London's public toilets but going cashless means that the Department will have to factor in additional budget.

The Deputy Chairman reminded the Committee that there is a need to strike a balance between going cashless and ensuring that the option to pay with cash is also available as not everyone may have access to the right IT accessibility.

The Chairman asked if the cashless payments on the City of London toilets can be explored given that mobile payments at Hampstead Heath are now provided with cashless solution. Additionally, he mentioned that in light of the COVID-19 it is observed that physical cash are not good to carry due to the infection risks involved and as such this case is worthy of a review.

**RESOLVED** – that Members;

- Noted the content of this report and the appendices; and
- received the report.

9. **MARKETS AND CONSUMER PROTECTION BUSINESS PLAN 2020/2021: PROGRESS REPORT (PERIOD 1)**

The Committee received a report of the Director of Markets and Consumer Protection on the Markets and Consumer Protection Business Plan 2020/2021: Progress Report (Period 1).

The Port Health and Public Protection Director introduced the report to the Committee and noted that the report covers the lockdown period and the easements that followed, consequently much of the recent work of the Service has been to assist businesses open and recover from the lockdown.

He noted that the Amber and Red KPIs relate to Port Health and the problems with receiving paperwork from other countries. This is a global issue that is affecting the UK and beyond. Consequently, procedures and processes have been developed with Defra and the Food Standards Agency to address the issue, such as accepting electronic copies of paperwork. This has sped up much of the process and will be in place until the current situation resolves back to some normality.

The Deputy Chairman asked why there seems to be an increase of NO<sub>2</sub> (Nitrogen dioxide) figures. This was followed by another question in terms of pest visibilities within the City of London.

The Port Health and Public Protection Director noted that there had been a slight increase in the last month in NO<sub>2</sub> levels, but it is not to the level experienced pre COVID. The Air Quality Team Manager also updated the Committee and mentioned that the NO<sub>2</sub> levels had decreased significantly during the COVID restrictions and the recent slight increase is due to increased traffic and the use of other combustion plant as the City becomes busier.

In terms of the pest visibilities within the City of London, this is potentially due to the lack of people and footfall within the City of London, which has led to the pests being disturbed less and/or foraging further. The Department continues to liaise with business owners, landlords, and other stakeholders in order to resolve any pest issues and asked Members to get in touch should they hear of any cases which need investigating.

The Deputy Chairman noted that on the South of the Millennium bridge, the illegal nut sellers are now back. The Assistant Director of Public Protection responded that the City of London is working with the National Food Crime Unit (NFCU), who got in touch with Officers from the City of London when they heard about the City's work on this. The City of London is now putting together a data intelligence pack on all known illegal traders in the City, which will be shared with appropriate partners. The pilot project on the illegal traders is coming to an end, and the Committee will be provided with a further update on this following a review.

**RESOLVED** – that Members noted the content of this report and the appendices

10. **PORT HEALTH & PUBLIC PROTECTION RISKS**

The Committee received a report of the Director of Markets and Consumer Protection on the Port Health & Public Protection Risks.

A Member noted that the target dates for a number of the risks are missed and advised that in order to mitigate the risks, we should include a target date. Officers agreed to include the target dates for the future report on this.

**RESOLVED** – that Members noted the report and the actions taken by the Department of Markets and Consumer Protection to monitor and manage effectively risks arising from its operations.

11. **REPORT OF ACTION TAKEN BETWEEN MEETINGS**

The Committee received a report of the Town Clerk on the report of action taken between meetings.

**RESOLVED** – that Members noted the report.

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

A Member asked if the City of London had any plans to regulate the use of drones within the City of London as the Member had received complaints in terms of a drone being flown in his constituency last night.

Officers agreed to take this away and investigate the matter further, as usually drones are only used within the City of London for a number of specific reasons, including policing and for building surveys.

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



### **Update on the impact of the UK leaving the EU (Brexit) on Port Health & Public Protection – Gavin Stedman**

The Port Health and Public Protection Director noted that a report was presented to the Committee in its sitting of July 2020, at which point the City of London knew that there would be a phased introduction of Border Controls from January 2021. However, at present we do not know the regime which we will follow at the end of the EU Transition Period (e.g., will EU imports be subject to the same checks as imports entering the UK from outside of the EU or will there be a 'lighter touch'. It is therefore challenging to predict future workloads at this time.

The Committee was informed that the City of London had made a funding bid to the Food Standards Agency with a request for £474K, but had received only £150K. Officers had gone back to the Food Standards Agency and had asked for other fund opportunities that may be available. Officers had also made a bid to Department for Environment, Food, and Rural Affairs for additional funding for the difference. The closing date for the Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs was the 13 September 2020 and a bid was submitted.

Members raised concerns about the lack of funds being made available. The Chairman assured the Committee that he is working with the Port Health and Public Protection Director to ensure that the funding gaps are addressed, and resources are put in place.

### **Clean Air Day 8 October 2020 - Ruth Calderwood.**

The Air Quality Manager informed the Committee that the Clean Air Day is confirmed for 8 October 2020. This will be the fourth consecutive year that this has been running for; organised by a charity called Global Action Plan. The day aims to raise awareness about clean air, its impacts on health and how communities can reduce air pollution levels locally. Due to COVID-19 the activities will be online; besides, the City of London plans to host an online business event as part of the clean city award scheme. At the event, the City will be launching a tool kit to reduce personal exposure to air pollution.

The day will be promoted on social media, whereby businesses, schools and local residents will be signposted to participate with online activities.

The Committee was further advised that the Air Quality Team is working in collaboration with the Cross River Partnership on the Clean Air Village project and had invited candidates to apply to become Members of the Air Quality Ambassador's programme. Successful candidates for the Ambassadorship of the Clean Air Village will be announced on the day. The Clean Air Village Ambassadors will be trained to become active voices in their local communities to help reduced air pollution.

As a result of the Clean Air Day, the City of London will be putting together a column in City Matters newspaper, which will focus on the improvements that the City had seen in the Square Mile.

The Chairman asked if the plans for the day can be communicated to the

Committee via the Clerk so that Members can share the plan with their own networks.

The Chairman noted a letter to Ruth Calderwood from Sadiq Khan, the Mayor of London. Ruth is the Chair of the London Air Quality Steering Group and a Trustee of Environmental Protection UK, a nationally renowned and respected organisation. The Chairman went onto reading the letter from the Mayor of London praising Ruth and her team's work.

#### **FORS GOLD Accreditation**

The Chairman informed the Committee that the City of London has again this year been accredited with FORS GOLD Award. FORS GOLD award is a very prestigious award, and the City of London aims to lead by example in many aspects. The Chairman congratulated the team involved in achieving the recognition.

#### **London Thames Fishery Research Experiment**

The Chairman informed the Committee that the London Thames Fishery Research Experiment would take place on the 17 October 2020, but it will be a significantly scaled-back event with limited participation. The City of London would be represented by the Chairman and Deputy Chairman of the Committee, subject to no further COVID-19 restrictions and that they can attend.

#### **14. 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>Item No.</b>	<b>Paragraph(s) in Schedule 12A</b>
15	3
16	3 & 4
17	3 & 4

#### **15. NON-PUBLIC MINUTES**

**RESOLVED** - that the no public minutes of the meeting held on Tuesday, 21 July 2020 be approved as a correct record.

16. **FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS OF COVID-19 ON THE CLEANSING SERVICE**  
The Committee received a report of the Director of Built Environment on the Financial Implications of COVID-19 on the Cleansing Service.
17. **PORT HEALTH AND ENVIRONMENTAL SERVICES DEBTORS -PERIOD ENDING 30 JUNE 2020**  
The Committee received a joint report of the Director of the Built Environment, the Director of Markets and Consumer Protection, and the Director of Open Spaces.
18. **NON-PUBLIC QUESTIONS ON MATTERS RELATING TO THE WORK OF THE COMMITTEE**  
There were no additional, urgent item of business for consideration in the non-public session.
19. **ANY OTHER BUSINESS THAT THE CHAIRMAN CONSIDERED URGENT AND WHICH THE COMMITTEE AGREES SHOULD BE CONSIDERED WHILST THE PUBLIC ARE EXCLUDED**  
There were no other urgent business.

**The meeting closed at 12.21.**

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Chairman

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