

MARKETS COMMITTEE
Wednesday, 3 November 2021

Minutes of the meeting of the Markets Committee held at Committee Rooms 3 & 4 -
2nd Floor, West Wing, Guildhall on Wednesday, 3 November 2021 at 11.30 am

Present

Members:

John Chapman (Chairman)
Deputy Henry Pollard (Deputy Chairman)
Peter Bennett
Mark Bostock
Deputy David Bradshaw
Deputy Kevin Everett
Helen Fentimen
Deputy Tom Hoffman
Angus Knowles-Cutler
Deputy Robert Merrett
Deputy Brian Mooney (Chief Commoner)
John Petrie
Stephen Quilter
Ian Seaton
James Tumbridge
Dawn Wright

Officers:

| | | |
|--------------------|---|---|
| Ben Milligan | - | Markets Director |
| Daniel Ritchie | - | Markets and Consumer Protection |
| Mark Sherlock | - | Markets and Consumer Protection |
| Peter Young | - | City Surveyor's Department |
| Anna Dunne | - | City Surveyor's Department |
| Steven Chandler | - | City Surveyor's Department |
| Simon Owen | - | Chamberlain's Department |
| Clem Harcourt | - | Chamberlain's Department |
| Andrew Fothergill | - | Comptroller and City Solicitor's Department |
| Julie Gibbs | - | Markets and Consumer Protection |
| Antoinette Duhaney | - | Town Clerk's Department |

1. APOLOGIES

Apologies were received from Caroline Addy, Nicholas Bensted-Smith, John Edwards, Alderman & Sheriff Alison Gowman, Wendy Mead, Deputy Barbara Newman, Elizabeth Rogula and Deputy Dr Giles Shilson.

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

There were no declarations.

3.1 **Public Minutes**

RESOLVED – That the public minutes of the meeting held on 15.09.21 be approved as a correct record.

3.2 **Outstanding Actions Log**

Officers advised that Item 3 – Energy costs had been completed and could therefore be removed from the log.

RESOLVED – That the Outstanding Actions Log be noted subject to the removal of Item 3 - Energy costs from the log.

4. **SUPERINTENDENT UPDATES (ORAL UPDATE)**

The Committee heard oral updates from the Markets Superintendents on the matters set out below:-

Smithfield

National Association of British Market Authorities (NABMA) Conference

The Superintendent attended the annual NABMA conference on 11th -12th October 2021. The conference recognised and celebrated the role Markets in supporting communities, employment and the wider public realm by adapting and remaining open throughout the pandemic to supply quality affordable food.

Car Park LED lighting

A Gateway 2 report would be presented to the Projects Board and Corporate Asset and Projects Sub Committees during November in respect of the installation of LED lighting in the car park with an estimated completion date of November 2022. The project would be funded from the CWP budget and would generate annual savings of £18k.

Trade

Trade was close to pre-pandemic levels although there were still noticeable fluctuations in returning to a consistent flow of trade across the week or year compared to pre-covid times. If food shortages continued, the market would be busier. Covid mitigation controls would be adapted to meet any change in Government guidance.

Traffic Management

Christmas traffic management plan meetings were taking place involving Traders and Officers. The loading bay suspensions would have a major impact on the market and mitigation measures were being considered to manage traffic flow to the Market and surrounding roads network in the lead up week to Christmas.

Planned Animal Rights Protest

Another protest was planned for 5th November from about midday. This would be the second protest at the market this year and Officers were working closely with Traders and emergency plans would be invoked as necessary.

Billingsgate

1. Following the Committee's approval of various elements of the Billingsgate Action Plan at the previous meeting, the London Fish Merchants Association (LFMA) would meet during November to appoint a new Chairman and fill other positions on their Council.
2. Tenants met with the Remembrancer earlier in the day to discuss the process for submission of a Private Bill and the outcome of discussions would be reported under agenda item 16.
3. A meeting to consider a trial of outbound deliveries over the Christmas period had been postponed due to driver shortages and would now be reconsidered in 2022.
4. At the recent National Association of British Markets Authorities (NABMA) annual awards, Billingsgate won Markets Team of the Year. Judges acknowledged:
 - a. That whilst markets across the country were closing, Billingsgate was busier than ever, with the team working tirelessly to ensure that thousands of local people could buy fish quickly and safely.
 - b. That the market was not closed for a single day and that staff showed remarkable dedication to support the delivery of the service by adapting their roles.
 - c. That impeding access into the market hall had increased pressure on the constabulary who had worked tirelessly to reassure visitors whilst challenging unacceptable behaviour.
 - d. The team were further commended, for facilitating numerous temporary COVID-19 testing sites on behalf of Tower Hamlets in the collaborative response to the pandemic.

Judges had concluded that staff at Billingsgate were a credit to the industry in maintaining market operations in unprecedented times.

New Spitalfields

Markets Tour

Markets Committee Members attended a tour of the market on 22 September 2022. Members were briefed by Countrystyle regarding waste recycling and nil landfill. The CEO of City Harvest also briefed Members on their activities and efforts to increase output now that they had secured additional space and were liaising with traders to facilitate more surplus tonnage donations.

Trade

The market was quieter during the autumn, and this was reflected in the 13% reduction in vehicles using the car park over the last 2 months compared to usage during July and August. However, numbers are up by 17% for Sept and Oct 2021 compared to the same period in 2022.

Air Quality

Officers met with a green bio-fuel supplier to explore scope for bio-fuel being used for forklift trucks on site to reduce emissions in the market hall from forklift

trucks. An ancillary providing site fuel is engaging in further discussions with the bio-fuel supplier regarding the feasibility of bio-fuel being used onsite.

Brexit/COVID-19

Officers reported that there were no significant changes to report.

Rental of empty catering units

Agents were negotiating with several prospective tenants regarding rental of vacant units.

Members thanked Officers for the updates and Members who attended the New Spitalfields tour were appreciative of the informative presentations. Disappointment was expressed at the low attendance rate and also the poor transport provision. It was suggested that the annual schedule of tours for 2022 be agreed earlier in advance and that alternative dates should be offered for tours.

Officers felt that more could be done to promote the Markets and widen links in respect of the broader sustainability agenda

RESOLVED –

1. That the updates be noted.
2. That the annual schedule of tours for 2022 be agreed earlier in advance and that alternative dates should be made available.

5. MARKETS COMMITTEE RISK UPDATE - NOVEMBER 2021

The Committee considered a report of the Director of Markets providing assurances that satisfactory risk management procedures are in place within the Markets Division to meet the requirements of the corporate Risk Management Framework.

In presenting the report, Officers advised that the report would be prepared in a new format from April 2022.

Members had mixed views on the new report format. Some Members were concerned that the new format would make it easier for issues to fall under the radar and on the other hand some Members felt that "by exception" reporting on risks made the best use of the Committee's time.

In response to questions and observations from Members, Officers reported that the risk in respect of the glass canopy at Smithfield Market was ranked green because of mitigation measures in place. An audit of transport at Smithfield Market had taken place recently

A Member suggested that the maintenance related risks should be reviewed to achieve the right balance in respect of necessary repairs versus value for money taking into account the Markets Co-location Programme.

RESOLVED –

1. That the report and the actions taken in the Markets Division to monitor, and manage effectively, risks arising from its operations be noted.
2. That it be noted that going forward, only red risks or risks which had altered significantly would be reported.

6. **REVENUE AND CAPITAL BUDGETS 2022/23**

The Committee considered a joint report of the Chamberlain and the Director of Markets regarding the annual submission of the revenue and capital budgets overseen by the Markets Committee.

In presenting the report, Officers advised that the resource envelope had not altered and the savings shortfall was £39,000 and Markets Conditions Survey costs would be met from MCP funds.

During the course of debate, Members raised the following points/questions.

- An explanation on bullet points 1 through 5 on page 41 of the agenda pack was requested.
- Why were sinking fund resources included in page 41 of the pack rather than being the subject of a standalone report?
- In respect of para 9, page 42 how were the figures quoted calculated?
- What is that capital depreciation charge as a percentage of the overall value of the Markets? (Page 43, para 12)
- Were savings opportunistic or recurrent year on year?
- What was the likely impact of inflation on the budget and savings targets?
- The Capital project budget was low taking into account the number of capital projects for the markets.

In response, Officers stated that some of the savings were TOM savings and some savings were opportunistic. Going forward, there would be further opportunistic savings arising from TOM related staffing restructures. Officers also advised that inflation was not included in the figures and the 2% efficiency savings target applied up to and including 2022/23. The capital projects budget covered capital projects within the remit of the Markets Committee

Members requested a comprehensive report on all markets capital projects irrespective of which department was co-ordinating these projects so that the Committee retained full oversight on all markets related capital projects. Officers undertook to provide this information once the current capital bidding process for 2022/3 was complete and would also explore how best to present this information to Members going forward.

RESOLVED – That Members:

1. Note the latest revenue budget for 2021/22 for Markets Committee;
 2. Approve the Markets Committee proposed revenue budget for 2022/23 for submission to Finance Committee;
 3. Approve the Markets Committee proposed capital and supplementary revenue projects budgets for 2022/23 for submission to Finance Committee;
 4. Authorise the Chamberlain, in consultation with the Chief Operating Officer, to revise these budgets to allow for any further implications arising from subsequently approved savings proposals, Target Operating Model (TOM) implementation, or changes to the resource envelope; and
 5. Agree that amendments for 2021/22 and 2022/23 budgets arising from changes to recharges or for any further implications arising from Corporate Projects, other reviews and changes to the Cyclical Works Programme and capital charges during budget setting be delegated to the Chamberlain in consultation with the Chief Operating Officer.
 6. Agree that a comprehensive report on all markets capital projects be presented to a future meeting, irrespective of which department is co-ordinating these projects so that the Markets Committee retains full oversight on all markets related capital projects.
7. **CONCESSIONARY PARKING AT SMITHFIELD MARKET DURING THE CHRISTMAS PERIOD 2021**

The Committee considered a report of the Director of Markets regarding a request for a temporary reduction in the car park tariffs from 9pm on 1st December 2021 until 10am on 31st December 2021.

In presenting the report, Officers stated that there was already significant disruption around the market as a result of suspended loading bays and the concessions would assist in alleviating any further congestion/ disruption which was impacting on deliveries.

Members had mixed views on the length of the concessionary period being recommended in the absence of narrative in the report to outline the traffic pressures. The justification for a longer concessionary period was questioned given that traffic levels were lower and a longer concessionary period would result in income loss for the CoL.

In response to questions and comments from Members, Officers advised that in the area around the market was already very congested and this was impacting on deliveries which would be exacerbated in the busier trading period leading up to Christmas.

It was MOVED, SECONDED and

RESOLVED – That Members agree

1. To grant an increased concessionary period of 13 days from 12 – 24 December inclusive (compared to 14 days granted in 2020).
2. That the current tariff be reduced to free for all visitors to the Rotunda car park from 9.00pm on Sunday 12th December until 10am on Friday 24th December 2021 (13 days).

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

There were no questions.

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

There were no urgent items.

10. **EXCLUSION OF THE PUBLIC**

RESOLVED – That under Section 100A(4) of the Local Government Act 1972, the public be excluded from the meeting for the following items of business on the grounds that they involve the likely disclosure of exempt information as defined in Paragraph 3 of Part I of Schedule 12A of the Local Government Act as follows:-

| Item(s) | Paragraph |
|---------|-----------|
| 11 - 14 | 3 |

11. **NON-PUBLIC MINUTES**

The non-public minutes of the meeting held on 15.09.21 were approved.

12. **SUPERINTENDENT UPDATES (ORAL UPDATE)**

The Committee considered oral updates from the Superintendents.

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

There were no questions.

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

Officers reported on two urgent matters.

The meeting ended at 1.08 pm

Chairman

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