

PLANNING AND TRANSPORTATION COMMITTEE

Tuesday, 21 November 2023

Minutes of the meeting of the Planning and Transportation Committee held at the Guildhall EC2 at 10.30 am

Present

Members:

Deputy Shравan Joshi (Chairman)	Deputy Natasha Maria Cabrera Lloyd-Owen
Graham Packham (Deputy Chairman)	Antony Manchester
Deputy Randall Anderson	Deputy Brian Mooney
Brendan Barns	Deputy Alastair Moss
Ian Bishop-Laggett	Alderwoman Jennette Newman
Mary Durcan	Deborah Oliver
John Edwards	Alderwoman Susan Pearson
Anthony David Fitzpatrick	Deputy Henry Pollard
Deputy John Fletcher	Ian Seaton
Deputy Marianne Fredericks	Hugh Selka
Jaspreet Hodgson	Luis Felipe Tilleria
Deputy Charles Edward Lord	William Upton KC

Officers:

Zoe Lewis	- Town Clerk's Department
Fleur Francis	- Comptroller and City Solicitor's Department
Simon Bradbury	- Environment Department
Gillian Howard	- Environment Department
Ian Hughes	- Environment Department
Rob McNicol	- Environment Department
Gwyn Richards	- Environment Department
Bob Roberts	- Environment Department
Samantha Tharme	- Environment Department
David Horkan	- Environment Department
Peter Wilson	- Environment Department

1. APOLOGIES

Apologies for absence were received from Deputy Michael Cassidy, Dawn Frampton and Shailendra Umrada.

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 previous meeting held on 3 October 2023, be approved as an accurate record.

4. **OUTSTANDING ACTIONS***

An Officer informed the Committee that Officers were meeting a potential external trainer to provide heritage training for Members. It was anticipated this training would be arranged in Quarter 1 or 2024. The Officer stated that a Members' training session on archaeology was being arranged and in addition Members had been invited to see archaeology that had recently been found. There would also be a training session arranged on fire safety and the new building regulations.

In response to a Member's question about whether Historic England guidance would be part of the heritage training, the Officer stated that this would be integrated into the training.

5. **CITY PLAN 2040**

The Chairman informed Members that this item had been withdrawn from the agenda. He informed Members that the Levelling Up and Regeneration Act had gained Royal Assent at the end of October 2023 and following this there were indications that an update to the National Planning Policy Framework was due to be published imminently by the Government, including changes that would affect the plan-making process. For this reason, it has been decided to withdraw this item and return it to Committee as soon as possible once there was further clarity on the national policy changes that were due to come forward. The Chairman advised that it was likely to be considered by the Committee in mid-late January 2023.

6. **BANK JUNCTION IMPROVEMENTS (ALL CHANGE AT BANK): TRAFFIC MIX AND TIMING REVIEW UPDATE**

The Committee considered a report of the Interim Executive Director, Environment updating Members on the All Change at Bank project.

An Officer stated that the report was a summary of the work undertaken since July 2023 following the Court of Common Council approval to pause further work on the traffic modelling exercise at Bank Junction and to instead focus on identifying and evidencing the need for change and how this could be best addressed. Further work had been undertaken to understand the potential latent demand regarding taxis. The Court of Common Council had also requested that a progress report be submitted to its December 2023 meeting.

The Officer stated that the report contained the information that had been collected and analysed to date. The work undertaken to date on taxi volumes showed that there had been a significant reduction in the volume of taxis near Bank and across the City when comparing figures from 2017 and 2022. This was not dissimilar to the figures in parts of Westminster or in terms of volumes of taxis entering the congestion charge area in the same timeframes.

Members were informed that there had been a continued trend of a reduction in the total number of licensed taxi drivers and vehicle volumes for many years. However, this data was likely to help to support the way forward for establishing an agreed approach to the latent demand issues for the traffic modelling requirements with TfL.

The Officer stated, that it was recognised that there had been some dissatisfaction in the proposed timeframes of the possible implementation of any findings from this review, and Officers considered that there was an opportunity to accelerate this by three to four months and outlined this option to Members. The Officer advised that the other options were to continue with the methodology as agreed in July 2023 by the Court of Common Council, or to stop the review.

The Officer informed Members that a further report would be presented to Members of the Planning and Transportation Committee by May 2024 with the final findings of the data collection, the traffic modelling and the updated equalities analysis included. It would recommend the next steps to either close the review or to proceed in terms of progressing changes to the traffic orders at Bank Junction.

Deputy Thompson addressed the Committee. He spoke in favour of Option B, the option recommended by Officers. He stated however that he would prefer for the City to take back control from TfL and implement a trial lifting of restriction on licensed hackney carriages across Bank Junction and Bishopsgate but have been advised this would be difficult and so he proposed that the City's relationship with TfL be reset. He raised concerns that TfL had closed two lines on the day of the Lord Mayor's Show with no consultation with the City. He also raised concerns on the restrictions by TfL on London Bridge which meant high volumes of traffic were driving across the iconic Tower Bridge, which was not designed for this. He stated that this caused congestion and wear and tear on the bridge and expense on the City Bridge Foundation. Deputy Thompson stated that short trips across the City could be long and expensive and as a result, many black taxis avoided the City.

He further stated that it could be very difficult to hail a cab on the street especially at night whilst they remained readily available in the West End. He stated that there being fewer cabs post COVID was as a result of the restrictions that were being imposed, as shown by taxi app data and discussions with black taxi drivers.

Deputy Thompson stated that in the trial of 2017, Members were given assurances the restrictions could be varied easily if access for black taxis was an issue but this was not the case and was the reason a motion was put to the Court of Common Council in April 2022. He stated that this issue was a problem for businesses in his ward and raised concern that although there was the possibility of an easing of restrictions, this would not be until 2025. Deputy Thompson outlined a number of cases where the shortage of taxis was providing significant issues and stated that he considered that the restrictions were discriminatory against the elderly and those with mobility issues and were

causing significant issues for individuals and businesses. He stated that numerous black taxi drivers backed up these experiences. He also stated that restrictions should be lifted for women's safety, for a safe and vibrant nighttime economy, to encourage businesses to locate and remain in the City, to encourage taxi drivers to the City, for economic growth, for vibrant hospitality and to support Destination City, businesses and the City's 10 million annual visitors.

Deputy Thompson raised concerns about there being difficulties during the Lord Mayor's Show as a result of the changes to Bank Junction.

He also stated that black taxis were the safest vehicles on the City's roads and were part of the public transport system so should be permitted where buses were. He asked Members to support Option B in the Officer report.

The Chairman asked for Members' questions to Officers.

A number of Members raised concerns about businesses suffering due to a lack of taxis, issues where staff were required to work early mornings or night shifts, where people had to travel to business meetings and where people did not have the time to use other methods of transport. It was also stated that many foreign investors coming into the city would expect to use taxis and visitors would not have Apps for booking other taxis and could experience difficulties in hailing a black cab. A Member stated that as part of Destination City, it was important to encourage people, visitors, families, workers, everyone into the city.

The Chairman asked Officers about the most efficient method to have a decision made by the Court of Common Council and was informed that Option B, as outlined in the report was the most efficient, robust method to ease restrictions if that was the decision of Members. A Member asked whether, if option B was chosen, Officers could discuss with TfL and others with an interest to find a solution that would enable taxi capacity at Bank Junction to be increased sooner than summer 2025. An Officer stated that as any party could take out a judicial review, a negotiated settlement with TfL would not stop the possibility or likelihood of a challenge.

The Chairman asked Officers to explain what would happen if Members decided to stop further work and put in an experimental traffic order. An Officer stated there was a clear legislative process to be followed. Modelling and data were required and without these there could be legal challenge. TfL was the Strategic Transport Authority and had the right of oversight over the way in which some streets were managed.

Members commented on the Bank Junction Taxi Availability and Analysis Report which seemed to suggest that availability was a Londonwide problem and was not unique to the city, with the comparatives between Westminster and the City showing the problem did not seem to be worse in the city. A Member asked for clarification on whether opening Bank Junction would resolve the problem as this did not seem to be supported by the evidence in the

report. An Officer stated that some comparisons had been made with Oxford Street and Regent Street by working with Westminster, the data in the appendix was an interim report and further information would be provided in due course. The Officer stated that the high-level data suggested taxi availability was an issue across central London and that the numbers of licenced drivers and licenced vehicles had been decreasing over a long period of time.

Members discussed Bank Junction currently being open to taxis after 7pm and measures that could help increase numbers of taxis at nighttime including more taxi ranks and charging points. An Officer referred to paragraph 29 and 30 of the Officer report and stated that Cheapside had been opened up to taxis, there was a marshalling scheme at Liverpool Street and a taxi rank put in outside the Ned. He stated that although taxi availability was a pan-London phenomenon, City focused improvements were being implemented. A Member asked if work was being undertaken to see why more taxis were not in the City in the evening as Bank Junction was open to them at this time. An Officer stated that the current data collection was high-level and aggregated. When individual sites were considered, it would be possible to see where there were differences in taxi availability across the day and the quantity of vehicles in the City in the evening period. It was anticipated that this would inform the position as to whether or not reopening Bank Junction to taxis during the day, would result in more taxi drivers there in the day who therefore might then be there in the evening too. A Member suggested an education piece could be undertaken as some drivers seemed unaware they could drive through the junction at other times and this could increase the number of taxis in the City in the evening. Another Member asked that modelling be undertaken with sufficient granularity e.g. three hour by three hour availability.

Members discussed the accessibility benefits of taxi use by those with mobility challenges. A Member commented that not permitting taxis through Bank Junction was discriminatory to those who were unable to use other methods. He added that with more people working longer, the number of people with mobility challenges would increase. Some Members commented that whilst mobility issues should be taken into account there could be other ways to address this, than by allowing taxis through Bank Junction. Members were informed that the equalities analysis would be presented to Members by May 2024 and would be a more detailed analysis than the previous one. The new equalities analysis would better substantiate the balance between taxis through Bank Junction providing a benefit for some people with protected characteristics and the likelihood that it would also disbenefit other people with protected characteristics who walked, cycled, used buses etc. Data would include Oyster card data from TfL buses to provide more information on the demographic of people and volumes of people using services at and near the junction and on those routes e.g. by using data from Young Persons Oyster Cards, Disabled Persons Oyster Cards and Freedom Cards, etc. to work out the volumes of people that were using those services.

A Member raised concern about the costs of the work. The Officer stated that a request was made through the Resource Allocation Sub-Committee for funding from the On-Street Parking Reserve to supplement the existing budget for Bank

Junction and funding was granted. Therefore there was funding to complete this work unless Option C, as outlined in the report, was chosen in which case that funding would be released.

In response to points made about accidents at the junction and whether or not these would increase if taxis were allowed through the junction, the Officer stated that the reason for changing the junction was the accidents that were happening. He informed Members that once the data collection was finished and all the information had been collated it needed to be balanced against the risk to the people driving, cycling and walking through the junction. These points would be put to Members when they were asked to decide on whether to change the traffic orders.

Members discussed the Lord Mayor's Show and the pinch points which had been an issue for some large vehicles when turning. An Officer informed Members that Officers had worked closely with the Pageant Master's team when designing the junction and had watched the show before the junction was designed to see how it moved through the junction. The Officer stated that there were very large military vehicles taking part in the show this year and they took part on an infrequent but rotating basis. The size of these military vehicles sat outside the modelling CAD design process because normal highways were not designed to take that scale of military vehicle. Officers would ensure that the margin for error would be broadened and that a couple of additional pieces of infrastructure would be removed for future shows. The pinch points that would be addressed as part of the usual debrief process and this would feed into the planning of the next show. A Member commented on how good Bank Junction looked for the Lord Mayor's Show and credited the hard work that Officers had put in with the Conway contractors to get the area cleared and ready for the show.

A Member raised concern about socio-economic inequality with taxis not being the most accessible method of transport for the majority of people. She stated that data on the public sector equality duty should be presented to Members and stated that she would welcome the City of London access group being consulted around this. An Officer stated that more detail would be provided on the equalities impact assessment and socio-economic inequality would be included.

A Member suggested that more consultation should be undertaken with businesses in and around Bank Junction and there should be robust engagement with TfL. An Officer stated that engagement from businesses would be welcomed the engagement, however, there had been a reluctance by businesses and commercial organisations to come forward with their views. The Officer also stated that robust engagement had taken place, and would continue to take place, with TfL.

A Member commented that the City of London was well served by a number of tube stations, mainline stations and bus routes. She stated that TfL had been updating stations with lifts, escalators and new entrances at Bank itself and the City was being more accessible. In response by a comment from Deputy

Thompson that TfL had closed two lines on the day of the Lord Mayor's Show without consultation, the Member stated that she had been advised by TfL that this was unavoidable as the works were critical. She stated the importance of looking at the impact on the bus journeys in the modelling because these were affordable and accessible and many people used them to travel in and out of the City in the very early morning and at night. She stated that consultation should be fair and suggested that modelling should also include what would happen if traffic was taken out of Bank junction at weekends. An Officer stated that the more modelling and testing that took place, the longer time it would take and advised that Officers would be reluctant to do this unless instructed to do so by the Committee.

In response to the Chairman's suggestion that reduced journey times would reduce emissions and could be an argument to put to TfL alongside the accessibility work, an Officer stated that improving air quality and emissions at Bank Junction was part of the original ambition for the scheme. There was a balance between the organisation's different broader strategic objectives e.g. accessibility, transport strategy, climate action, Destination City, and they did not always perfectly align. Therefore all the information would be brought together for Members to make a considered decision.

Having fully debated the application, the Chairman asked Members to vote on Recommendation B (the Officer's recommended Option).

Votes were cast as follows: IN FAVOUR – 22 Votes
OPPOSED – 1 Vote
There was 1 abstention.

The recommended Option B was therefore carried.

RESOLVED – That Members of the Committee

1. Note the contents of the report.
2. Endorse Option B: To immediately restart the modelling of the traffic impacts, running this work in parallel with the data collection and analysis. (Recommended)
3. Agree on the basis of recommendation 2 that this report is referred to the Court of Common Council for consideration.

7. FLEET STREET AREA HEALTHY STREETS PLAN

The Committee considered a report of the Interim Executive Director, Environment concerning the Fleet Street Area Healthy Streets Plan (HSP) which would provide a framework for improvements to streets and public realm in the area.

RESOLVED - That the Fleet Street Area Healthy Streets Plan be approved.

8. VISION ZERO PLAN 2023-2028

An Officer introduced the report and stated that the Vision Zero plan set out the ambition to reduce road danger on the City's streets and reduce the number of fatal and serious injuries to zero in the longer term. Members were informed

that the plan had been considered by the Streets and Walkway's Sub-Committee and the Police Authority Board. There had also been a briefing of Planning and Transportation Committee Members and Police Authority Board Members. The Officer stated that the plan had been amended following Member feedback. He informed Members that the document was now more succinct and focused on the areas where the most difference could be made. In addition, the engineering and infrastructure improvement elements had been moved to the front of the document and there was a new section on delivering the plan which set out timescales and funding sources. The Officer stated that the funding for the plan was now in closer alignment than it was previously, in terms of the City of London Police funding envelope, and there was not an expectation of additional unfunded commitments from the City of London Police. The Officer stated that there was a broad range of ambitious proposals to help achieve the interim targets, reducing fatal and serious injuries in the City.

The Officer stated that aside from existing TfL Local Implementation Plan funding, the delivery of the plan depended on the success of future capital funding bids. He assured Members that the approach to these forthcoming bids would be considered, would be spread across the period of the plan and would fully comply with all existing governance and decision-making procedures.

In response to a Member's question, the Officer confirmed that there had been a reduction in terms of the numbers of fatal and serious injuries during the pandemic, mainly due to lower numbers of people in the City. Through the delivery of the schemes and initiatives, steps had been taken to try and ensure that as additional numbers of people returned to the City, there was not a concurrent increase in the numbers of those fatally or seriously injured. Unfortunately, in 2022, the figures for the City, and across London, showed an increase in the number of people killed and seriously injured. This showed the need for a more ambitious plan, as outlined in the Officer report.

A Member asked if work was being done with the Safer City Partnership regarding unsafe cycling and taking enforcement action or educating cyclists. The Officer stated that the plan set out the different types of conflict that existed between different street users in the city e.g. the conflict between people walking and cycling. There were a number of commitments included within the plan which built upon existing work principally undertaken by colleagues in the City of London Police in terms of ensuring that dangerous cycling was tackled in an appropriate way. It was also central to the design of new infrastructure improvements to ensure it was addressed and discouraged as much as possible. The plan set out initiatives across the themes of streets, people's behaviours, and the vehicles themselves.

An Officer stated that the police were currently running a successful operation, Operation Lewis, with a cycling team dealing with cycling issues. There had been a high level of engagement with cyclists and pedestrians. There had also been a number of stop and search outcomes from it, warning notices and fixed penalty notices issued, and the outcomes were reported through the Safer City Partnership to the Police Authority Board.

A Member stated that 50% of accidents were caused by inattention and this needed to be addressed through behavioural change. He asked how it was proposed to do this. The Officer stated that it was difficult to change behaviour and while themes of activity within safe behaviours would be considered, it was important to take a holistic approach to understand how behaviours could be influenced in other ways too e.g. through the design of the street environment.

A Member commented that pedestrians distracted on mobile phones was an issue and was not referred to specifically in the plan. An Officer stated that the plan stated there was a need to understand more about the system and more about conflicts that occurred. The plan recognised there was more to do in terms of understanding and building on knowledge and research in this area. There was a commitment to looking at this in more detail. Findings of research would then lead into the potential for more intervention in future.

In response to a Member's concern about dockless cycles being abandoned rather than left in bays, an Officer stated that a Member briefing had been held with one of the operators and a report to the next Streets and Walkways Sub-Committee had been requested on short, medium and long-term proposals to demonstrate the actions being taken. A Member briefing would also be held with another operator had also been arranged.

A Member commented that the police cycle team had recently been increased in size. She stated that many Members had been out with the police either observing or collecting data and that the police were working to tackle cycling issues. She raised concern that it was more difficult to tackle the issue of inattentive pedestrians. A Member stated that cyclists and motorists should be made aware that the City was predominantly a pedestrian-friendly environment and they should be looking out for pedestrians.

In response to a Member's question, the Officer stated that the quality of data was imperative for the development and delivery of the plan. There had been improvements in the data received and there were actions in the plan to continue to improve the insight and understanding from the data. In addition, the allocation and prioritisation of funding in relation to the plan was associated with the priorities seen in the data.

A Member asked if measures could be taken to discourage vehicles from entering the space at junctions intended only for cyclists, and if increasing the offer around cycling proficiency courses was part of the plan. The Officer stated the importance of maintaining cycle safety through protected and safe space for them, including advanced stop lines and advanced stop boxes and this was referred to in the plan. The Officer also stated that cycle training had been delivered for a number of years and would continue to be funded through the Transport for London Local Implementation Plan. The Officer referred to the work being done by City of London Police colleagues, including through Operation Lewis, for example, where officers were riding bicycles and having a visible presence, and also the good work of the roads policing unit which would

continue to enforce and discourage encroachment into advanced stop lines by motorists.

A Member stated that it would be difficult to change the behaviours of pedestrians and there had to be a focus on improving safety at junctions and crossings. She stated that the report mentioned that the majority of accidents took place at T-junctions and crossings and at nighttime. She commented that speeds tended to be higher than they were during the day. She raised concern about the clusters of collisions shown in the report and asked if having all the traffic lights at a junction turning red at the same time so pedestrians could cross would reduce pedestrian confusion and the risk of collisions. She asked if more raised ramps and better lighting at T-junctions could also help. The Officer stated that there was a list of the 10 priority junction locations, to be a priority for the period of the plan with the process of junction prioritisation undertaken on an annual basis to ensure that any emerging issues and new hotspots were acted upon. The Officer stated that Officers worked closely with Transport for London as the strategic highway authority, responsible for traffic signals, including the extent to which there might be more appropriate ways and more understandable ways for people walking to cross junctions. He stated that Officers would continue to work with colleagues at TfL to ensure that they continued to evolve and harness new technologies regarding signalling.

RESOLVED – That the Vision Zero Plan 2023 – 2028 be approved.

9. PUBLIC LIFT AND ESCALATOR REPORT*

The Committee received a report of the City Surveyor on the availability and performance of publicly accessible lifts and escalators monitored and maintained by City Surveyors, in the reporting period 19 September 2023 to 3 November 2023.

A Member asked Officers to confirm whether the Millenium inclinor would be in place and ready when the building was opened in spring 2024. An Officer clarified that the lift was outside the envelope of the building and was not within the building. The Officer stated that work was taking place with the City Bridge Foundation, and in particular the Millenium Commission. Officers were working to facilitate the opening when the building was opened in spring 2024. The Officer also clarified that a service agreement was in place with the developer for the ongoing service and maintenance of the lift under the Section 106 agreement.

RESOLVED – To note the report.

10. TO NOTE THE MINUTES OF THE PLANNING APPLICATIONS SUB-COMMITTEE - 21 JULY 2023*

The Committee received the public minutes of the meeting held on 21 July 2023.

RECEIVED.

11. TO NOTE THE DRAFT MINUTES OF THE LOCAL PLANS SUB-COMMITTEE - 18 OCTOBER 2023*

The Committee received the draft public minutes of the meeting held on 18 October 2023.

RECEIVED.

12. TO NOTE THE MINUTES OF THE STREETS AND WALKWAYS SUB-COMMITTEE - 26 SEPTEMBER 2023*

The Committee received the draft public minutes of the meeting held on 26 September 2023.

RECEIVED.

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

Lighting SPD and Voluntary Charter

A Member asked about the withdrawal of funding for the promoting of the Lighting SPD and Voluntary charter. The Chairman stated that the promotion of the Lighting SPD and Voluntary Charter was outside the remit of just Planning and Transportation. He stated that there was a desire to have a publicity campaign to promote that amongst existing buildings, encouraging them to turn their lights off. Whilst it was considered that the Corporation should lead the way and sign up, to achieve this, there was a requirement to understand the capital cost of doing so. This was currently being undertaken. It was considered that it would be premature to launch a marketing campaign until the Corporation was in a position to sign up. The Chairman stated that funding or the marketing campaign was not currently on the agenda, this was on the basis that the costs were better understood and that the Corporation wanted to promote the SPD and Voluntary Character. The Chairman stated that many organisations would be undertaking similar work to understand the capital cost of them signing up to the charter. He informed Members that understanding the cost was a responsible approach to fulfilling the policy.

In response to questions from Members on steps that could be taken to help residents who were keen to promote the Lighting SPD and Voluntary Charter to businesses, and if more could be done to help them, Officers stated that discussions had taken place with the City Property Association (CPA) and Business Improvement Districts could encourage their Members to switch their lights off. An Officer stated the work was currently light touch as it was resource intensive. The Officer also stated that discussions had taken place with residents who were keen to promote the charter and speak to businesses and they had been given background information. The Officer stated that in terms of the resources to further publicise the charter, this was dependent on additional funding which currently was not in place. The Officer also stated that any major schemes being granted planning permission, either by the Planning & Transportation Committee, or by delegated authority, now contained a lighting condition.

A Member suggested that there were environmental benefits which could be promoted to encourage organisations to sign up to the Voluntary Charter. Officers stated that they could speak to colleagues about the information that could be shared.

Roof Terraces

A Member asked if a list of open roof terraces could be circulated to Members of the Committee and sent to the Destination City team so that it could be included on the website. She also suggested that a leaflet containing the details of roof terraces plus QR codes so people could book. An Officer confirmed that a list could be circulated of all the consented, built and roof terraces in the pipeline as well as opening hours. He stated that Officers were working with the Destination City team on how to publicise these roof terraces.

At this point, the Chairman sought approval from the Committee to continue the meeting beyond two hours from the appointed time for the start of the meeting, in accordance with Standing Order 40, and this was agreed.

The City Plan

A Member asked whether the tracked changes version of the plan in the Officer report had the approval of the Local Plans Sub-Committee and could be used by Members as a working draft. The Officer stated that the Sub-Committee had effectively approved the plan to be submitted to the Planning and Transportation Committee and it could be shared on that basis.

The Member also asked about the timetable. The Officer stated that the decision to withdraw the item from the agenda, would result in an expected delay of about two months. He stated that there was a need to continue rapid progress with the City Plan and it was hoped that some of the delay could be made up later in the overall timescale for the project. It was expected that the submission of the plan might be delayed by a month in the summer, but that would be within a reasonable timeframe and long in advance of the June 2025 deadline for submissions of local plans under the current planning system. Officers would consider whether or not the local development scheme needed to be updated as part of this work. The Officer added that if there was a need to deviate from this plan a report would be submitted to the Committee.

A Member raised concern about the late withdrawal of the item from the agenda and stated that members of the public might have been in attendance for this item and would not have been aware it would be withdrawn. She stated she had many points she wanted to raise on the Local Plan. The Member also suggested that the City Plan should be considered at a meeting where that was the only item on the agenda. She asked if it was expected that the document would be substantially changed and asked for Members to be provided with the background material that informed the plan.

The Chairman stated that Officers were open to receiving comments and suggestions on the City Plan and these could be sent to Officers. An Officer stated that following the Levelling Up and Regeneration Bill becoming an Act at

the end of October 2023, imminent changes and updates to the National Planning Policy Framework were expected and therefore the item had been withdrawn from the agenda. He informed Members that the City Plan had to be in accordance with national policy. Officers would ensure the Committee had full background material in advance of the Committee consideration of the City Plan and would send documents to Members once they were published. Members were informed that a substantial major rewrite of this City Plan was not envisaged and the plan had been informed by extensive engagement, through the Local Plans Sub-Committee.

A Member asked that the City Plan be considered at a meeting where it was the only agenda item. She asked that the background information be publicly available in a library section on the websites with the plan so anyone reviewing the plan could see the data. She also asked for a message to be put on the website explaining the delay, outlining the new timetable, and how the background information could be accessed. An Officer stated that the website would be updated following the meeting and information would be as easily accessible as possible. The Chairman confirmed that a special meeting would be arranged to consider the City Plan as a single item.

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

Custom House

The Chairman commented on the transformation of Sugar Quay which was now a well-used public space. He compared this to Custom House, narrow pathway along the north bank which was difficult to access and often flooded. He asked for the Committee's view to write to the current owners to ask them to remove their railings as the security reasons for having them no longer existed as the building was empty. If the railings were removed it would open up the quay side and allow the public safe access to walk on the north bank. A Member commented that planks on the Broadwalk needed to be repaired. She also stated that there were a number of lights that did not work by Blackwater Passage and asked Officers to address this. Another Member commented that the letter should be clear that this did not affect any planning decision. Members supported a letter being written to the owners of Custom House.

Resolution from Port Health and Environmental Services Committee

The Chairman stated that the Committee had received a resolution from the Port Health and Environmental Services Committee. The wording was as follows:

The Port Health & Environmental Service Committee request the Planning Committee seek, wherever possible, the provision, as part of major new developments, of public and accessible toilets. Officers should also investigate the possibility of ensuring that major hospitality and retail developments have a requirement to provide publicly accessible toilet facilities as part of their planning obligations.

An Officer stated that the City Plan 2040 would recognise the need for new development to play a part in providing public toilet provision in the City particularly to help realise Destination City ambitions. The Officer stated that

Policy HL 7 of the plan would require public toilets in major retail, leisure and transport developments, particularly near visitor attractions, open spaces and existing major transport interchanges. The policy required them to be available 24 hours a day and it also sought the incorporation of further additional public toilets in proposed developments. The Officer stated that the policy as it was currently drafted had been amended to specifically state that this could be in hotel and office schemes and in locations likely to see significant footfall and visitors. A Member who was the Chairman of the Port Health and Environmental Services Committee stated that this was encouraging.

A Member asked whether it would be possible to include publicly accessible toilet provision as part of the negotiations with the applicant of the development granted planning permission at the Planning Sub-Committee meeting on 20 November 2023 as this site was close to a station and other facilities. Officers stated they would discuss this with the applicant.

A Member requested that the City Plan policy be amended to require visible signage indicating the presence of a publicly accessible toilet. In response to a question about the threshold size for a major scheme, an Officer stated that a major scheme was generally over 1000 square metres of floor space, although there were other categories. He stated that there were policies in the adopted local plan and work was taking place to improve and refine this. A Member commented that regardless of the size of a development, applicants should be encouraged to make toilets accessible to the public.

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.

Item Nos

16

Paragraph No(s)

3

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

There was one non-public question.

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

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

The meeting closed at 12.45 pm

Chairman

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