

PORT HEALTH & ENVIRONMENTAL SERVICES COMMITTEE

Tuesday, 14 November 2023

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

Present

Members:

Mary Durcan (Chairman)	Wendy Hyde
Deputy Peter Dunphy (Deputy Chairman)	Deputy Elizabeth King
Timothy Butcher	Deputy Natasha Maria Cabrera Lloyd-Owen
Deputy Simon Duckworth	Andrew McMurtrie
John Edwards	Deputy Henry Pollard
Helen Fentimen	Jason Pritchard
John Foley	Oliver Sells KC
Deputy Marianne Fredericks	Alethea Silk
Steve Goodman OBE	Luis Felipe Tilleria
Jaspreet Hodgson	Alderman Kawsar Zaman

Officers:

Bob Roberts	- Interim Executive Director of Environment
Gavin Stedman	- Environment Department
Susie Pritchard	- Environment Department
Rachel Pye	- Environment Department
Ian Hughes	- Environment Department
Jenny Pitcairn	- Chamberlain's Department
Frank Marchione	- Comptroller and City Solicitor's Department
Kate Doidge	- Governance Officer

1. APOLOGIES

Apologies were received from Alderman Alexander Barr, Alderman Prem Goyal, Henrika Priest, and Hugh Selka.

Caroline Haines, Henry Jones, and Deputy Dr Giles Shilson observed the meeting virtually.

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

There were no declarations.

3. MINUTES

The Committee were advised there were a number of missed attendances in the minutes of the previous meeting. These would be updated and recorded accordingly.

RESOLVED – That, the public minutes and non-public summary be approved, as corrected.

4. **OUTSTANDING ACTIONS**

Member's received the Committee's Outstanding Actions.

The Committee heard an update in respect of Item 1 of the Outstanding Actions. A meeting had been with LUL that had included the Chairman and Deputy Chairman. LUL had outlined a methodology for modelling the noise and vibration impacts within the tunnel structure. A timeline of the measuring and analysing the interim results had been discussed and a further meeting date arranged. If the data supported moving the points and crossings, a viability report with detailed costings would be provided from LUL. The Committee heard that the night-tube was not being considered for those underground lines.

Members suggested that future meetings should include the elected representatives of the relevant wards. The Committee heard that a Member who was a resident of one of affected locations had been present at the meeting with LUL.

5. **51ST CITY OF LONDON THAMES FISHERY RESEARCH EXPERIMENT**

The Committee received a report of the Interim Executive Director for Environment, regarding the outcome of the 51st City of London Thames Fishery Research Experiment, and options for the 52nd Experiment in 2024.

A question was raised on whether there were concerns with the number of fish when compared to previous years, and the response was that environmental conditions impacted the fish present in the river and the change to discourage the catching of whiting (the most abundant fish in recent years) would have impacted on overall numbers. In future years information could be provided to the Committee on how aspects such as water temperature impacted fish.

Members of the Committee raised concerns and reservations about the scientific value of the Experiment and whether it was worthwhile to continue in the future. There were concerns on the continued naming of the event as an 'experiment'. It was raised that changing the scoring system yearly was unhelpful. Other Members raised that the Experiment could have more of an environmental angle, by measuring the condition of the Thames, including taking water samples, collecting metrics on the water, and collecting waste at the foreshore. With regards to sustainability concerns, the Committee heard that traditional line fishing techniques were used, and fish were returned to the water.

The community involvement of the event was discussed, and that it was an important event for the river community. With regards to Members concerns on the financial value of the Experiment, it was suggested that officers could explore commercial sponsorship for future Experiments. For this, the Chairman could write to City firms. This could contribute to the community aspect of the

Experiment. Finally, it was raised that there could be entrance fees to the Experiment which would assist with the financial value.

Officers informed the Committee that they would consider its suggestions as detailed above in its planning of the 52nd City of London Thames Fishery Research Experiment.

RESOLVED – That the Port Health and Environmental Services Committee:

- (i) Approve the recommended option (a): to proceed with the 52nd City of London Thames Fishery Research Experiment in 2024 in its existing format and scale, accepting the higher cost to the local risk budget.
- (ii) Reviewed and approve the grant from City's Cash to partially fund the 2024 Experiment.

6. STREET CLEANSING RESOURCES

The Committee received a report of the Interim Executive Director for Environment, to consider options to remediate impact of previous service cuts to street cleansing resources and loss-making public conveniences, following concerns raised by Members in the context of the City's recovery.

A Member had submitted a public question for matters relating to the Committee, that with consent of the Chairman, was asked during this item. The Member raised that they had received correspondence from residents on the street cleansing. The Member asked if Destination City should contribute to the street cleansing funding, whether resources were being used optimally given the change in footfall, and whether officers could provide feedback on lessons learned from approaches to litter in other major cities. In response to the latter question, it was said that some cities had no bins, but there needed to be the right balance for the number of bins in the City, and the recommended option focused on the resources to collect the litter rather than reducing or expanding the number of bins. The points from the Member's remaining questions were discussed and answered during the remainder of the item, as detailed below.

The Committee commented that there needed to be more funding for street cleansing. Several Members agreed that street cleansing resources should be linked with Destination City, to support the delivery and success of major events. The Committee heard that the Chairman would write to the Chairman of Policy & Resources Committee on this matter. Discussions on the funding of street cleansing by Destination City would be for the consideration of the Resource Allocation Sub-Committee and the Policy & Resources Committee.

The Committee discussed the cleaning contract with Veolia, and whether the service was performing effectively. The Committee heard that the contract was a hybrid input/output contract, as the cleansing resources outweighed the waste collection resources in the City. There were KPIs that were being used to hold Veolia to account, including monetary penalties.

Members also discussed the provision of public conveniences in the City. Concerns were raised on the proposal of not re-opening the toilets at Bank Station. One Member raised that the London Society were due to hold an event

on public health and inequalities, which was linked to the provision of toilets. Members also raised their concerns on the effectiveness of the Community Toilet Scheme, and many commented that there was a lack of signage and signposting to the locations within the Scheme. Some commented that many locations were not open on weekends, when visitors (and not workers) would most often come into the City. The Committee heard that there was an officer who checked Scheme locations every six months to check if they were available during opening hours. Locations were promoted on the Corporation's website and through available external apps.

In response to suggestions on opening staffed toilets or removing the charge on toilets, the Committee heard that it was too costly to open staffed toilets. Previous provision of automated public conveniences had caused issues. If the current charge was removed on toilets, this would have a negative impact on the current deficit.

Following discussions on the provision of public toilets, members agreed that there needed to be a strategic approach. Members of the Committee agreed to send a resolution to the Planning and Transportation Committee to request the provision of publicly accessible toilet facilities in major developments and as part of planning obligations within the City. The Committee further agreed that final wording of the resolution be delegated to the Interim Executive Director for Environment, in consultation with the Chairman and Deputy Chairman.

The provision of bins throughout the City was also discussed by the Committee. It was raised that the big belly bins were out-of-date, and that officers should also consider funds being raised with capital spending on bins. Officers responded that lunch packaging was larger, which meant that although bins were not full, they were becoming jammed. There had been a change of locations for the bins around St. Pauls, and changes in the schedule of sweepers which was believed to be a better way of resolving the issue. There would shortly be a trial of alternative automated bins.

The Committee also raised concerns on the levels of dog fouling within the City, and the availability of bins for dog waste. Officers informed the Committee that a report concerning dogs (including dogs off lead and dog fouling) would be received at the Natural Environment Board. There would be a pilot at Bunhill Fields, and if successful lessons learnt could be applied to the City.

Another Member had also submitted a public question on matters relating to the work of the Committee, that with the consent of the Chairman, was received under this item. The Member asked what powers the City of London Corporation officers had to deal with urination in the street. The response was that there were 3 routes for enforcement: by-laws, community PSPOs, and Fixed Penalty Notices (FPNs). FPNs were the preferred route recommended by Central Government. The City of London Police could issue FPNs which were processed by the Corporation. There had been work with the Police on the nighttime economy, especially with regards to the upcoming Christmas season.

Finally, it was agreed that a report would be received every six months, concerning updates and progress on the street cleansing resources.

RESOLVED, That –

- (i) The Port Health and Environmental Services Committee submit a resolution to the Planning and Transportation Committee, to request the consideration of provision of publicly accessible toilet facilities in major developments and as part of planning obligations within the City, and that final wording of the resolution be delegated to the Interim Executive Director for Environment, in consultation with the Chairman and Deputy Chairman.
- (ii) The Committee support the need to seek additional funding for enhanced cleansing resources based on the proposals & priorities outlined in Option 2 (paragraph 15) of this report, funded from the On-Street Parking Reserve (subject to the approval of Resource Allocation Sub Committee & Policy & Resources Committee).

7. UPDATE ON THE IMPACT OF THE BORDER TARGET OPERATING MODEL ON PORT HEALTH & PUBLIC PROTECTION

The Committee received a report of the Interim Executive Director for Environment, regarding an update on the impact of the Border Target Operating Model on Port Health & Public Protection.

The Committee heard that controls for food and feed would come into effect on 30th April 2023. There had been preparations, but there had been unknowns including throughput, charging regimes, and differences between low and medium food and feed consignments. Officers had been working with Defra regarding planning recruitment, development, onboarding, and funding of between 25 and 35 additional staff. Some aspects of the unknowns had recently been confirmed by Central Government. Officers were waiting for Defra to agree their readiness proposals before proceeding the Committee would be advised accordingly.

The Port Health & Public Protection Director had written to the Programme Delivery Director (Biosecurity, Borders, and Trade) at Defra seeking an agreement for the next financial year to be underwritten.

Despite the challenges, the City Corporation were considered a green risk and an example of how other Border Control Posts should be preparing for the future.

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

8. REVENUE AND CAPITAL BUDGETS 2024-25

The Committee received a joint report of the Chamberlain and the Interim Executive Director for Environment, concerning the approval for the revenue and capital budgets for the Committee for 2024/25. Questions were asked and responses were provided as follows:

The Committee heard that the 3% inflation uplift provision had been agreed by the Resource Allocation Sub-Committee as being affordable for the Corporation as a whole.

Officers explained that the reduction from the 2023/24 in street cleansing was due to additional funding from the on-street parking reserve to meet the cumulative cost of inflationary price increases.

It was raised licensing and enforcement of river boats should be reviewed, but the Corporation could only do six enforcement trips per year. It was suggested that officers meet and discuss with other Local Authorities on ways to recuperate the costs of enforcement.

RESOLVED, That –

- (i) Members reviewed and approved the proposed revenue budget for 2024/25 for submission to Finance Committee;
- (ii) Members reviewed and approved the proposed capital budgets for 2024/25 for submission to Finance Committee;
- (iii) Members agree that amendments for 2023/24 and 2024/25 budgets arising from changes to recharges or any further implications arising from subsequently approved savings proposals, changes to the Cyclical Works Programme, or changes to the resource envelope be delegated to the Chamberlain in consultation with the Interim Executive Director for Environment.

9. **BUSINESS PLAN 2023/24: PROGRESS REPORT (PERIOD ONE: 1 APRIL - 31 JULY 2023)**

The Committee received a report of the Interim Executive Director for Environment, regarding an update on the progress made during Period One (1 April – 31 July 2023) against the Business Plan for 2023/24.

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

10. **RISK MANAGEMENT UPDATE**

The Committee received a report of the Interim Executive Director for Environment, concerning actions being taken by the Environment Department to monitor, mitigate and effectively manage risks arising from their operations.

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

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

There were two public questions received on matters relating to the work of the Committee, which were received under Item 6, Street Cleansing Resources.

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

There were no items of public urgent business.

13. **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.

14. **NON-PUBLIC MINUTES**

RESOLVED – That the non-public minutes of the previous meeting held on 19 September 2023 be approved as a correct record.

15. **HEATHROW ANIMAL RECEPTION CENTRE - FORWARD PLAN**

The Committee received and noted a report of the Interim Executive Director for Environment, regarding an update to the Heathrow Animal Reception Centre (HARC) forward plan.

Note: The Committee agreed that, under Standing Order 40, the meeting be extended by 5 minutes to in order to conclude its business.

16. **PORT HEALTH AND ENVIRONMENTAL SERVICES DEBTORS - PERIOD ENDING 30 SEPTEMBER 2023**

The Committee received and noted a report of the Executive Director (Interim) for Environment, concerning debtors for the period ending 30 September 2023.

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

There were no non-public questions on matters relating to the work of the Committee.

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

There were no items of non-public urgent business.

The meeting closed at 1.00 pm

Chairman

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