

PORT HEALTH & ENVIRONMENTAL SERVICES COMMITTEE

Tuesday, 9 January 2024

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
George Abrahams	Andrew McMurtrie
Deputy Timothy Butcher	Jason Pritchard
John Edwards	Hugh Selka
Helen Fentimen	Deputy Dr Giles Shilson
John Foley	Jacqui Webster
Deputy Marianne Fredericks	

Officers:

Bob Roberts	- Deputy Town Clerk
Gavin Stedman	- Environment Department
Susie Pritchard	- Environment Department
Rachel Pye	- Environment Department
Ian Hughes	- Environment Department
Joe Kingston	- Environment Department
Graham Holmes	- Environment Department
Aggie Minas	- Environment Department
Joanne Purkiss	- Environment Department
Steve Playe	- Environment Department
Jenny Pitcairn	- Chamberlain's Department
Richard Chamberlain	- City Surveyor's Department
Kate Doidge	- Town Clerk's Department

1. APOLOGIES

Apologies were received from Steve Goodman, Alderman Prem Goyal, Jaspreet Hodgson, Deputy Alistair Moss, Alethea Silk, and Mandeep Thandi.

Shahnan Bakth, Caroline Haines, Henry Jones, Deputy Henry Pollard, Henrika Priest, and Glen Witney observed the meeting virtually.

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

There were no declarations for this meeting.

3. **MINUTES**

The Committee received the minutes of the previous meeting, held on 14 November 2023, for approval.

RESOLVED – That the public minutes and non-public summary be approved as a correct record.

The Committee discussed the following matters arising from the minutes, as follows:

City of London Thames Fishery Research Experiment

The Committee heard that officers would be investigating potential partners for financing the future City of London Thames Fishery Research Experiment. Officers would also be engaging with the Environment Agency, Port of London Authority, and universities for the future event to have a more scientific approach.

Street Cleansing Resources

The Committee heard that following the approval to seek additional funding for enhanced cleansing resources, the request would be received at the Resource Allocation Sub-Committee and Policy & Resources for approval. If the funding was agreed in February 2024, some resources could begin implementation. The full rollout could take up to six months. Finally, the Committee heard that its resolution made at the previous meeting to consider the provision of publicly accessible toilet facilities in major developments and as part of planning obligations within the City had been received at the most recent meeting of the Planning & Transportation Committee.

Community Toilets Scheme

The Committee discussed the Community Toilets Scheme, and some Members raised concerns on the effectiveness of the scheme, including that the signs or posters for the Scheme were not large or visible. Points were raised surrounding Destination City and that projects and strategies needed to include considerations of amenities such as toilets and extra cleansing of the streets. It was suggested that the Scheme be reviewed by officers, including considering the re-opening of the toilets at Bank Station. The Committee heard that the Bank Station toilets caused a large financial loss for the City Corporation, and that funding for Destination City was for specific events, but that officers would continue to work on solutions for the Scheme.

Bins

The Committee heard that there would shortly be a trial of alternatives to big-belly bins.

Dog Fouling

It was confirmed that there would be a report received at the Natural Environment Board on dog control within Bunhill fields and City Gardens, this would include reference to dog fouling.

Port Health Brexit Readiness

The Committee were reminded of the update previously received at its last meeting on Port Health Brexit Readiness. A resourcing plan and funding had now been agreed with the Director of the Defra Trade and Border Programme. The number of staff required had increased, and these would be funded by Defra during the mobilisation phase. From May 2024, the new regime would be implemented, and the new levies would cover the cost of the service. In order to be ready for the new regime, recruitment and onboarding needed to commence as soon as possible, and officers requested a delegation of authority in order to prepare for the Brexit Readiness Resourcing Plan for the Port Health Service.

In response to this, Members agreed to delegate authority to the Town Clerk in consultation with the Chairman and Deputy Chairman of Port Health & Environmental Services, to consider proposals relevant to the Committee, relating to a Brexit Readiness Resourcing Plan for the Port Health Service, if required before the next meeting (12 March 2024).

RESOLVED - That Members agree to delegate authority to the Town Clerk in consultation with the Chairman and Deputy Chairman of Port Health & Environmental Services, to consider proposals relevant to the Committee, relating to a Brexit Readiness Resourcing Plan for the Port Health Service, if required before the next meeting (12 March 2024).

London Underground Noise

The Committee heard that the meeting had been scheduled with LUL to discuss the approach for modelling the noise and vibration impacts of moving the points and crossings had been delayed until 30th January 2024.

Note: The Committee agreed to debate Agenda Items 4-8 together. Questions and comments raised have been in relation to those items have been split out and detailed under the relevant Minute Item below (Minute Item 4-8).

4. **ANNUAL REVIEW OF CHARGES - ANIMAL HEALTH**

The Committee received a report of the Interim Executive Director for Environment, concerning the increase in charges for the Animal Health Team service, and approval for increases of 5-20% to be applied to the Schedule of Charges in respect of services provided at the Heathrow Animal Reception Centre (HARC) for the forthcoming financial year 2024/25.

Following queries, it was confirmed to the Committee that there was a £1m overspend projected in the current financial year, and the budget for the next year was lower. The budget had been set prior to the loss of trade, which was reflected in the net expenditure. However, the net expenditure was lower than initial reports which demonstrated some improvements, but the budget was reflective of what was currently known and included unidentified savings.

Concerns were raised with the unidentified savings. It was agreed that the Committee receive a report at a future meeting, which would aim to address those unidentified savings.

A Member asked if the changes in the fees and charges reflected the current position with competitors. The response was that the throughput figures were encouraging, as the activity lost was less than initially believed. Further opportunities were being investigated. In addition, the Committee heard that the market was fickle, as fees and charges had increased significantly in some areas, and it was believed that the market would sustain that position. Officers were aware of the fees and charges for local competitors, but the information for European Border Control Posts (BCPs) was unknown.

A Member enquired whether there was flexibility with the setting of the charges, and if they could be adjusted in alignment with market trends. The response was that the operation of fees and charges varied, with some based on full-cost recovery, and some services that could not be charged. The Animal Health Team fees and charges were set by the Committee, and the HARC fees are set through the Byelaws with approval of the Court of Common Council. This governance process created a timeframe to change the fees and charges, and, in addition, live animal shipping agents quoted for the charges approximately 3 months in advance. Officers would check the Byelaws, to determine whether there was any flexibility in the fee setting process.

RESOLVED – That Members:

- (i) Approve the Animal Health Service fees in Appendix 1 of this report.
- (ii) Approve the increases in HARC fees through the proposed Byelaws contained in Appendix 2 of this report and recommend to the Court of Common Council that the Byelaws be made, and that the Comptroller and City Solicitor be instructed to seal the Byelaws accordingly.

5. **CEMETERY AND CREMATORIUM FEES AND CHARGES 2023-24**

The Committee received a report of the Interim Executive Director for Environment, concerning the proposed fees and charges for the services provided at the City of London Cemetery and Crematorium for 2024/25.

It was questioned whether the City of London Cemetery and Crematorium were underselling, and whether the charges should be increased. The response was that setting fees and charges was a fine balance, as trade could be lost to competitors who often deliberately undercut. This could negatively impact the budget for the next financial year if trade was lost. The proposed fees and charges had been matched against other cemeteries and crematoriums and was comparatively favourable.

A Member raised the service being flexible for those on lower incomes. The Committee heard that slots were offered at a reduced price, which were loss-making, however the overall service covered those losses. This was consistent within the industry sector. The Committee also heard that the increase in pure cremations had not impacted the workload, and the model offered was considered to be a fair price point.

Following a question, the Committee heard that the pricing for cremations on Saturdays had continued the same as 2023/24, but the pricing for cremations

on Sundays has increased. This was due to some financial loss on Sunday's, as officers were paid enhanced rates, and the increase aimed for cost recovery.

RESOLVED – That Members agree the fees and charges as set out in this report and shown in Appendix 1 for implementation with effect from 1 April 2024.

6. **STREET TRADING FEES 2024/25**

The Committee received a report of the Interim Executive Director of Environment, concerning the annual setting of the Street Trading Fees for 2024/25.

RESOLVED – That Members agree the proposed fees for 2024/25 as set out in Appendix 1.

7. **MASSAGE AND SPECIAL TREATMENT FEES 2024/25**

The Committee received a report of the Interim Executive Director of Environment, concerning the annual setting of the Massage and Special Treatments (MSTs) Fees for 2024/25.

RESOLVED – That Members agree the proposed fees for 2024/25 as set out in Appendix 2 (column two).

8. **PROPOSED CHARGES FOR STREET CLEANSING, WASTE COLLECTION AND PUBLIC CONVENIENCES 2024/25**

The Committee received a report of the Interim Executive Director for Environment, concerning the proposed 2024/25 fees and charges for a range of services provided by the City's Street Cleansing, Waste Collection, and Public Conveniences operations.

A Member of the Committee expressed thanks to the officers for information provided regarding the collection of Christmas trees.

A Member of the Committee queried how costs were implemented and recuperated for cleansing on private landowner areas. The response was that the City Corporation had an SLA agreement with 3 private landowner areas. Members were encouraged to report issues, where officers could undertake site visits and take action as necessary.

RESOLVED – That Members approve the following charges in the report with effect from 1 April 2024:

- charges for Street Cleansing services to external clients are increased by 6.1% in line with RPI.
- charges for special events and other ad-hoc works provided to third parties continue to be made at full cost plus 30% to cover the City's management and administration costs.
- bulky waste collection continues to be offered free of charge on request to those who are in receipt of means tested benefits and to those who are infirm or disabled receiving assisted collections.

- the general waste charges for educational establishments are increased by 6.1% and food and recycling collection charges should be maintained at the current level to encourage recycling.
- charges for the removal of highway obstructions to be increased from £72.57 to £77 and for the removal of uncollected bagged waste also be increased to £161.27 from £152 for up to 10 bags and £5 per bag thereafter.
- charges for the staffed toilet facilities at Tower Hill and Paternoster Square conveniences to remain at 50p per use.
- costs of smart bins (post mounted cigarette bins) sold to businesses be charged at cost plus 30% to cover the City's administration costs.
- Clean City Awards Scheme membership fees are kept the same.

9. **TRADING STANDARDS UPDATE - NICOTINE INHALING PRODUCTS**

The Committee received a report of the Interim Executive Director of Environment, concerning an update on action currently being undertaken by the City of London's Trading Service on the sale of illegal nicotine inhaling products.

The Committee heard that it was standard industry practice to use underage volunteers to test whether shops that sold age restricted products were compliant. These volunteers were carefully managed to ensure that the individuals were protected and knew how to gather the right information.

The Committee heard that there were approximately 30 shops which sold nicotine inhaling products in the City of London. Officers would check with licensing officers on the street trading laws for selling nicotine inhaling products outside of shops.

Members of the Committee raised that the Health and Wellbeing Board had previously discussed concerns connected to nicotine inhaling products. There had been a briefing in which several actions had been discussed, which included encouraging the safe disposal of nicotine inhaling products. The Committee heard that there had been fires in connection with products being included in disposable waste and could consider better signage for safe disposal.

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

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

Three public questions on matters relating to the work of the Committee were raised.

A question was raised on what enforcement powers the City Corporation had for waste left behind in properties used by companies such as Air BnB. The Committee agreed that a response would be reported back to the Committee.

Following a question raised on the cleansing of streets following City of London Police horses leaving waste, the Committee heard that this was being raised with the Commissioner.

Finally, a question was raised on the condition of the wooden planters located on London Bridge. The Committee heard that officers had discussed the issue with TfL, and were investigating potential alternative external funding to fix the planters and resolve the issue.

11. ANY OTHER BUSINESS THAT THE CHAIRMAN CONSIDERS URGENT

There were no items of public urgent business.

12. 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.

13. NON-PUBLIC MINUTES

RESOLVED – That the non-public minutes of the previous meeting held on 14 November 2023 be approved as a correct record.

14. WALBROOK WHARF FEASIBILITY 2027 AND BEYOND - G2 ISSUES REPORT

The Committee received a joint report of the City Surveyor, the Executive Director for Property, and the Interim Executive Director for Environment concerning a Gateway 2 report for Walbrook Wharf feasibility for 2027 and beyond.

15. REPORT OF ACTION TAKEN

The Committee received a report of the Town Clerk concerning a Report of Action Taken.

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

One non-public question was asked on matters relating to the work of the Committee.

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

The Committee heard one non-public item of urgent business.

The meeting closed at 12.51 pm

Chairman

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