

PORT HEALTH & ENVIRONMENTAL SERVICES COMMITTEE

Tuesday, 19 November 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)	Caroline Haines
Deputy Peter Dunphy (Deputy Chairman)	Jaspreet Hodgson
George Abrahams	Wendy Hyde
Alderman Alexander Barr	Gregory Lawrence
Deputy Christopher Boden	Andrew McMurtrie
Deputy Timothy Butcher	Deborah Oliver
Deputy John Edwards	Deputy Henry Pollard
John Foley	Hugh Selka
Dawn Frampton	Alethea Silk
Deputy Marianne Fredericks	Jacqui Webster

Officers:

Katie Stewart	- Executive Director, Environment
Timothy Bage	- Environment Department
Ruth Calderwood	- Environment Department
Joanne Hill	- Environment Department
Ian Hughes	- Environment Department
Joe Kingston	- Environment Department
Joanna Leyden	- Environment Department
Susie Pritchard	- Environment Department
Rachel Pye	- Environment Department
Jenny Pitcairn	- Chamberlain's Department
Frank Marchione	- Comptroller & City Solicitor's Department
Kate Doidge	- Town Clerk's Department

1. APOLOGIES

Apologies were received from Shahnaz Bakth, Steve Goodman, Henrika Priest, and Alderman Kawsar Zaman.

Henry Jones observed the meeting online.

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 and non-public summary of the meeting held on 24th September 2024 be approved as an accurate record.

4. **OUTSTANDING ACTIONS**

RESOLVED – That the Committee note the outstanding actions.

5. **AIR QUALITY STRATEGY 2025 TO 2030**

The Committee received a report of the Executive Director of Environment, concerning the approval of the final Air Quality Strategy 2025 to 2030.

A Member raised that the greatest source of particulates in the City was construction, yet the City Corporation had an objective within its draft City Plan 2040 to deliver more office buildings, and greater emphasis needed to be placed on better working practices. The Committee heard that the largest local source was from construction activity, however 90% of PM₁₀ did not originate from within the City. There was a code of practice that construction companies were expected to adhere, and equipment used at construction sites were regulated. Officers also made visits to construction sites to check compliance. In addition, a section of the Strategy focused on collaboration with stakeholders outside of the City as there were many factors that were outside of the control of the City Corporation.

It was noted that the biggest source of PM_{2.5} was cooking fuels, and it was queried whether this included schools within the City. The Committee heard that cooking fuels used in the City should be smokeless, such as specific charcoals and woods (i.e., solid fuels). The City Corporation advised on cooking fuels as this was a soft approach and a raising awareness exercise with restaurants and would be followed up if they continued to use unauthorised fuels. This would also include schools.

RESOLVED – That the Port Health and Environmental Services Committee approve the final Air Quality Strategy 2025 to 2030.

6. **ANIMAL HEALTH AND WELFARE SERVICE - ANNUAL REVIEW OF CHARGES**

The Committee received a report of the Executive Director of Environment, concerning the recommendation of the Byelaws for the Heathrow Animal Reception Centre (HARC), and the approval for the listed fees for the licensing services delivered by the Animal Health Team.

It was noted that at previous meetings, Members had raised concerns that there was a lack of flexibility with the fees. Therefore, the Byelaws listed the maximum chargeable fees and sought agreement for a delegated authority for the Executive Director of Environment to amend the fee structure, up to twice a year, by up to 20% (but not exceeding the maximum). This would be 20% per annum.

In terms of whether the fees could be increased further, the response was that the way in which agents operated and potentially competing European Border

Control Posts needed to be taken into account, to provide fees that were the best option for all stakeholders. Officers were satisfied that the proposed fees were appropriate. Later, the Committee heard that there were some charges for additional administration and practical work, but there were no surcharges to offset other costs. The byelaws would need to be amended if the Corporation wished to charge beyond the agreed maximum charge, which would require approval from the Court of Common Council.

The Corporation was obliged under legislation to publicly list fees for its services relating to HARC. Additional materials were produced for customers.

RESOLVED – That Members:

- Approve the HARC Byelaws as listing the maximum chargeable fees from April 2025 (Appendix 1).
- 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.
- Approve the listed fees for licensing services delivered by the Animal Health Team (Appendix 2).
- Approve delegated authority for the Executive Director of Environment to amend the fee structure, up to twice a year, by up to 20% (not exceeding the maximum).

7. **CIRCULAR ECONOMY FRAMEWORK FOR THE CITY OF LONDON CORPORATION**

The Committee received a report of the Executive Director of Environment, concerning the approval for the implementation of the City of London's Circular Economy Framework.

A Member queried how the framework would be enforced. The response was that a key issue would be the creation of a market for regenerated materials, which included facilitating this within the planning process. There were multiple platforms currently in existence for regenerated materials, and the City Corporation could help facilitate the market and reduce the stigma on used materials in the industry.

It was suggested that the number of "Give and Take" days be increased, to provide more opportunities for residents to give away items they no longer needed and take things they may have a use for. The response was that these days were frequently well attended but would ultimately depend on the resource available to run more.

Finally, it was said that the Circular Economy Framework concerned changing the mindset surrounding used materials, to ensure that it did not become waste.

RESOLVED – That Members approve the implementation of the Circular Economy Framework and the associated Action Plan 2024-2027.

8. **PROPOSED CHARGES FOR STREET CLEANSING, WASTE COLLECTION, AND PUBLIC CONVENIENCES 2025/26**

The Committee received a report of the Executive Director of Environment, concerning the annual submission of the Street Cleansing, Waste Collection and Public Conveniences operations and the fees and charges for those services for 2025/26. There was a proposed increase by Retail Price Index (RPI) of 2.7%, where appropriate, for the services covered in the report. The Committee heard that under Local Government Act 2003, the Corporation could only charge on a cost recovery basis for these services.

A Member queried if fly-tipping had a negative financial effect on services, and what powers the City Corporation had to discourage fly-tipping. The response was that the definition of fly-tipping is complex – for instance, the City had relatively low numbers of fly-tipping, but there were frequent instances of bagged waste left by businesses on footways outside of the Time Banding Scheme. New timings for this scheme had been agreed by the Committee, which included a communications campaign to raise awareness. In terms of enforcement, Fixed Penalty Notices were issued against those businesses who obstructed the footway with waste.

Members of the Committee recalled issues in the previous year with the disposal of Christmas trees. The Committee heard that residents of the City outside of the Barbican could take their old trees to Corporation sites such as the Barbican for disposal, which were then used for mulch on Hampstead Heath.

The success of working with the EC BID for additional cleansing in ‘hotspot’ areas was raised, and whether this was an appropriate model for street cleansing in privately owned land in the City. The response was that it needed to be clear that the identified ‘hotspot’ areas did not supplement the base standard for street cleansing, but was a good model and could assist with the additional cleansing. The difficulty in cleansing privately owned land was identifying and contacting the landowner. The Committee heard that the Policy & Resources Committee were reviewing the governance for BIDs and their value for money. There would be relevant outcomes of this review for the Committee, such as cleansing, which officers would consider how this would be reported back to the Committee in the future.

RESOLVED – That Members approve the following charges in the report with effect from 1st April 2025:

- Charges for Street Cleansing services to external clients are increased by 2.7% 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.
- No increase is proposed for bulky waste collections to remain competitive.
- The general waste charges for educational establishments are increased by 2.7% 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 £77 to £79 and for the removal of uncollected bagged waste also be increased to £165.62 from £161.27 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. **BUSINESS PLAN 2024/25: PROGRESS REPORT (MID-YEAR: 1 APRIL - 30 SEPTEMBER 2024)**

The Committee received a report of the Executive Director for Environment, concerning an update on the progress made against the high-level Business Plan 2024/25.

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

10. **RISK MANAGEMENT UPDATE**

The Committee received a report of the Executive Director of Environment, concerning the risk management procedures in place within the Environment Department, specifically the Port Health and Public Protection and the Cleansing Services.

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

11. **ANNUAL REVIEW OF THE TERMS OF REFERENCE FOR THE PORT HEALTH AND ENVIRONMENTAL SERVICES COMMITTEE**

The Committee received a report of the Town Clerk, concerning the annual review of the terms of reference of the Port Health and Environmental Services Committee.

RESOLVED – That the Terms of Reference for the Port Health and Environmental Services Committee be approved for submission to the Court of Common Council in April 2025.

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

Two Members raised questions on matters relating to the work of the Committee:

The first question concerned a noise pollution emanating cross to the north bank from the south bank of the River Thames, and what progress made with Southwark Council. The response was that the City Corporation had been working with Southwark Officers, residents, and members to reduce the disturbance caused by Buskers playing unnecessarily noisily. There was proactive monitoring, which meant quick intervention, and mediation. However, despite success, the problem had never been removed, and regular complaints and issue still arose. Changes in staffing at Southwark Council had not aided the joint working. Officers had contacted "Better Bankside" to manage the area

to see how their wardens could aid in ensuring busking was undertaken reasonably, and so that their staff are better equipped to deal with busking. This meeting would be held shortly.

Senior Southwark and City officers had been meeting to discuss and agree a way forward on these issues and a joint Home Office funded project had been underway which dealt with all types of crime and antisocial behaviour on and around London's Bridges, including busking. Following this response, Members of the Committee urged the need for high level meetings with Southwark Council and other relevant stakeholders, such as London Councils, to address the noise pollution issues arising from buskers. It was noted that enforcement was the responsibility of Southwark Council, and the Corporation's role was advisory.

The second question from a Member concerned an automated toilet in on Long Lane / Cloth Street, which had been closed and remained boarded up. The Member asked what the agreement was with the toilet being part of the building, and whether there was a planning condition on who operated it and bore the cost. The response was that the decision was made to temporarily close these at the start of the pandemic in 2020. Subsequently in 2021, the Committee approved the recommendation to permanently close these facilities, based on the costs to run and maintain and had very low usage. In addition, it often attracted high levels of Anti-Social Behaviour and vandalism. The facilities themselves were within the footprint of the building but a condition of the planning was for them to be used as public conveniences, however the management and cost of these was to be borne by the Corporation. The Committee had received a report highlighting the other public toilet in the City, but also identified that wayfinding to these facilities was not good enough. A report would be brought back to the Committee in 2025.

The Committee also heard that the cost to maintain those facilities would have meant other facilities would have to be close. It noted that whilst additional funding had been agreed to reinstate street cleansing resources, the identified funding source could not be used for public conveniences. However, the Corporation were investing in facilities surrounding the Barbican Centre, Golden Lane, and the London Museum, which would form part of the Community Toilet Scheme.

The Committee discussed public convenience provision and raised points such as the importance of communications of facilities available, including signage and online resources, and the need to ensure that if a toilet facility formed part of a planning provision, this should include the ongoing maintenance of that facility.

ANY OTHER BUSINESS THAT THE CHAIRMAN CONSIDERS URGENT

There were no public items of urgent business.

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 Scheduled 12A of the Local Government Act.
15. **NON-PUBLIC MINUTES**
RESOLVED – That the non-public minutes of the meeting held on 24th September 2024 be approved as an accurate record.
16. **PORT HEALTH AND ENVIRONMENTAL SERVICES DEBTORS - PERIOD ENDING 30 SEPTEMBER 2024**
The Committee received a report of the Executive Director of Environment, concern the Port Health and Environmental Services debtors, for the period ending 30th September 2024.
17. **BREXIT UPDATE**
The Committee received a verbal update of the Executive Director of Environment concerning an update on Brexit in relation to Port Health.
18. **NON-PUBLIC QUESTIONS ON MATTERS RELATING TO THE WORK OF THE COMMITTEE**
There were no non-public questions.
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 non-public items of urgent business.

The meeting closed at 12.38 pm

Chairman

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