



RUSSELL, LOCUM TENENS (ITEMS 1-4)

PARMLEY, LOCUM TENENS (ITEM 4)

COURT OF COMMON COUNCIL

26th November 2024
MEMBERS PRESENT

ALDERMEN

Alexander Robertson Martin Barr (Alderman)	Gregory Jones KC (Alderman & Sheriff)	Jennette Rachel Newman (Alderwoman)
Prem Goyal OBE (Alderman)	Vincent Keaveny CBE (Alderman)	Sir Andrew Charles Parmley, (Alderman)
Martha Grekos (Alderwoman)	Elizabeth Anne King, BEM JP (Alderwoman)	Simon Pryke (Alderman)
Timothy Russell Hailes (Alderman)	Christopher Makin (Alderman)	Sir William Anthony Bowater Russell (Alderman)
Robert Picton Seymour Howard (Alderman)	Bronek Masojada (Alderman)	Kawsar Zaman (Alderman)

COMMONERS

Joanna Tufuo Abeyie MBE	Anthony David Fitzpatrick	Andrien Gereith Dominic Meyers, Deputy	Paul Singh
Randall Keith Anderson, Deputy	John Foley	Brian Desmond Francis Mooney, Deputy BEM	Tom Sleigh
Jamel Banda	Marianne Bernadette Fredericks, Deputy	Alastair Michael Moss, Deputy	Sir Michael Snyder, Deputy
Matthew Bell	Steve Goodman OBE	Eamonn James Mullally	Naresh Hari Sonpar
Ian Bishop-Laggett	John Griffiths	Deborah Oliver TD	James St John Davis
Christopher Paul Boden, Deputy	Jason Groves	Suzanne Ornsby KC	Mandeep Thandi
Keith David Forbes Bottomley, Deputy	Madush Gupta, Deputy	Graham Packham	James Richard Tumbridge
Tijs Broeke	Christopher Michael Hayward, Deputy	James Henry George Pollard, Deputy	William Upton KC
Timothy Richard Butcher, Deputy	Ann Holmes, Deputy	Henrika Johanna Sofia Priest	Jacqueline Roberts Webster
Henry Nicholas Almroth	Amy Horscroft	Nighat Qureishi, Deputy	Mark Raymond Peter Henry
Colthurst, Deputy	Michael Hudson	Anett Rideg	Delano Wheatley
Anne Corbett	Wendy Hyde	David Sales	Ceri Wilkins, Deputy
Simon Duckworth, Deputy OBE	Shravan Jashvantrai Joshi, Deputy MBE	Ruby Sayed	Glen David Witney
DL	Florence Keelson-Anfu	Ian Christopher Norman Seaton MBE	Philip Woodhouse
Chief Commoner Peter Gerard	Charles Edward Lord, OBE JP, Deputy	Hugh Selka	Dawn Linsey Wright, Deputy
Dunphy, Deputy	Catherine McGuinness CBE	Oliver Sells KC	Irem Yerdelen
Mary Durcan JP	Timothy James McNally		
John Ernest Edwards, Deputy			
Helen Lesley Fentimen OBE JP			

1. Apologies The apologies of those Members unable to attend this meeting of the Court were noted.
2. Declarations There were no additional declarations.
3. Exclusion of the public *Motion* - That the public be excluded from the meeting for the following item of business below on the grounds that it relates to functions of the Court of Common Council which are not subject to the provisions of Part VA and Schedule 12A of that

Dunphy,
P. G.,
Deputy;
Colthurst,
H., N., A.,
Deputy

Act.

A Member rose to debate the motion, as they felt that it would be beneficial to consider the Policy and Resources Committee report, set out at Item 4, in public session, in line with the principle of taking decisions in an open and transparent manner as set out in the Seven Principles of Public Life.

The Lord Mayor's view as to the advice of officers in respect of the exclusion of the public was relayed to the Court.

The Chief Commoner, closing the debate, echoed the Lord Mayor's thoughts and expressed his support for the exclusion of the public, adding he felt it would be wholly inappropriate to consider the item in public session given the nature of the contents.

Resolved - That the public be excluded from the meeting for the following item of business below on the grounds that it relates to functions of the Court of Common Council which are not subject to the provisions of Part VA and Schedule 12A of that Act.

4. **POLICY AND RESOURCES COMMITTEE**

(Deputy Christopher Michael Hayward)

7 November 2024

City's Wholesale Markets Review Outcomes

The Court considered a report relating to the Market Co-location Programme, specifically proposing the cessation of the Programme and the depositing of a Private Bill to remove the statutory market use of the Billingsgate and Smithfield Markets.

In his introduction, the Chairman of the Policy and Resources Committee emphasised the significance of the decision before Members. The Chairman said he had hoped to proceed in accordance with the published agenda but informed the Court that, following a series of discussions with Members over the preceding days, he understood that there was concern amongst some Members that insufficient information had been provided to progress a decision on the 'demarketisation' of Smithfield and Billingsgate Market. Accordingly, he moved an amendment to the recommendation to delete proposals 1b, 1c, 2a, 2b, and 2c. If agreed, the amendment would have the effect of ceasing the Markets Co-Location Programme (MCP) and opening up the Dagenham Docks site to be developed for other uses, but would defer the decision on 'demarketisation', the depositing of a Private Bill or the pursuit of an agreement with traders. These elements would be brought back for a decision early in the New Year, following the required assurances being provided.

Hayward, C.
M., Deputy;
Bottomley, K.
D. F., Deputy

Amendment - To delete proposals 1b, 1c, 2a, 2b, and 2c (as set out on page 5 of the agenda), such that the revised recommendation before the Court reads as follows:

“The Court of Common Council is **recommended to**:

1. Approve:
 - a. Cessation of the Market Co-location Programme, with a media and stakeholder engagement plan to be developed by an external agency to manage key messages;
2. Approve
 - a. The continued drawdown from the Market Co-location Programme budget until such time as the programme can be re-baselined;
 - b. That with Dagenham Docks no longer required for the Market Co-location Programme, this investment asset can be developed for other uses. Subject to approval, work will now begin on developing options for this surplus site, and governance for this asset will move to the Investment Committee;
 - c. Commencement by the Independent Consultant of a review of the Market Co-location Programme Team, following close down of the programme, as requested by Policy and Resources Committee in July;
 - d. That the Policy and Resources Committee will, on receipt of a further report and recommendations from officers, put in place appropriate arrangements for member oversight and management of the project.”

Members proceeded to debate the amendment.

Several Members spoke against the amendment. They argued that the issues surrounding the MCP had been known and debated for considerable time and argued that it was important to use this meeting to make a final decision highlighting the deadline for depositing a Private Bill.

One Member, also the Chairman of the Markets Board, was heard in support of the amendment, arguing that it would allow an opportunity for further debate which might help develop more options which could be presented to the Court at a later meeting, particularly with regard to the cost of the move and to address concerns over food security.

Motion - That, in accordance with Standing Order No.11(10), the Question be now put.

Upon the question being put, the Lord Mayor declared it to be carried.

A Division being demanded and granted, there appeared:-

For the Affirmative – 38

ALDERMEN

Barr, A.R.M.
Grekos, M.

Hughes-Penney, R.
Keaveny, V.T., C.B.E.

Masojada, B.
Newman, J.

Hailles, T.R. J.P
Howard, R.P.S.

Levene, T. The Hon.
Makin, C.

Parmley, Sir Andrew
Zaman, K.

COMMONERS

Banda, J.
Bottomley, K.D.F., Deputy
Broeke, T.
Butcher, T., Deputy
Colthurst, H.N.A., Deputy
Duckworth, S.D'O.,
O.B.E.,D.L., Deputy
Dunphy, P.G., Deputy
Durcan, J.M. J.P.
Edwards, J.E., Deputy

Gupta, M., Deputy
Hayward, C.M., Deputy
Horscroft, A.
Joshi, S.J. Deputy
Keelson-Anfu, F.
Lord, C.E., O.B.E., J.P.,
Deputy
Mooney, B.D.F., B.E.M.
Deputy
Moss, A.M., Deputy
Packham, G.D.

Rideg, A.
Seaton, I.C.N., M.B.E.
Sells, O. KC, Deputy
Singh, P.
Sleigh, T.
Sonpar, N.
Snyder, Sir Michael,
Deputy
Wright, D.L., Deputy

For the Negative – 23

ALDERMEN

Jones, G., K.C. Sheriff
Pryke. S.

COMMONERS

Anderson, R.K., Deputy
Bell, M.
Bishop-Laggett, I.
Fentimen, H., O.B.E., J.P.
Fitzpatrick, A.
Foley, J. R.
Fredericks, M.B., Deputy

Goodman, S. O.B.E
Holmes, A., Deputy
Hudson, M.
McGuinness, C.S., C.B.E.
Mullally, E.
Oliver, D.
Ornsby, S., K.C.

Pollard, J.H.G., Deputy
Sayed, R.
Selka, H.
Upton, W., K.C.
Webster, J.
Wheatley, M.
Woodhouse, P.

Abstentions – 2

ALDERMEN

King, E. A., B.E.M. J.P
Russell, Sir William

Resolved – That the question be now put.

The Court proceeded to vote on the Amendment. Upon the Amendment being put, the Lord Mayor declared it to be lost.

The Court resumed discussion on the original motion.

The Chairman reminded Members that the Court had taken a collective decision in July 2024 to stop work on the preferred delivery option for the Markets Co-Location

Programme, which had become a significant risk to the City Corporation's finances and had tasked an independent advisor to review the programme and recommend a solution. This solution would need to deliver the maximum social and economic benefits, be supported by the traders, maintain food security, deliver jobs in the London Borough of Barking and Dagenham and be financially affordable. The only two options that had received support from the traders were to remain in the current locations or to receive a compensation package to relocate, with the City Corporation ceasing to be their landlord. The Chairman advised that the City Corporation could not afford to refurbish the Billingsgate and Smithfield sites without selling prime investment property, which would reduce its annual income and have a significant impact on the services funded by City's Estate going forward.

The proposals in the report to completely stop the MCP and 'demarketise' would position City's Estate on a secure financial footing, guaranteeing the City Corporation's continued contribution to London for future generations. The proposals also had the support of traders at both sites. If approved, 'demarketisation' would release structures at Smithfield to become a cultural and commercial destination, while the Billingsgate site would be released to provide much-needed housing in Tower Hamlets. The Chairman also advised that he understood that there would be a negligible impact on London's food security, with the majority of traders intending to continue operating. The upcoming study on food security would also help to assure Parliament.

The Chairman concluded by highlighting to the Court that delaying the decision would incur further costs and risk the deals that had now been successfully made with traders.

During debate, a number of Members spoke in support of the recommendations. They emphasised the importance of making a final decision to resolve the markets issue, rather than continue to defer it and risk escalating costs. Members had a duty to ensure they made financially sound decisions; continuing with the MCP, or with operating markets in general, posed a significant risk to the financial position of City's Estate. Continuation would require the sale of investment assets, which would subsequently cause a loss of income which could otherwise be used to support other services. Approving the proposals would release sites for other opportunities: Dagenham Docks would help to diversify the investment portfolio, and Members echoed the Chairman's arguments about the need to honour the agreement with Tower Hamlets for housing at Billingsgate and to complete the development at Smithfield. The traders had indicated that they were only interested in staying at the Dagenham Docks site for a short period of time, and the City Corporation risked creating a 'white elephant' at Dagenham Docks. Regarding food security, Members noted that food supply was moving away wholesale markets and towards localisation, and that many traders had indicated they would seek to continue to operate their businesses. 'Demarketisation' could provide the impetus for the City Corporation to start positively exploring other areas of its work, such as the Honourable The Irish Society and its support for its private schools.

Several Members spoke to oppose the proposals. They felt that the issue had been brought prematurely and advised of alternative methods to navigate the parliamentary deadline for the submission of Private Bills. Some believed the Court

should not make a decision before it had seen the outcome of the research into the importance of the City's wholesale markets to food security in London and the Southeast, funding for which had been approved in July. The market's role in providing food and 'real-world' jobs helped to explain the City Corporation's value to London. Some Members argued that the debate on the amendment had been curtailed, which meant there had not been opportunity to propose other options, and therefore that the proposals should not be seen as representing the only or best way forward. A Member queried whether the cost of building the site at Dagenham outweighed the proposed offer to tenants.

*Dunphy, P. G.,
Deputy; Lord,
C. E., O.B.E.,
J.P., Deputy*

Motion - That, in accordance with Standing Order No.11(10), the Question be now put.

Resolved – That the question now be put.

Locum Tenens

Locum Tenens

The Town Clerk reported that the Lord Mayor Locum Tenens now needed to depart the meeting in order to attend another official engagement. Accordingly, there was produced and laid in Court a Warrant, signed by the Right Honourable The Lord Mayor, appointing Alderman Sir Andrew Parmley as Locum Tenens to transact all the business appertaining to the Office of Mayoralty of this City during his absence.

Concluding the debate, the Chairman thanked all those Members who had spoken for their contributions. He also thanked the officers who had worked on the report and noted his confidence in their advice. He agreed that the question was one of affordability and needed to be made to secure the financial future of City's Estate. Approving the proposals would bring opportunities in several other areas. He regretted that some Members did not agree but hoped that he had demonstrated an understanding of their position.

Upon the question being put, the Lord Mayor declared it to be carried.

Resolved – That Members:

1. Approve:
 - a. Cessation of the Market Co-location Programme, with a media and stakeholder engagement plan to be developed by an external agency to manage key messages;
 - b. The new strategy of the City of London Corporation no longer running or being involved in Smithfield and Billingsgate wholesale food markets and releasing the sites for other uses. CoL will continue running New Spitalfields Wholesale Fruit & Vegetable market;
 - c. The overall financial position to secure vacant possession of the Smithfield and Billingsgate sites and the traders' support for a new Private Bill to de-marketise these sites [REDACTED]
2. Authorise:
 - a. The Town Clerk, in consultation with the Chairman and Deputy Chairman

of your Policy and Resources Committee, to progress further detailed negotiations with the Traders and finalise Heads of Terms (from within appropriate budgets) subject to contract and approval by the Policy and Resources Committee.

- b. The Remembrancer to deposit a City of London (Markets) Bill to de-marketise the Billingsgate and Smithfield sites, subject to Heads of Terms being signed with traders and pursuant to Standing Order No.47;
 - c. The Town Clerk and Chief Executive and other relevant Chief Officers as appropriate to take all necessary steps to implement the decisions set out above.
3. Approve
- a. The continued drawdown from the Market Co-location Programme budget until such time as the programme can be re-baselined;
 - b. That with Dagenham Docks no longer required for the Market Co-location Programme, this investment asset can be developed for other uses. Subject to approval, work will now begin on developing options for this surplus site, and governance for this asset will move to the Investment Committee;
 - c. Commencement by the Independent Consultant of a review of the Market Co-location Programme Team, following close down of the programme, as requested by Policy and Resources Committee in July;
 - d. That the Policy and Resources Committee will, on receipt of a further report and recommendations from officers, put in place appropriate arrangements for member oversight and management of the project.

The meeting commenced at 2.00pm and ended at 3.58pm.

THOMAS.