



CITY OF WESTMINSTER

MINUTES

Business and Children's Policy and Scrutiny Committee

MINUTES OF PROCEEDINGS

Minutes of a meeting of the **Business and Children's Policy and Scrutiny Committee** held on **Monday 19th July, 2021**, .

Members Present: Councillors

Also Present: Councillors

Apologies for Absence:

1 MEMBERSHIP

- 1.1 Councillor Lindsey Hall was unable to attend and sent apologies. Councillor Nickie Aiken replaced Councillor Lindsey Hall for this meeting. Councillor Aicha Less was unable to attend and sent apologies. Councillor Aziz Toki replaced Councillor Aicha Less for this meeting. Wasim Butt, Marina Coleman, Mark Hewitt and Alix Ascough were unable attend and sent their apologies.

2 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

- 2.1 There were no declarations of interest.

3 MINUTES

- 3.1 **RESOLVED:** That the minutes of the meetings held on 26th April 2021 be approved as a correct record of proceedings.

4 UPDATE FROM THE CABINET MEMBER FOR YOUNG PEOPLE AND LEARNING

- 5.1 The Committee received a written update from the Cabinet Member for Young People and Learning, who responded to questions on the following topics:
- school attendance and flooding in North Westminster
 - the change of leadership at Pimlico Academy

- the available summer activities for young people
 - Members asked about catch-up funding, referencing the £6000 allocated to primary schools and £22,000 to secondary schools and whether this was enough to meet the demand.
 - Members asked about the provision of laptops to vulnerable young people and if there were enough distributed to meet the need across the Borough. It was noted that Westminster Council was one of the first to start distributing equipment in August 2020 and has distributed more than the recommended amount by Ofqual.
 - Members asked about primary school capacity. Demographic changes in the borough have meant there is a decreased demand for primary school places and the Council needs to assist schools to manage this change.
 - Members discussed the Sir Simon Milton Westminster UTC College and its decision to pause student recruitment from the next academic year. Members raised concerns and asked the Cabinet Member to commission a report on the College's future.
- 5.2 The Committee was advised that the floods had damaged some library facilities and schools, but that all facilities had been offered immediate financial support and all facilities were operational within a week.
- 5.3 The Committee was notified by the Cabinet Member that, concerning the Pimlico Academy, the results of a recent Ofsted Inspection were due soon.
- 5.4 In addition to requesting information about summer activities, the Committee raised its concerns about holiday hunger. The Cabinet Member informed the Committee that Free School Meals vouchers would be provided throughout the school summer holiday period, and this had been communicated to parents.

ACTION: The Committee requested:

1. an update on Sir Simon Milton Westminster UTC College at the next scheduled Committee meeting in October 2021.

5 UPDATE FROM THE CABINET MEMBER FOR BUSINESS AND PLANNING

- 6.1 The Committee received a written update from the Cabinet Member who responded to questions on the following topics:
- businesses affected by the flooding in North Westminster. The Committee was advised that businesses were able to access the bulky waste collection council service for free and that advice had also been issued to businesses affected by the flooding as well as hardship relief.
 - apprenticeship employment opportunities for residents in the City. The Committee discussed employment shortages in the hospitality sector, the Council were trying to combat this by working with local Job Centres and facilitating hospitality taster days with Westminster Kingsway College.

- the Kickstart scheme and the lower than anticipated number of new joiners at the Council. The Committee was informed by the Cabinet Member that the Council was paying the London Living Wage to young people on the Kickstart scheme.
- the Al-Fresco hospitality strategy. The Committee congratulated the Cabinet Member particularly on the granting of over 700 pavement licences to restaurants to provide nearly 16,000 seats for outdoor food and beverage services.
- residents' concerns relating to the Al-Fresco hospitality strategy. The Cabinet Member informed the Committee about the launch of a series of consultations with residents to co-design a new scheme that would be suitable for both residents and businesses.
- the West End Recovery and particularly the art installations within the Westminster Animation Strategy.
- an update on how the Council was encouraging start-ups to use stalls within markets. It was noted that the Council's pitch fees were one of the lowest in London to encourage start-ups to occupy Market stalls.
- the targets set for the Westminster Investment Service. It was noted that the Members would receive a written response.
- concerns about the proliferation of American sweet/candy shops across the West End and whether the Council could do anything about the increase in shops. The Committee was advised that the Council had limited powers in this regard.

ACTIONS: Members requested:

1. a written update from the Cabinet Member on the targets that have been set for the Westminster Investment Service.

6 REPORT ON GAMBLING POLICY

7.1 The Committee received a written report on the Council's Gambling Policy in Westminster. Cllr Matthew Green (Cabinet Member for Business, Licensing and Planning) introduced the report followed by Raj Mistry and Kerry Simpkin who both presented on the report's findings. The Committee also heard from two expert witnesses, Robert Burkitt and Andrew Birleson from the Gambling Commission. Questions on the report included:

- the triennial review of the Council's gambling policy and whether every three years was an appropriate time frame to review the Council's policy. It was noted that many Councils wanted this extended to every five years to match the statutory five-year requirement for Councils to review their licensing policy.
- the vulnerability index, the gambling harm risk index combined a number of data sets relating to different groups who were identified as being at risk to gambling related harm.
- the Council's powers to refuse gambling licenses. The Committee discussed previously denied applications in Harrow Road and the decision to refuse those specific applications was attributed to gathering detailed local

evidence. The Committee heard that the Council was proposing in the new Gambling Policy to create detailed local evidence bases across the City known as Local Area Profiles.

- assurances that the new Gambling Policy would be able collect localised evidence through Local Area Profiles and therefore be able to take into consideration the potential vulnerability of residents when applications were being made for gambling premises.
- the conditions available to be imposed on gambling licences and if they could be strengthened. The Committee noted that the Council did impose conditions upon licences and also had the power to review the licences.
- the engagement with reputable, well-run gambling premises' such as Casinos in the City centre. The Committee noted that the Council would be engaging with most gambling premises as the new Gambling Policy was developed.

7.2 The Chairman noted the Committee's thanks to the Officers in the Council for the work on refreshing the Gambling policy.

7 WORK PROGRAMME

8.1 The Committee discussed its work programme for the remainder of the municipal year. The Chairman informed Members that the Policy and Scrutiny team would be circulating a suggested list of substantial items for future Committee meetings. The Chairman also updated the Committee on the progress of its scrutiny task group looking into the mental health and well-being of children and young people in Westminster.

The Meeting ended at Time Not Specified

CHAIRMAN: _____

DATE _____