



CITY OF WESTMINSTER

MINUTES

Communities, City Management and Air Quality Policy and Scrutiny Committee

MINUTES OF PROCEEDINGS

Minutes of a meeting of the **Communities, City Management and Air Quality Policy and Scrutiny Committee** held on **Monday 31st October, 2022**, Rooms 18.01 & 18.03, 18th Floor, 64 Victoria Street, London, SW1E 6QP.

Members Present: Councillors Melvyn Caplan, Jim Glen, Iman Less, Mark Shearer, James Small-Edwards, Judith Southern and Jason Williams (Chair)

Also Present: Councillor Aicha Less (Deputy Leader and Cabinet Member for Communities and Public Protection), Councillor Paul Dimoldenberg (Cabinet Member for City Management and Air Quality). External Guest Chief Inspector Simon Crew from Neighbourhood Policing in Westminster. Officers; Wayne Chance-Mckay (Head of City Operations), Nicky Crouch (Director of PPL), Francis Dwan (Policy and Scrutiny Advisor), Claire Hardy (Senior Practitioner), Amy Jones (Director of Environment), Cameron Macleod (Policy Officer), Christine Mead (Programme Lead), Clare O’Keefe (Temp Lead Policy and Scrutiny Advisor), Jonathan Rowing (Head of Parking) and Serena Simon (Director of Communities).

1 MEMBERSHIP

- 1.1 The Committee noted that Councillor Jim Glen was attending as substitute for Councillor Laila Cunningham

2 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

- 2.1 There were no declarations of interest.

3 MINUTES

3.1 RESOLVED:

That the minutes of the meeting held on 13th of September 2022 be agreed subject to the following amendments:

Under the Waste Management section, Item 6 Of the minutes, it was referenced that potential fly-tippers were taking advantage of the current situation as City Inspectors were not present in the “evenings”. Members

pointed out that typical shifts are 7am to 3pm, so the period they are away for extends more than just evenings.

3.2 Actions:

1. In response to an action from the previous meeting a cycle lane map was produced for Members on request. This map was labelled as 'confidential'. Members asked why this was necessary and if it must be, then is there a version available that would be publishable.

4 PORTFOLIO UPDATE - CABINET MEMBER FOR COMMUNITIES AND PUBLIC PROTECTION

4.1 The Committee received an update from Councillor Aicha Less, Cabinet Member for Communities and Public Protection, on priorities for the portfolio and any updates that have arisen. The Cabinet Member's address started with a clarification that City Inspectors fall within the remit of her portfolio. The only exception to this is in relation to City Inspectors involvement in the 'Waste Action Squad' which falls within the remit of Cllr Dimoldenberg, Cabinet Member for City Management and Air Quality. The Cabinet Member responded to questions on the following topics:

- Noise Pollution emanating from Battersea Power Station, what actions the Council have made, working with Wandsworth Council, to mitigate this. This was agreed as an action to come back to.
- City Inspectors, to which the Cabinet Member informed the Committee that there are a total of 90 City Inspectors across the Council. Further information was requested and noted as an action.
- Westminster Connects, in relation to who ultimately takes decisions. In response, Members were told that whilst partners are highly engaged in the process all decisions are made by the Council.
- Warm spaces, where they have been identified and whether more were still required. In response, the Committee were told that more were needed but there was a reasonable offering at present, with particular thanks to a variety of faith groups offering up places of worship.
- Approach to equalities, to identify what tangible changes this approach might bring about. After some minor clarification, it was agreed that a paper explaining could provide the necessary detail and this was agreed as an action. This followed an earlier discussion on the cost of integrating socioeconomic duty into work, which additional information was also actioned out of. As a follow up, the role of Citizen Advice Bureau (CAB) Advisors was queried, and clarity was sought on how long the funding was in place for and what the total cost of this would be. It was agreed that this would also be raised as an action to feedback on.

- Maida Hill Market, to understand what is meant by ‘stakeholder engagement’ in real terms. It was explained to mean building trust through physical interactions and meetings with residents aided by a dedicated strategic lead officer now in post, to ensure the same conversations and questions are not being asked repeatedly.

4.2 Actions:

1. On Noise Pollution from Battersea Power Station – Members asked for clarity on action already taken liaising with Wandsworth Council concerning noise from Battersea Power Station which spills over into parts of Westminster. If no action recently, then it was requested that this should followed up on.
2. On City Inspectors - The Committee requested a rundown of exactly who the City Inspectors are (for each ward) and for how long they are present for.
3. On Integrating Socioeconomic Duty - The Committee requested an exact breakdown of how much the procured work will cost to integrate the ‘socioeconomic duty into work’ and who these partners will be.
4. On CAB Advisors - The Committee asked exactly how long the funding for the our new advisors for CAB us in place for. It was also requested that the Committee are provided with the total costs associated.
5. On Warm Spaces - Officers to provide the list of warm spaces that have been offered so far in Westminster.
6. On Approach to Equalities - A paper explaining the internal and external approach to equalities. This would include what is happening, what are the commitments, what the engagement strategy around the external equalities approach is and what the outcomes will be.
7. On Maida Hill Market - The Committee to be provided with specific activities undertaken to ensure community relations are rebuilt in and around Maida Hill Market.

5 PORTFOLIO UPDATE - CABINET MEMBER FOR CITY MANAGEMENT AND AIR QUALITY

5.1 The Committee received an update from Councillor Paul Dimoldenberg, Cabinet Member for City Management and Air Quality, on priorities for the portfolio and any updates that have arisen. In supplement to the update, the Cabinet Member gave additional detail on the Waste Action Plan and the Leafing Plan. The Cabinet Member responded to questions on the following topics:

- Recycling Signs, Members asked for an update on the status of the rollout after identifying that there are areas and roads where they have not been put

up yet (e.g Claverton Street), this was marked as an action as the rollout was supposed to have happened.

- Leafing Plan, more detail was requested. The Committee were told how 11 agency staff have been hired, about 1000 tonnes of leaves will need to be cleared, which will make up about 200,000 bags. Teams will work in pairs with leaves around gullies a priority due to risk of flooding. In terms of the environmental impacts, electric leaf blowers are being trialled to measure their effectiveness and these also emit much less noise pollution. In terms of waste disposal due to risks of cross-contamination, leaves must be combusted, which provides power for heating amongst other things.
- Waste Action Plan, to understand more about it and whether it detracted current resource. Some detail was given and it was clarified that at times, staff could be temporarily relocated to neighbouring wards. The food waste bin rollouts was also questioned, the timeline of which can be provided.
- Queensway Strategy Group, Members welcomed receiving regular updates and asked for any additional information that could be shared. The Committee heard that the group is made up of about 30 people and includes the Westway, they have been particularly interested in looking at anti-social behaviour and crime.
- Cycle Hangers, to find out how long the waiting list was and which areas had been frequently requested. In response the Cabinet Member expressed that he was very eager for the offering to increase substantially and that work was ongoing to secure the finance to facilitate that. New areas had been identified through request but funding remains a stumbling block.
- Overtime pay for City Inspectors, having thanked staff for their tireless work, particularly regarding 'Operation London Bridge' and the Head of Parking's work on it, Members asked for detail on overtime and remuneration for officers, particularly City Inspectors, to ensure they were being paid adequately for the hard work and time they commit. The Committee heard that there are overtime payments that are paid, but these, understandably are managed and heads of service must approve overtime.
- Dockless Bike Charging, further clarity was sort on what dockless bike providers are doing to clamp down on nuisance users who leave bikes in disruptive places as well as what the Council is asking of the providers. In response, the Committee were reminded of the previous conversations and about the ongoing relationship that has included discussions on geo-fencing. The Transport Bill which is set to come to the House of Commons soon, could provide additional powers to enforce. This explanation was also provided on a question on engine idling, which wanted the exact detail of the number issued since May 2022. This was taken as an action. In follow-up, Members asked what details could be requested from the e-bike trial from Transport for London (TfL), this was noted as an action.
- Sheffield Stands, when they were coming in and how many are to be installed. The Committee heard that installation rollout of 180 Sheffield stands

was ongoing, all sites identified bar one should be up within the year. Whilst on the topic of encouraging active travel, Members then asked about Electric Vehicle (EV) charging points and whether they could accommodate for mobility scooters, the Committee heard that they are commissioned externally but this could be looked into, which was marked as an action.

- Flooding in Westminster, it was asked when papers would be published and a substantive item could be brought to the Committee. This was listed as a relevant discussion for the Work Programme.

5.2 Actions:

1. On Recycling Signs - Members asked about for an update on the status of the rollout after identifying that there are areas or roads where they have not been put up yet (e.g Claverton Street).
2. On the Food Waste Programme - Members asked for a timeline of when each ward will receive the roll-out.
3. On placement of Waste Leaf Bags – Members requested that waste officers are asked not stack leaf bags for waste beside standard waste bins as it attracts fly-tipping and general littering.
4. On the Queensway Strategy Group – Members asked to ensure that routine (quarterly) updates are provided to the Committee as is planned.
5. On TfL feedback from the E-scooter Trials – Members asked that when the time comes that feedback is received from the trials the Council could request as much additional information on user details as possible. Being able to identify their use (or likely use) would be valuable insight (e.g xx% of the e-scooters are used for commuting from outside of Westminster).
6. On Electrical Vehicles (EV) Lamp Charging Sockets – Members asked that in future discussions, mobility scooters could be considered when assessing our offering of EV chargers and lamppost chargers with manufacturers.
7. On diverting City Inspector Resources – Members requested comment on whether City Inspectors have been diverted for days at a time due to the Waste Action Squad Programme.
8. On Fixed Penalty Notices (FPNs) – Members requested detail on exactly how many FPNs have been issued (since May 2022) for engine idling.
9. On Flooding - To clarify when an update will be brought to the Committee on alleviating flooding risk in Westminster.

6 POLICING IN THE CITY OF WESTMINSTER

6.1 Chief Inspector Simon Crew for Neighbourhood Policing in Westminster introduced the paper. Covered within this was the operating model, resourcing, stop and search, Section 60 offences, anti-social behaviour offences and crime. The report was drawn entirely from publicly available data. Taking the paper as read, he took questions on:

- Thorough Searches, particularly how the safety, humility and modesty was protected especially for the 17 thorough searches that were conducted within the reporting period on persons aged 19 or younger. In response, the Committee heard that firstly, an appropriate adult is always present and following notable cases there has been extensive reviews into the practice which has ensured adequate, enhanced training is given to officers.
- Westminster Police's addressing of Baroness Casey's report and findings, how the findings are being addressed locally. The Committee heard that more widely, an anti-corruption and abuse command has been set up to improve professional standards. Police processes are also under review across the Metropolitan Police.
- Ethnic Disproportionately in Stop and Search, to understand why seemingly a disproportionate number of ethnic minorities appear to be stopped. In supplement Members asked how many of those stopped were actually residents of Westminster. In response Chief Inspector Simon Crew highlighted that 'White' was the most common ethnic minority stopped and without the latest census data, no conclusions could be made on disproportionality. In terms of who, of those stopped and searched, could be a resident, this is not data that exists as there is no legal obligation to provide an address when stop and searched unless then arrested.
- West End activity skewing statistics, given that there are about 11,000 residents in St James' ward, but on a typical day about 250,000 people pass through, the Committee were curious as to whether this area, and the West End more broadly, skews the figures. In response, the Committee were told in simple terms, yes, whilst Chief Inspector Crew did not have figures on him, a large volume of police activity occurs in this area and it is likely to skew overall statistics. Ward level breakdowns are made available and shared with the Council at specific times though.
- Dealing with reporting fatigue and whether there were less police on the streets than before. In response, victims feeling fatigued or not being willing to contact the police was one of the priorities and current engagement targets that the police are working on. In terms of officer numbers, despite the amalgamation of two wards in the borough, the total number of dedicated ward officers has remained level. Integrated Gangs and Exploitation Units (IGXUs) remain in place but some proactive gang officers have been redistributed but this is under review and the Council is already lobbying for their return.

6.2 Actions:

1. As a request of the Police, “In the reporting period (September 2021 – August 2022), of those who were stop and searched in Westminster (16556) and subsequently arrested (~2000), how many had/gave their permanent address as being within the boundary of Westminster City Council?”
2. On pre-existing crime data, Members asked for any resident specific crime and arrest figures that have already been made available to the Council to be distributed to the Committee.

7 ANTI-SOCIAL BEHAVIOUR STRATEGY CONSULTATION

7.1 The Committee were talked through the ASB Strategy Consultation by Wayne Chance-McKay Head of City Operations. Notably that it had taken 15 months to get together, involved mass engagement and stemmed on five key pillars. He clarified that within it there was no specific strategy for a specific group like young people or homeless people for example, as the strategy aims change behaviours rather than be focused on specific people. Questions then covered the following topics:

- A bespoke mental health offering as part of the strategy, in response the Committee was told that the mental health offering would be a key part of the strategy within the first year.
- The quality of existing relationships between the Council, the Police and mental health services, the Committee heard how historically this has been a challenge but works are ongoing to develop and improve the partnerships and the necessary collaboration required.
- Linking up all aspects of the strategy, the Committee heard this was a key part and steering groups include large numbers of different stakeholders including registered social landlords (RSLs).
- Improving the speed of response and after-care, to which the Committee heard a number of statistics explaining the breakdown such as 35% of all ASB reports are related to noise and nuisance. Getting swift justice for victims was another key priority.
- The length of the consultation document, the Committee made the comment that a summary version was required if they wanted additional contributions from residents who will be busy with their own lives. The Committee heard that there is an “easy-read” version available.
- The success of previous pilot schemes, Edward Aslop Court was highlighted to the Committee, its targeted offering in 2019, which introduced activities as well as other aspects that would form part of the strategy, saw complaints over the same period fall from 110 to just two.

- Whether one objective trumped another, in response the Committee heard that whilst protecting victims was a top priority, there was no outlined hierarchy of objectives.
- What best practice the strategy has drawn from, amongst others that had been drawn on; the Westminster Housing Service and national charity, ASB Help were singled out for praise.
- Understanding why ASB is particularly high in Westminster, as mentioned in the report. The Committee heard, that as for Crime, ASB statistics are also brought up by the West End and the Night Time Economy. That inflation though should not detract from ASB which still occurs across the City.

7.2 Actions:

1. On getting Councillors Involved - Officers to publish exactly how Members can interact and contribute to the consultation.
2. On ensuring Councillors are aware of the consultation - Non-Cabinet and Committee Councillors have not been made aware of the ongoing consultation, potentially as they have not been listed as stakeholders. It has been requested that officers draw attention about the consultation to all Councillors via an email and this is something that has been suggested as best practice for any and all public consultations going forward.

8 WORK PROGRAMME

- 8.2 The Work Programme was discussed and Members reflected that having two substantive items relating to the same Cabinet Member worked well and this could be a preferred style going forward.

The Meeting ended at 20.33.

CHAIR: _____

DATE _____