



CITY OF WESTMINSTER

MINUTES

**FINANCE, SMART CITY AND CITY MANAGEMENT POLICY & SCRUTINY
COMMITTEE
3 FEBRUARY 2021
MINUTES OF PROCEEDINGS**

Minutes of a meeting of the **Finance, Smart City and City Management Policy & Scrutiny Committee** held virtually on 3 February 2021 at 7.00pm **on TEAMS**.

Members Present: Councillors Gotz Mohindra (Chairman), Paul Dimoldenberg (Deputy Chairman), Susie Burbridge, Lorraine Dean, Murad Gassanly, Adam Hug, Pancho Lewis, Emily Payne

Also present: Councillor Melvyn Caplan (Cabinet Member for City Management), Councillor Paul Swaddle (Cabinet Member Finance and Smart City)

1. ELECTION OF CHAIRMAN

- 1.1 Nominations for the post of Chair were invited. One nomination was received and seconded for Councillor Gotz Mohindra. One nomination was received and seconded for Councillor Paul Dimoldenberg. There were no further nominations.
- 1.2 The committee officer put both nomination to the vote. Councillor Gotz Mohindra received five votes and Councillor Paul Dimoldenberg received two votes.
- 1.3 **RESOLVED:** That Councillor Gotz Mohindra be appointed Chairman of the Finance, Smart City and City Management Policy and Scrutiny Committee and Councillor Paul Dimoldenberg be appointed Deputy Chairman of the Finance, Smart City and City Management Policy and Scrutiny Committee for this meeting.

2. MEMBERSHIP

- 2.1 There were no changes to the membership.

3. DECLARATION OF INTEREST

- 3.1 Councillor Mohindra declared he owns an electric vehicle which is relevant to agenda item four (Councillor Caplan's Cabinet Member update).

4. QUESTION AND ANSWER SESSION: CABINET MEMBER CITY MANAGEMENT

- 4.1 The Committee received a written update from the Cabinet Member who responded to questions on the following topics:
- Members asked about ensuring electric vehicle charging points close to where people lived and also outside NHS facilities specifically for people with disabilities. The committee heard the council moving towards a situation where there will be more and also dedicated places available for people to park and charge their electric cars.
 - Members asked that the views of surrounding wards be taken into account if a LTN is proposed in future.
 - Members asked about the cost of works around the Oxford Street area. The Crown covered the entirety of the costs of works on Regent Street. The council is considering views on temporary works along Oxford Street and will be able to provide costs in due course. In relation to Oxford Circus, the council will be consulting on what to do in this area.
 - Members asked about temporary cycle lane schemes. The majority will continue but there are some schemes where it is obvious that they are not required.
 - Members heard there will be a review of leisure centres. It will be based on what we see happening when COVID-19 restrictions begin to be lifted. Members commented that some residents were concerned about potential restrictions on opening hours for leisure centres after COVID-19.
 - Members heard that the council is talking with people and groups about its ambition to open up hospitality safely once restrictions begin to be lifted.
 - Members suggested setting up a Westminster award to recognise those that have gone above and beyond, particularly in these challenging times.

6. QUESTION AND ANSWER SESSION: CABINET MEMBER FOR YOUNG PEOPLE AND LEARNING

- 6.1 The Committee received a written update from the Cabinet Member who responded to questions on the following topics:
- Members asked about plans to attract domestic tourists into the City. They heard the council is looking at different types of festivals, including the inside out festival which was postponed last year. Members commented that there were many opportunities to promote the city to an international audience on platforms like Instagram.
 - Members commended Cllr Swaddle and officers on the successful delivery of the new website.
 - Members asked about procurement and contract management. The council has a new head of procurement and will be looking at new ideas and ways of doing things to ensure the council is an organisation that is easy to do business with.
 - Members asked about broadband connectivity and support the council was providing for people with way leave issues. The council has led by example and

given way leaves across all of its properties. Cllr Swaddle encouraged members to reach out to him if there are complicated cases in their wards.

- Members heard there have been schemes put in place to provide broadband for those with limited economic means, particularly aimed at school aged residents.
- Members asked about the call centre transformation. They heard that the focus was on delivering a high standard of service while amalgamating the centres.
- Members asked whether autism friendly meeting rooms would be past of new office spaces. Cllr Swaddle said he would welcome member engagement on ensuring meeting rooms are autism friendly.
- Members asked about how the council could maximise revenue from its corporate property. They heard the council has a significant portfolio which they want to deliver on while at the same time ensuring the council is not put at risk. Cllr Swaddle encourage members to come forward with ideas.
- Members heard there is provision in the capital budget to bring works on the Seymour Leisure Centre and the council is looking at options for this.

6.2 **ACTION:** That more information is provided on how new procurement policies will support the council's net zero goals.

7. COMMITTEE WORK PROGRAMME

7.1 The committee discussed ideas for its upcoming meetings including:

- Rationalisation of council buildings
- Waste management and freight consolidation
- Community contribution fund
- Oxford Street Programme
- Streetscape and revitalising the West End
- Customer service transformation
- Green footprint of digital offering

8. TERMINATION OF MEETING

8.1 The meeting ended at 8.35pm.

CHAIRMAN _____

DATE _____