



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 12th December, 2022**, Rooms 18.06 & 18.07, 18th Floor, 64 Victoria Street, London, SW1E 6QP.

**Members Present:** Councillors Melvyn Caplan, Laila Cunningham, David Harvey, Iman Less, James Small-Edwards, Judith Southern, Jason Williams (Chair).

**Also Present:** Councillor Paul Dimoldenberg (Cabinet Member for City Management and Air Quality). Officers: Francis Dwan (Policy and Scrutiny Advisor), Andy Foster (Consultant Bridges and Structures), Claude Hemsley (Head of I.P.D), Amy Jones (Director of Environment), Alex Juon (Head of Service South and West PPL), Christine Mead (Programme Lead – Community Partnerships), Philip Robson (Head of Operations), Jon Rowing (Head of Parking).

#### 1 MEMBERSHIP

- 1.1 The Committee noted that Councillor Mark Shearer sent his apologies for this meeting.
- 1.2 The Committee noted that Councillor David Harvey stood in as substitute for Councillor Mark Shearer.

#### 2 DECLARATIONS

- 2.1 There were no declarations of interest.

#### 3 MINUTES

- 3.1 That the minutes of the meeting held on 31<sup>st</sup> October 2022 be agreed.
- 3.2 Resolved
  - The minutes of the meeting held on 31<sup>st</sup> October 2022 be signed by the Chair as a correct record of proceedings with no amendments.

#### **4 PORTFOLIO UPDATE - CABINET MEMBER FOR COMMUNITIES AND PUBLIC PROTECTION**

- 4.1 The Committee did not hear from the Cabinet Member for Communities and Public Protection as she was unwell and therefore unable to attend the meeting. It was agreed that Members of the Committee would be given the opportunity to ask questions of the Cabinet Member and the report provided via email.

#### **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. The Cabinet Member then responded to questions on the following topics:
- Cycle lanes and routes, particularly in Fitzrovia and Pimlico. Further questions were asked on the consultation process and the criteria for determining how many lanes would be provided.
  - Planned preventative maintenance (PPM), including when it is expected to be signed off.
  - CCTV cameras on School Streets and what the Council's policy is going to be.
  - Dockless bikes and a timescale for when a policy would be in place. In follow up, the cost of seizing and storage was also asked.
  - Priorities when creating cycle lanes and what enforcement options are when they are blocked by motorists.
  - Electric Vehicle charging parking spaces, the degree to which they take traditional parking spaces away and how this is justified.
  - Vandalism of temporary toilets, how the Council protects against this and understanding more detail on what happened.
  - Parking fines, understanding how many were currently being issued and requesting this information be provided.
  - Food waste rollout, understanding the required threshold for adaption of the programme. In follow up, the notion of central bins for food waste rather than individual bins was asked after, following a trial of this in Pimlico South ward.
  - Twice weekly waste collections, the threshold to qualify for this was enquired on.
  - Waste Action Plan, how it is progressing and an update.

- Bus speeds, what work the Council has done to improve bus journey times and tackle ‘pinch-points’.
- Cycle Hangars, an update on the status of the scheme and rollout.
- Regent Street public realm improvements, how much of the costs associated with this would be shouldered by the Council. In follow up, Members asked whether ‘no’ was an option when consulting on public realm improvement schemes particularly re the recent consultation relating to Pimlico South ward.
- Occupancy Rates, how these figures can be understood, and findings worked on to bring about better outcomes.
- Persistent parking offenders, how the Council approaches individuals who persistently offend and build up multiple penalty charge notices (PCNs).

## 5.2 Actions

1. Fitzrovia/Pimlico Cycle Routes, the Head of Operations offered to send details of consultations in a written response.
2. Increase in parking enforcement and consideration of night-time enforcement. The Head of Parking offered to provide a breakdown of figures for the Committee which can demonstrate the spread across the city.
3. The Committee to identify any practical issues or pinch points that they are aware of in relation to Bus travel in Westminster. This might feed into planned discussions between the Council and TfL’s Director of Buses.
4. If still sought by Members, additional information can be provided by the Head of Parking on explaining how the Council is able to deal with persistent offenders and the associated difficulties faced.

## 6 UPDATE PAPER – PARKING SERVICE

6.1 The Head of Parking, Jon Rowing, introduced this item as an update paper given that many decisions are yet to be made. Committee Members were then given the opportunity to make suggestions that could feed into a future substantive report set to come to Committee in July 2023. Member suggestions came on the following themes:

- Results of the Occupancy Survey, including breakdowns of sub-district and zones. If possible and noteworthy, a breakdown of zones such as ‘Zone C’ could be considered to demonstrate how demand changes within zones over the course of a day or week.
- Parking Suspensions, how they are done and how the Council deals with non-compliance. The cost of dealing with non-compliance is also sought.

Additionally, times when the Council can act faster based on need and urgency as in the example of relocation services which is an issue in some parts of Westminster.

- A summary of recent parking fine activity across Westminster, including, where possible time of day breakdowns, hotspots and mean and modal fines issued per warden.
- Future modelling, given the impending ban on petrol and diesel cars in 2030, how the Council is forecasting, preparing, and mapping the change this will have on parking services over the next ten years.
- Traffic Management Orders Process, what consideration has been made in streamlining the process of making orders and what efforts have been made to combine orders to prevent unnecessary delay.
- The consequence of reducing available spots to increase the provision of Electric Vehicle compatible bays. The associated impact this might have on Small and Medium Enterprises and the provision of blue-badge spaces.

## **7 FLOODING**

7.1 The Committee received an update from the Council's Head of Operations, Phil Robson on flooding in Westminster in the summer of 2021. Phil drew particular attention to the Sewer Resilience findings. The Cabinet Member, with Philip's support then responded to questions on the following topics:

- Reporting mechanisms and how they can be improved to become simpler for residents that experience flooding.
- Thames Water's response and whether the Council plans to meet with them directly and have an honest conversation about potential failings and suggestions for how their processes could be made much simpler for residents.
- The likelihood of improving sewer capacity and whether it is something the Council can push for.
- Issues with insurance, including some properties that have been deemed "un-insurable". Powers that the Council might have to step in and improve this. In follow-up the position of properties that are technically owned by a limited company and are also excluded from insurance was raised.
- Installation of sustainable drainage systems (SuDS) in community gardens and the process of installing them.
- Whether those that have been displaced by flooding should still be paying council tax.

- Rethinking the way the Council approaches tackling these issues, given the knock-on effect of rain and poor sewage capacity in other parts of London can contribute to flooding in Westminster.
- Outlining what exactly the Council has done in response to the flooding and whether this has gone far enough.
- How emergency preparedness for Council staff could improve the response and could be considered as a requirement.
- To consider looking at flooding and drainage management on a more regular basis

## 7.2 Actions

1. Members to provide detail on aspects they believe Thames Water may be able to improve which can feed into Council discussions with Thames Water. Within this, specific detail of properties affected could help to identify ones that may have been overlooked by Thames Waters and the surveys they carried out.
2. Members who know of residents that were displaced by Flooding and have continued to pay Council Tax throughout, can advise them that they are eligible for Council tax relief.
3. To consider the Council's position when properties are deemed 'un-insurable'.

## 8 WORK PROGRAMME REPORT

- 8.1 The Work Programme was discussed, and the following items were raised for Chair consideration:
  - Flooding could be considered as a recurring substantive item or at least included in Cabinet Member updates whenever a relevant update occurs.
  - Substantive items, when two come to a Committee, to remain within the same Cabinet Member's portfolio. This would push the Air Quality Action Plan back if accepted.
  - Scrutiny Officer to circulate a list of options within Cllr Less' portfolio for consideration and Chair approval for the next Committee.

There was no other business and the Meeting ended at 20.03

**CHAIR:** \_\_\_\_\_

**DATE** \_\_\_\_\_