



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 **Tuesday 19th September, 2023**, Rooms 18.07 & 18.08, 18th Floor, 64 Victoria Street, London, SW1E 6QP.

**Members Present:** Councillors Jason Williams (Chair), Laila Cunningham, Tim Mitchell, Mark Shearer, James Small-Edwards and Judith Southern.

**Also Present:** Councillors: Paul Dimoldenberg (Cabinet Member for City Management and Air Quality) and Aicha Less (Cabinet Member for Communities and Public Protection). Officers: Mark Banks (Head of Waste and Cleansing), Francis Dwan (Policy and Scrutiny Advisor), Amy Jones (Director of Environment), Frances Martin (Executive Director of Environment and City), Devika Samlal (Head of Public Realm and Security), Serena Simon (Director of Communities) and Mark Wiltshire (Director of Public Protection and Licensing).

#### 1 MEMBERSHIP

- 1.1 The Committee noted that Councillor Hamza Taouzzale sent his apologies for the meeting.

#### 2 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

- 2.1 Declarations were received from Councillors Laila Cunningham, James Small-Edwards and Jason Williams who declared that in respect to Item 6, they were members of Strategy Groups within their wards.
- 2.2 Councillor Dimoldenberg declared that in respect of Item 6, he chairs or oversees all strategy groups. The Committee noted that this is stated in the report.

#### 3 MINUTES

- 3.1 The Committee approved the minutes of its meeting held on 31<sup>st</sup> July 2023.

#### 3.2 RESOLVED

That the minutes of the meeting held on 31<sup>st</sup> July 2023 be agreed as a correct record of proceedings.

## **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 drew attention to the upcoming deadline for pavement licensing renewals and then responded to questions on the following topics:

- Joint working with other Local Authorities: Members asked what work was undertaken working with neighbouring local authorities on noise issues, particularly regarding large events such as the recent concert in Burgess Park.
- Paddington Green major incident: Members asked if the Cabinet Member had any update on the major incident at Paddington Green on 19<sup>th</sup> September 2023.
- Efforts to tackle serious youth violence: how efforts to tackle serious youth violence were progressing and what, if any, effect the Metropolitan Police's turnaround plan was having. Members then requested a breakdown of the figures available to the Council on this issue.
- Pavement licences: whether the Council was considering making pavement licences permanent and whether residents could be notified of applications through the current alert system used for other planning applications.
- Metropolitan Police: how community events run by the police had gone and the degree to which they are planned in future.
- The Council's Public Protection and Licensing department (PPL) restructure: how planned changes to PPL might affect noise complaints, the number of officers available and whether the Council will ensure that noise complaints can be attended by noise specialists with the appropriate statutory powers to act. Members also asked how staff would be stationed and deployed.
- The Noise App: whether improvements were planned for 'the noise app' used to record and report incidents of noise breaches. Members asked for clarity on the purpose of the application, once it had been established that the application alone cannot be used as evidence of a breach.
- Safer neighbourhood board: clarity was sought on the extent and security of the Mayor's office for Policing and Crime (MOPAC) funding for youth violence reduction and safer neighbourhood board. Members sought to understand how the cohort of participants were going to be identified and suggested that the whole community be considered.
- Animal warden: detail was sought on the number employed and responsibilities of Westminster's 'animal warden'. Members also asked the

degree to which they would be responsible for dealing with dog fouling and what more could be done.

- Anti-Social Behaviour (ASB) awareness week: the reach of ASB awareness week and how it could be promoted more widely in future.
- Community protection notices: understanding how the community protection notices work.
- Trading standards: information on the site of the recent raid on a business following a trading standards investigation. Members sought detail on what powers and punishments were available to the Council and police in circumstances where fake or illegal goods are found to be stored.
- Waste enforcement action: how successful waste enforcement action had been across Westminster.
- City Inspector seizures: whether the number of dockless bikes seized by City Inspectors was adequate and sent a clear enough message to act as a deterrent.

#### 4.2 Actions

1. To provide an update to the Committee on efforts and instances working with neighbouring authorities in relation to noise issues, particularly with Lambeth, Wandsworth and Southwark (including Burgess Park).
2. To provide the Committee with an update on tangible progress in relation to tackling serious youth violence in Westminster.
3. To confirm whether there is intention that residents can be notified (or at least find out) about pavement licence applications through the alert system which is applicable for other licence and planning applications.
4. To provide the statistics referenced in the meeting about PPL restructuring in terms of noise officers and, if possible, a comment on how the new service structure is working out.
5. To look into the noise reporting app and what it currently appears to offer after reported resident confusion on the purpose and likely outcomes from reporting.
6. To provide an update on what MOPAC funding to establish a safer neighbourhood board would be used for and would include. What preventative measures might be enacted used and how would vulnerable cohorts be identified.
7. To provide more information on the 'animal warden', specifically in terms of their role in tackling dog fouling. Lancaster Gate was suggested for the event schedule on awareness on dog fouling in future.

8. To provide the Committee with a broader look at waste enforcement statistics and prosecution City-wide.

## **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 announced that the Micro Logistics Hub had been nominated for an award and thanked the team for their work. The Cabinet Member then responded to questions on the following topics:

- Parking charges: when new parking charge plans would be released.
- Notting Hill Carnival Waste: how the Council can reduce the level of waste produced annually by Notting Hill Carnival and whether the Council would consider messaging campaigns in the build-up to the Carnival going forward.
- Anti-idling fines: how many people had been fined for anti-idling in Westminster to date. Members also asked what other steps could be taken to tackle the issue of anti-idling. Members also asked if officers knew the motivation behind anti-idling, particularly for coaches and buses.
- Regent's Street: what made Regent's Street an area in focus and what the aims for the engagement exercise were.
- Wood-burning stoves: understanding the decision to campaign against wood-burning stoves during a cost-of-living crisis when energy bills are high, and people may be seeking them out as a more affordable alternative.
- Neighbourhood waste bins: alerting the Cabinet Member to the absence of a neighbourhood waste bin in an area of St James' ward.
- School's Clean Air Fund: how the school's clean air programme will be reinvigorated to ensure school's continued engagement and enjoyment of the benefits available.
- Anti-idling and schools: clarity that it is Harris Sixth Form not Harris Academy as stated in the report and that the local resident association have been in discussions with concerns, including about air conditioning.
- Alleged bribery of a parking official: Members asked whether the private contractor had provided any further update on the ongoing investigation into reports of the potential bribery of a parking official in Westminster.
- Dockless bike parking bays: Members asked if the plans to have dockless bike parking bays was on track and set to be delivered in time for October

2023, as planned. Members also asked if the bays would apply for rental scooters as well as bikes.

- Parking availability: how non-residents are set to be informed of parking availability and whether this was possible before they arrive.
- Electric vehicle (EV) charging accessibility: whether any vulnerable, particularly elderly, people had issues accessing EV chargers installed by the Council.

## 5.2 Actions

1. To provide any available intelligence on the location and spread of wood-burning stoves in Westminster.
2. To check the status of the new neighbourhood waste bin rollout – specifically one's promised to St James' ward, which don't appear to have been fully rolled out yet.

## 6 STRATEGY GROUP MODELS (EDGWARE ROAD AND QUEENSWAY)

6.1 The Cabinet Member for City Management and Air Quality, Councillor Paul Dimoldenberg introduced the report on strategy group models providing a timeline to date, issues faced and remarked about how the groups successfully bring together different teams and departments in the Council. The Cabinet Member, supported by senior officers, took questions on the following topics:

- Co-ordination between groups: within the model, how do the operational group and the strategy group co-ordinate. Members also asked how frequently these groups meet.
- External engagement: how the groups could ensure good attendance from external bodies.
- Long-term outlook: what the wider vision was for strategy groups looking into the next year.
- Counterfeit goods: how the strategy groups can play a role in tackling illegal sale of goods and counterfeit goods.
- Lifespan: how long the strategy groups were set to exist for and what timeline they were working within to have the desired outcome.
- Link to neighbourhood community forums: whether strategy groups engage with neighbourhood community forums, in which many of the priority issues for particular areas are discussed.

- Feedback from public body engagement: how public bodies, like the police and Transport for London (TfL), have engaged with the strategy groups and how could this be improved.
- Resident engagement forum: Members asked for feedback on the resident engagement forum on 15 September 2023 and whether any new priority issues had been brought up.

## **7 PUBLIC CONVENIENCES MODERNISATION**

7.1 The Cabinet Member for City Management and Air Quality, Councillor Paul Dimoldenberg introduced the report on the public conveniences (PCs) modernisation programme. The Cabinet Member described how revenue had halved since 2017, whilst maintenance costs have risen. The Cabinet Member, supported by specialist officers, outlined the desired outcomes before taking questions on the following topics:

- Facilities in parks: how PCs could be integrated into parks better, managed easier and what could be done. Members asked whether there was a consideration of having attendants on site.
- Contactless payments: how beneficial officers believed providing contactless payments could prove to be.
- Facilities in TfL stations: what influence the Council could have on improving PC provision in TfL stations in the City.
- Community schemes: whether the Council was considering a community toilet style scheme with bars and restaurants in addition to the planned offering.
- Water conservation: what could be considered to conserve water, whether a wash basin above a cistern could be considered.
- Libraries: whether Westminster's public libraries offered PC provisions for public use. Members later queried whether shopping centres were obliged to provide PCs and whether that was something that could be considered as part of planning conditions.
- Understanding staffing roles: the role that cleaning staff would have and whether they could end up also being responsible for security.
- PCs revenue: clarity on the figures quoted by the Cabinet Member when introducing the report.
- Charging fee: how the rate of 50p for commercial sites had been reached, whether this had changed and whether it was justified. Members then asked what the likely forecast for revenues might be once contactless payments were installed.

- Priority locations: how the locations had been determined for the planned priority upgrades.
- Return on investment: the degree to which it could be possible to make back the large, planned investment on PCs modernisation (£6.5 million).
- Designs: whether various locations would end up with the same designs.
- Telescopic pop-up urinals: referencing the tragic death of a contractor working on a telescopic pop-up urinal on Cambridge Gardens, Members asked what the plan was for them and if they could ever be deemed safe.
- Covent Garden PCs: clarity on whether the Council was willing to allow the church to manage the PCs in Covent Garden.
- Programme budget: whether the planned investment total of £6.5 million was necessarily going to go far enough and cover all sites across Westminster.
- Accessibility: whether the designs would have accessible provisions, not only for disabled residents, but also parents and carers of young children who may require baby-changing provisions.

## 7.2 Actions

1. To provide, in writing, the change in revenues from Public Conveniences in Westminster last year, compared to 2017.

## 8 WORK PROGRAMME REPORT

- 8.1 The Work Programme was discussed, with Members being reminded of the later, 7pm, agreed start time for 7 December 2023. Members were then invited to make comment.
- 8.2 The Committee emphasised the importance of whichever relevant committee that may form, could consider reviewing the CCTV policy proposals. Members also indicated an interest in looking specifically at City Inspectors, their roles and effectiveness.

The meeting ended at 20.35.

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

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

This page is intentionally left blank