



CITY OF WESTMINSTER

MINUTES

Environment and Customer Services Policy and Scrutiny Committee

MINUTES OF PROCEEDINGS

Minutes of a meeting of the **Environment and Customer Services Policy and Scrutiny Committee** held on **Monday 7th March, 2016**, Rooms 5, 6 & 7 - 17th Floor, Westminster City Hall, 64 Victoria Street, London, SW1E 6 QP.

Members Present: Councillors Ian Adams (Chairman), Julia Alexander, Thomas Crockett, Paul Dimoldenberg, Louise Hyams, Karen Scarborough, Cameron Thomson and Jason Williams

Also Present: Councillor Melvyn Caplan, Cabinet Member for City Management and Customer Services and Councillor Heather Acton, Cabinet Member for Sustainability and Parking.

1 MEMBERSHIP

- 1.1 There were no apologies for absence. The Members of the Committee were all present at the meeting.

2 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

- 2.1 There were no declarations of interest.

3 MINUTES AND MATTERS ARISING

- 3.1 A post-meeting note had been included in the minutes of the meeting held on Monday 18 January that the Council had received nominations from the Pimlico Toy Library to list St. George's Square Gardens and Pimlico Gardens as Assets of Community Value. The applications were validated by the Council on 13th January. The Committee asked whether a decision had yet been taken on whether to list them or not. Barry Smith, Head of City Policy & Strategy, advised that he had corresponded with the Westminster Boating Base about whether they wished to be included in the existing application or submit their own application. It was likely that a decision would be taken in the next ten days or so.

3.2 **RESOLVED:** That the minutes of the meeting held on Monday 18 January 2016 be signed by the Chairman as a correct record of proceedings.

4 **UPDATE FROM CABINET MEMBERS**

4.1 The Committee received written updates from the Cabinet Member for the Built Environment, the Cabinet Member for City Management and Customer Services and the Cabinet Member for Sustainability and Parking on significant matters within their portfolios.

4.2 The Chairman welcomed Councillor Heather Acton and Councillor Melvyn Caplan to the meeting. The Committee firstly put questions to and received responses from Councillor Acton on a number of matters that were relevant to the Sustainability and Parking portfolio. These included the following topics:

- Councillor Acton was asked about discussions with Transport for London ('TfL') which had followed residents' concerns about 24 hours a day use of the underground trains at Covent Garden on Friday and Saturday evenings. Residents were worried about potential problems caused by noisy people on the streets throughout the night and had queried whether its use could be avoided then due to the area being quiet late at night (in contrast to Leicester Square). The Cabinet Member replied that TfL had not agreed to either not using or closing Covent Garden station earlier but they had agreed to monitor very carefully for a period of six months what the impact was of the use of Covent Garden Station at weekends. She added that this was a matter which cut across Cabinet Member portfolios, in particular those of Councillor Aiken and Councillor Caplan. It was queried whether the Station could be managed so that users of the 'tube' could only enter it and not exit from it. This would prevent those travelling dispersing into the Covent Garden area late at night and entering the cumulative impact area. Mr Smith stated that he would seek an answer on this point from TfL at a meeting that he was due to attend later that week.
- The Sustainability and Parking Cabinet Member Update had stated that 'any suggestions from the Committee on ideas that could be implemented to improve air quality in Marylebone would be invaluable at this stage'. It was suggested to the Cabinet Member at the meeting that the taxis which were not able to park in Marylebone Station should be kept in a holding area in Rossmore Road. Potentially then a signal could be given to taxis when they were able to proceed to the Station from Rossmore Road. The point was made that currently a large number of taxis queued over the Bridge and pollution was experienced by residents of Blandford Estate. Councillor Acton responded that she would discuss this idea with TfL as the taxi ranking and some of the roads in the area were their responsibility. She informed Members that she had brought to the Licensed Taxi Drivers Association's ('LTDA') attention that taxis should not be keeping their engines idling and she had been advised that the Association would be encouraging drivers to turn off their engines whilst waiting. All new taxis would be electric vehicles ('EV') by 2018 which would limit emission levels. Councillor Acton clarified that the specific Low Emission Neighbourhood bid in Marylebone did not include

Marylebone Station but this was very much an area where improved air quality was sought. A point was also made about taxi and minicab driver behaviour causing congestion, such as u-turns in Oxford Street. Councillor Acton stated that she would take this up with Steve McNamara of the LTDA when they next met.

- Councillor Acton was asked whether the bid for the LEN in Marylebone and other measures would have an impact on the area close to it, particularly Marylebone Road. She replied that Marylebone Road was TfL's direct responsibility. However, there were measures in place to discourage polluting diesel vehicles. The Mayor was being lobbied to reduce how long into the future diesel vehicles will be permitted on the road. The Council was working on potentially reducing bus and taxi numbers in Oxford Street. In addition to taxis becoming EV in 2018, buses would do so by 2020. Freight and waste consolidation was also making a difference. It was clarified that planting and green roofs would be part of the LEN bid.
- The Cabinet Member Update referred to the next phase of the Strategic Parking Policy Review looking at an emission based charging structure for resident permits. The Cabinet Member was asked whether this could be phased in for new applications only on the grounds that some of the existing residents who are less well-off may not have been able to purchase a low emissions car. Councillor Acton replied that this would be taken into consideration as part of the review. The detail had not been finalised as yet. It was likely that those who were creating the pollution would be required to pay more. Motorists who drove electric cars would not be required to pay.
- The Cabinet Member was asked for further details on coach parking projects, particularly The Mall coach park in St James's Park. She advised that the area to the north of The Mall was being used as a coach park with the agreement of the Royal Parks. There had been some issues with the access payment but these had now been resolved and it was hoped that the The Mall coach park would be reopened for business before the summer this year. In the future she believed there was an aim to open from Easter onwards. She added that the Kingsway bays are under-utilised and their use was being encouraged, particularly with the loss of those on Victoria Embankment. Officers were working closely with the Confederation of Passenger Transport regarding vehicle idling.
- There was a current consultation on Cycle Superhighway 11 being led by TfL. Councillor Acton was asked what measures were being taken to ensure safety around the outer circle of Regent's Park following the implementation of CS11. She replied that the Council was advocating a three phased approach. Firstly that motoring speeds were reduced and were monitored in this area. If this was not effective, then look at introducing infrastructure to control the motoring speeds. Ultimately if none of these measures were successful then gate closures may need to be considered. Councillor Acton stated she believed that TfL and GLA were listening to the Council's concerns.
- Councillor Acton advised that she was unable to name the two London Boroughs who it was stated were considering partnership working with the Council's Parking Team in the Cabinet Member Update. This was

because confidential discussions were ongoing. She stated that she would examine the concern that the Council was not always contesting appeals submitted by those receiving Penalty Charge Notices. She believed that it had been a more efficient process with the change in operation.

4.3 The Committee then put questions to and received responses from Councillor Caplan on a number of matters that were relevant to the City Management and Customer Services portfolio. Members raised the following matters:

- Councillor Caplan was asked what the Council was doing in relation to the 'Clean for the Queen' campaign. He replied that the event was run by Keep Britain Tidy with the aim to clear up Britain in time for The Queen's 90th birthday in 2016. The Council was a partner organisation and had already commenced its involvement with recent local events in the borough. It was regularly responsible for clean-up operations already throughout the year, such as following the Chinese New Year celebrations.
- The Cabinet Member was asked whether the supplies such as the stockpile of salt that had been built up to mitigate the impacts of adverse weather conditions would still be usable in the future. Councillor Caplan informed Members that this would be the case for quite some time to come. He clarified that some supplies had to be used during recent weeks, particularly for early morning users of pavements and carriageways.
- In response to a question as to whether there were any further solutions regarding minimising rubbish, Councillor Caplan stated he and officers were looking at a number of ideas. The aim was to have more recycling and less rubbish. Volumes of rubbish collected were not going up. Measures were being taken to increase recycling. These included increasing the proportion of recycling bins (including transparent bins in order to try and prevent contamination) as opposed to black bins and potentially increasing recycling collections at weekends. Ward walkabouts were taking place where discussions about possible improvements were able to take place with the local councillors.
- The Cabinet Member was asked whether there needed to be a review of recycling practices as correspondence had been received from residents that they had previously placed recycled waste into bins but now these bins were often padlocked or full. If recycled waste was placed into blue bags and put by the bin, this often led to a penalty notice which was likely to result in residents dumping all waste in black bags. Councillor Caplan stated he agreed that fines were inappropriate in this particular instance and a decision had been made that they would no longer be issued in such a scenario. There would also be a pilot project to take the locks off the bins. Potentially a different approach would be taken if a blue bag was left next to an empty bin.
- Councillor Caplan was asked what was being done to prevent persistent offenders who dumped rubbish outside at inappropriate times such as weekends. He encouraged Members and residents to report such

incidents on the Council's website. The local City Inspector would then be able to respond. Penalty notices would be issued to persistent offenders.

- It was queried why when using a mobile phone and using wi-fi, the Council's website could not be accessed and it was necessary to go to I.T. to fix the problem. Councillor Caplan stated he had sympathy for this concern. He would raise this with Councillor Mitchell who as the Cabinet Member for Finance and Corporate Services had responsibility for I.T. issues.
- The list of schemes for the 2014/15, 2015/16 and 2016/17 carriageway programmes was requested. It was agreed that this information would be provided to the Committee, including the link to the website for the 2016/17 programme.
- Councillor Caplan advised in response to a question on dog fouling that there would continue to be campaigns over a period of time to educate dog owners as these had been effective.

4.4 **ACTION:** The following actions arose:

- That an answer be sought from TfL as to whether Covent Garden Station could be managed so that 'tube' passengers could only enter the station and not exit into Covent Garden late at night (**Barry Smith, Head of City Policy & Strategy**).
- That it be raised with TfL whether taxis can be kept in a holding area in Rossmore Road and then a signal be given to taxis when they were able to proceed to the Station from Rossmore Road (**Councillor Heather Acton, Cabinet Member for Sustainability and Parking**).
- That taxi and minicab driver behaviour be raised with the LTDA (**Councillor Acton**).
- That the concern that when using a mobile phone and using wi-fi, the Council's website could not be accessed and it was necessary to go to I.T. to fix the problem, be raised with Councillor Mitchell (**Councillor Melvyn Caplan, Cabinet Member for City Management and Customer Services**).
- The list of schemes for the 2014/15, 2015/16 and 2016/17 carriageway programmes be provided to the Committee (**Jonathan Deacon, Senior Committee and Governance Officer** and **Muge Dindjer, Policy and Scrutiny Manager** liaise with **Matt Greet, Senior Cabinet Officer**).

4.5 **RESOLVED:** That the contents of the Cabinet Member Updates be noted.

5 WESTMINSTER'S OPEN SPACE AND GREEN INFRASTRUCTURE STRATEGY

- 5.1 Rebecca Cloke, Manager of Public Realm Design, Growth, Housing & Planning Department, introduced the item. She stated that the Strategy was being updated, amalgamating it with the Biodiversity Action Plan and incorporating recommendations for green infrastructure. It was important that the information on open spaces was robust and up-to-date to support planning policy and decision making (the previous Open Space Strategy had been published in 2007). A study had been undertaken which included landscape

and ecology audits of all open spaces in the borough, both private and public and were in the final stages of analysing the information received. This would assist in informing the Strategy. It was anticipated that the draft Strategy would go out to public consultation in late spring / early summer in order to be adopted in autumn 2016. The Committee was being invited to comment at an early stage.

5.2 The Committee asked a number of questions to officers and Councillor Acton and raised a number of points, including the following:

- What would ensure that the document would not merely be an aspirational document? Councillor Acton and Mr Smith replied that there were statutory requirements, particularly in respect of planning. It formed a framework that planning officers would be able to take account of during the application process. A clear framework would demonstrate its robustness when bidding for external funding.
- Was there an emphasis in policy terms on planting that would encourage insects such as butterflies or small garden birds and other wildlife? Ms Cloke replied that priority habitats were reflected in the Biodiversity Action Plan. Plant choices were likely to be included in management plans.
- Was consideration being given to close certain roads at certain times in order to enable children who live in the urban environment to appreciate open spaces and the natural environment? Councillor Acton replied that this was happening in certain areas and it was proposed that this was implemented in more areas in the Walking Strategy and the LEN.
- The point was made that as part of the Royal Parks' expertise in respect of habitats, grassland was not mown in some areas of Regent's Park. It was asked whether this could be introduced in other open spaces such as the manicured squares. Ms Cloke advised that the audits of open spaces had been undertaken by a landscape architect and they were required to provide recommendations for improving biodiversity. The information received from the audits was about to be sent out to the owners of the sites with the recommendations. Councillor Acton added that CityWest Homes were very aware of the need to increase biodiversity in their green spaces and were working with the Council on this.
- Had consideration been given to turning a few more streets into linear parks as in the case of the 'Green Spine' project in Church Street, potentially removing street parking to do so? Councillor Acton stated that this was being looked at in the LEN. One of the proposals in the LEN was to create movable green space, including the temporary closure of a road. She made the point that it was not always popular for car parking space to be removed.
- How could the public be encouraged to become more involved and also what was the best way to educate the wider community? Ms Cloke referred to the importance of volunteering. The Chairman requested that volunteering, community engagement and community action was included in the Strategy. It was recommended to officers that schools were as involved as much as possible, including potentially in adopting a park in the borough. The Friends of Queens Park Gardens were put forward as an example of a group who resuscitated a green area and had a link with

a local school, Queens Park Community School. Councillor Acton informed Members that The Friends of Queens Park Gardens had attended a stakeholder event and officers would be liaising with them.

- Consideration could be given to asking owners of the private open spaces to open them up to some shared use during the day, as in the case of Lincoln's Inn Gardens. Councillor Acton responded that reference could be made to this in the Strategy. She commented that some youth activities were permitted during the summer at Vincent Square and Portman Square had opened to the public during the spring and summer months.
- The Committee recommended that there were more green roofs but that businesses should be encouraged to avoid vegetation on the roofs which could lead to a monoculture at odds with biodiversity. The Committee also considered that advice should be given to the public on what they could usefully plant, whether they owned a garden or a window box.

5.3 The Chairman asked Councillor Acton and officers whether the Committee would have sight of and be able to comment on the final draft of the Strategy before it was published for public consultation. Councillor Acton replied that it would be useful to receive comments prior to public consultation. There was also the option for a meeting at this stage.

5.4 **RESOLVED:**

1. That the Committee be consulted on the final draft of the Westminster's Open Space and Green Infrastructure Strategy prior to the public consultation taking place.
2. The Committee recommended that:

Officers give consideration to the ideas put forward by the Committee in paragraph 5.2 above, including that volunteering, community engagement and community action are part of the Strategy.

6 **BROADBAND COVERAGE**

6.1 The Chairman referred to the fact that in January 2015 the Committee had considered the position regarding fixed line broadband coverage in Westminster and the need for improvement in terms of connectivity and the increased take-up of superfast broadband. A number of actions had resulted at the Committee meeting and it had been agreed that this topic would be revisited in 2016. Members at the current meeting received a report setting out the progress made since January 2015.

6.2 The report was introduced at the meeting by Steve Carr, Deputy Director, West End Partnership and David Wilkins, Business and Enterprise Support Officer. Mr Carr stated that at the time of the previous meeting in January 2015, OFCOM data from 2014 had showed that only 47% of premises in Westminster had access to superfast broadband. OfCOM had not updated this figure but various surveys suggested that this figure had gone up. A

recent Think Broadband survey had suggested 71.1%. A report from Grant Shapps MP had ranked parliamentary constituencies for superfast broadband coverage and had put the availability for Westminster North and Cities of London and Westminster constituencies as being 79% and 78% respectively, which was at a low level nationally.

- 6.3 Mr Carr advised the Committee on the progress made since the meeting, including that officers had ran a broadband campaign in summer 2015. This had established that there was a huge appetite and demand for superfast broadband. Discussions with BT Openreach had led to an agreement that they would deploy 142 additional street cabinets in Westminster by the end of 2017. Five trial cabinets were agreed and it was believed that they had now been installed. Virgin had agreed to update their legacy analogue cabinets, bringing additional connectivity to Pimlico and areas of Paddington in the next year. Mr Carr added that he believed there was a lack of clarity from the main providers regarding when residents in specific streets would be receiving superfast broadband. A 'Wired Westminster Group' had been established, chaired by Councillor Jonathan Glanz, in order to tackle some of the challenges regarding connectivity to premises and involves property firms, advisors and broadband operators. The DCMS Broadband Connection Voucher Scheme for small and medium sized firms had been promoted. Westminster had topped the rankings for take up using the voucher scheme (Venus Communications who provide fibre to the premises had been successful in providing this service to Soho businesses) but the scheme had since been withdrawn by the Government. Officers were, as part of their recommendations in the report, proposing a London or Westminster wide voucher scheme. Mr Carr was working with the West End Partnership who had identified broadband connectivity as a major priority in their investment programme.
- 6.4 Mr Carr took Members through possible options for the future. These included provision by the Council of ducts and infrastructure, potentially running a connection voucher scheme through the West End Partnership, continuing lobbying activities particularly with national government and continue dialogue with BT Openreach and other providers. Mr Carr referred to the recent OFCOM report which had looked at whether the roles of BT and Openreach would be split. It was yet to be seen whether this would take place and if there was an impact on Westminster.
- 6.5 Mr Wilkins briefly addressed the Committee on the work to strengthen the relationship between landlords and the broadband industry through the wayleave project. Mr Wilkins stated that the two main pieces of work had been firstly promoting the Mayor's 'Wired Score' scheme, which rates buildings according to broadband connectivity and encouraging the major property owners to adopt it. This had been the case with the likes of Grosvenor Estates. It was also being explored how these could be rolled out in Council buildings. Currently the Council did not have many multi-tenanted buildings where this approach would be useful. Secondly, through the Wired Westminster group and with Central London Forward and the City of London, British Standards Institute had been appointed to draft a Standard Wayleave Agreement. This would help reduce the time and cost for small firms seeking

connections via their landlords. The work was going out to final consultation in March 2016. It was hoped this could be launched in April/May.

- 6.6 The Committee heard evidence from Councillor Glanz, Lead Member for Connectivity (in addition to being the Chairman of the 'Wired Westminster Group'); Kim Mears, Managing Director, Infrastructure Delivery, Openreach; Andrew Campling, General Manager, London, Southern and Eastern England, BT Group and Mark Spells, Programme Director for the South East at Openreach. Councillor Glanz thanked officers for all the work they had done. He made the point that there was still a huge amount of work to be done for businesses in Westminster to be able to compete with other areas of London, the United Kingdom and internationally. The Grant Shapps MP report had referred to uncompetitive levels of superfast broadband being available in the two Westminster constituencies. London's average download speed ranked 26th out of 33 other European capital cities and London ranked 38th for average speeds among the top 40 British cities. Constituents were expressing their frustration with the situation.
- 6.7 Councillor Glanz commented that BT Openreach and Virgin had stated their commitment to resolving the existing problems. However, there were 142 cabinets proposed by the end of 2017 and of the five trial cabinets that had been installed, it was not known whether these had been connected yet. It did not appear possible to give businesses and residents any realistic timescale regarding connectivity. He had not seen any borough maps with indications of when superfast broadband would be installed. The need for broadband connectivity appeared to be growing year by year with demand including entertainment packages. This pattern would be expected to continue with ultra-definition services becoming available. OFCOM had stated that fibre is the future. Japan had 70% of its properties connected via a fibre link whilst the United Kingdom had 2%. The UK was still using copper wire. The Council needed to work with the industry to fill gaps and ensure there were clear timescales as to when fibre broadband would be available to residents and businesses. Councillor Caplan, who made the point that broadband was included in his Cabinet Member portfolio and that of Councillor Astaire's, brought to Members' attention that Westminster was the home of some very small businesses and they operated right across the borough. The debate was not just about the West End. Many of the major businesses could pay for the service they required. However, there were many residents and small businesses that were not able to have the required connectivity to proceed with business or leisure activities. An operator or operators needed to provide the necessary broadband connectivity.
- 6.8 Ms Mears stated that there had been difficulties in reaching an agreement with the Council about signing off and siting street furniture just over two years ago and deployment had stopped. She welcomed the fact that there were positive discussions about introducing fibre broadband. Ms Mears gave some background to her role. Openreach is a separate entity within BT and is responsible for the access network. She is responsible for delivering the large scale infrastructure programmes, including the roll-out of fibre across the UK as well as Broadband Delivery UK ('BDUK'). BDUK was a co-funded

arrangement with the national Government and local bodies. Currently over 24 million homes had access to fibre broadband via BT Openreach.

- 6.9 Ms Mears confirmed that there had been an agreement with the Leader of the Council to deploy 142 cabinets across Westminster which would bring fibre broadband to homes by the end of 2017. 37 street cabinets had been surveyed and 15 had been stood. The programme was under way. There was one cabinet which was fully functional. By the end of March 2016, 12 cabinets would be released for service to 3500 homes. By the end of October 2016, there would be another 13000 homes benefiting. She commented that there were issues with putting street furniture under the ground in Westminster, including congestion but BT Openreach would be working with officers to resolve any problems. There was a good working relationship with highways officers.
- 6.10 Ms Mears advised that it was possible for customers to access detailed BDUK maps with the future locations of fibre broadband connectivity from the Openreach website if they entered their telephone number. There was also an option for the Council to proceed with an Open Market Review. With the OMR, it would be possible to see where suppliers were declaring they had network and where customers were being served across the borough. She stated that OFCOM had referred to BT having installed ultra-fast broadband (fibre to the premises) in 2% of homes in contrast to 70% via fibre to cabinet. However, fibre to the premises was only one way of introducing ultra-fast technology. Openreach had committed to deliver ultra-fast technology to 10 million homes by 2020 via G.fast. There would also be pilots to establish how fibre to the premises could be delivered in a more cost effective way. She added that the 142 cabinets in Westminster by the end of 2017 was only a chapter in the story and discussions needed to take place as to how matters would be taken forward after that.
- 6.11 The following points were made as a result of questions from the Committee:
- Mr Carr stated that the Council had worked with a number of providers, including Community Fibre and Venus as well as BT Openreach.
 - Ms Mears advised that if there were problems with siting street cabinets, she would be liaising with Council officers on creating alternatives, including potentially requesting access to basements (this had been the case in City of London). The 142 cabinets being provided for the roll-out was the number which was commercially viable for BT Openreach. 37 cabinets had been surveyed and until the full 142 had been surveyed it was not known what the exact position would be. If BT Openreach and the Council worked together, solutions would be found. She would continue to look for solutions that would ensure the deployment was cheaper and faster. BT Openreach was working with the Council and with City of London on the wayleave agreements.
 - In response to concerns about timescales and a perception that there was a lack of urgency, Ms Mears stated that she was willing to provide milestones to the cabinets being installed by the end of 2017. 106,000 homes would benefit from fibre to cabinet broadband by this date. This would be a complex engineering programme. She informed Members that

she was also looking at the potential of Passive Optical Networks. Councillor Caplan made the point that officers would work together to find locations with BT Openreach. There would be more confidence in the BT Openreach programme in Westminster once it was established where the cabinets would be, when they would be installed and what areas would be receiving fibre to cabinet broadband coverage. There was currently a lack of detail as to what was envisaged. Ms Mears and Mr Campling responded that permits had been given by the Council to BT Openreach for cabinets and they knew where they wanted to put them. Once they became confident in the deployment process they would publish this information, including on the Openreach website. They would be willing to share information confidentially with officers.

- Mr Campling commented that it was not the case that the UK was behind other countries in installing broadband. He stated that the deployment in the UK was the fastest in the world and a number of countries were copying UK's technological approach. Pricing in the UK was cheaper than other countries. The UK public often did not like to pay more for services, retained slower broadband and did not upgrade. In broadband speed comparisons with other cities, they were not looking at the capability of the other line network but the average speed of the technology customers were choosing to use. In some other countries faster broadband was a default service. The average speeds quoted in the UK were purely for broadband whereas in other countries they were a combination of broadband and business grade services. Westminster businesses did have access to excellent business grade services. He added that he believed that the Grant Shapps MP data was at least two years out of date in terms of Westminster (he could provide more current data) and that a PWC survey had found in a study of 30 global cities, London had been second to Seoul in broadband quality. He believed that in comparison with New York State in terms of broadband availability, London fared well. The target was 95% in most counties of the UK by 2017.
- Ms Mears gave Members information on Community Fibre Partnerships. This was where Openreach works with a local group or community that are not covered in an existing fibre upgrade plan to find a solution to bring fibre to their area. This was co-funded by Openreach.
- Ms Mears confirmed she was more than happy to attend future meetings of the Committee and provide regular updates on progress regarding broadband connectivity. Mr Campling gave an invitation to Members to visit BT Openreach offices in Judd Street to see the technology being used first hand, including the cabinets. The Committee thanked the BT Openreach representatives for this invitation.

6.12 The Committee welcomed the much improved joint working relationship with BT Openreach. The Chairman stated that it had been useful to receive clarity on the timelines to the 142 cabinets being deployed in 2017 and that regular updates would be received from BT Openreach. Officers and Members were encouraged not only to focus on the 2017 target but what could potentially be achieved after this date. The Chairman requested that officers investigate the potential opportunities provided by an Open Market Review as referred to by Ms Mears.

6.13 Councillor Glanz provided the Committee with some closing thoughts on broadband connectivity. He referred to the fact that of the 142 cabinets, 37 had been surveyed, 15 stood and 12 deployed by the end of March. He asked what would be the position with the overall figure of 142 cabinets if BT Openreach then found that cabinets at certain locations were not viable. He also asked what is defined as a community in respect of Community Fibre Partnerships and how groups could get involved. Could businesses in an area rather than in a single building have access to the grants? Could the grants be used to update the cabinet? He stated that his experience was that broadband technology for residents was not suitable for businesses and he was therefore interested in the hybrid concept that BT Openreach had appeared to hint at during the meeting. The fibre infrastructure was often there under the streets and a way needed to be found for local people to be able to access it. Councillor Glanz emphasised that the Wired Westminster Group had talked to other providers other than BT Openreach and about other supply mechanisms such as superfast and ultrafast broadband, satellite and point to point link and 4G connectivity. He added that no one supplier was favoured in finding solutions to the broadband coverage issues. BT Openreach representatives at the meeting stated they would provide answers to Councillor Glanz's questions in his closing statement.

6.14 **ACTION:** The following action arose:

- That the BT Openreach representatives in attendance at the meeting respond to the questions raised by Councillor Glanz in paragraph 6.13 above. This information to be provided to the Committee.

6.15 **RESOLVED:**

1. The Committee recommended that:

- 1) Officers investigate the potential opportunities provided by an Open Market Review.

2. The Committee noted BT Openreach's commitment to:

- 1) Attend future meetings of the Committee.
- 2) Provide regular updates on progress regarding broadband connectivity and share with the Council the milestones in reaching the target to deploy 142 street cabinets by the end of 2017.
- 3) The Committee supports that continued discussions take place with various suppliers in order to provide superfast broadband to as many residents and businesses in the borough as possible and that no one supplier is favoured in order to achieve this.

7 **PRESS RELEASES**

- 7.1 The Chairman stated that he was minded to publish a press release in respect of the Broadband Coverage item. It was intended that he would consult Ms Dindjer, Policy and Scrutiny Manager and the relevant press officer and it would be circulated to Members of the Committee.

8 ANNUAL WORK PROGRAMME

- 8.1 The Committee noted that the three items listed on the Annual Work Programme for the 18 April 2016 meeting were neighbourhood planning, air quality and the waste disposal contract re-let. Ms Dindjer made the point that following discussions with Mr Smith it was clear that the air quality report would take the form of a status update. The Committee decided that the status update would be provided at the April meeting due to the high profile nature of this topic and requested that Mr Smith set out a timetable then for when the Committee would examine some broader issues in this area. The neighbourhood planning and waste disposal contract re-let items would be retained on the agenda for 18 April.

- 8.2 Ms Dindjer asked Members of the Committee whether they wished to take forward a joint task group on air quality later in the year with the Adults, Health and Public Protection Policy and Scrutiny Committee. The Committee supported this idea as Members considered that the environmental and health impact of poor air quality is a particularly concerning issue.

- 8.3 A draft 2016/17 Work Programme was considered. It was agreed that the document would take into account the Committee's pledge at the 18 January 2016 meeting that the Nine Elms Bridge would be a topic to be scrutinised by Members should there be any significant news in relation to this matter. It was agreed that an updated Work Programme document for 2016/17 would be circulated to the Committee following consultation with the Chairman. Members were invited to propose items to be scrutinised for the scheduled six meetings from 8 June 2016 to 15 March 2017.

8.4 RESOLVED:

1. That the neighbourhood planning, air quality and waste disposal contract re-let items included in the 2015/16 Work Programme be considered at the 18 April meeting.
2. That the Committee support a joint task group on air quality taking place later in the year with the Adults, Health and Public Protection Policy and Scrutiny Committee.
3. That an updated Work Programme document for 2016/17 be circulated to the Committee following consultation with the Chairman. Members of the Committee are invited to propose items for the Work Programme.

9 ANY OTHER BUSINESS THE CHAIRMAN CONSIDERS URGENT

- 9.1 There was no additional business for the Committee to consider.

10 FUTURE COMMITTEE MEETING DATES

10.1 The Committee noted that the future meeting dates of the Committee are 18 April 2016, 8 June 2016, 14 September 2016, 16 November 2016, 30 January 2017 and 15 March 2017.

The Meeting ended at 9.53 pm

CHAIRMAN: _____ **DATE** _____