



# MINUTES

CITY OF WESTMINSTER

## Finance, Smart City and City Management Policy and Scrutiny Committee

### MINUTES OF PROCEEDINGS

Minutes of a hybrid meeting of the **Finance, Smart City and City Management Policy and Scrutiny Committee** held at 6.30pm on Tuesday 19<sup>th</sup> October 2021.

**Councillors Present:** Councillors Gotz Mohindra (Chairman), Ian Adams, Lorraine Dean, Paul Dimoldenberg, Adam Hug, Pancho Lewis, Eoghain Murphy and Emily Payne.

**Also Present:** Councillor James Spencer (Cabinet Member), Councillor Paul Swaddle (Cabinet Member), Lewis Aaltonen (Policy and Scrutiny Co-Ordinator), Raj Mistry (Executive Director for Environment and City Management), Philip Robson (Head of Operations, City Highways), Gerald Almeroth (Executive Director for Finance and Resources), Ed Humphreys (Head of Commercial), Nicole Repetto (Head of Procurement), Natalie Evans (Responsible Procurement Manager), Hannah Small (Policy and Scrutiny Co-Ordinator) and Veronica Christopher (Portfolio Advisor).

### AGENDA PART 1

#### 1. MEMBERSHIP

1.1. Councillor Susie Burbridge replaced Councillor Eoghain Murphy for this meeting.

#### 2. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

2.1. There were no Declarations of Interest.

#### 3. MINUTES

3.1. **RESOLVED:** That the minutes of the meeting on 30<sup>th</sup> June 2021 were approved as a correct record of proceedings.

#### **4. CABINET MEMBER UPDATE: CITY MANAGEMENT**

4.1. The Committee received a written update from the Cabinet Member for City Management, who responded to questions on the report and his wider portfolio. Questions and discussion themes included:

- The Veolia contract, including the number of BIDs received and whether the Council had considered jointly procuring Veolia with neighbouring local authorities. The Committee discussed that the contract will be up for full renegotiation in 2024.
- The Committee discussed what were the problem areas in the Veolia contract that needed addressing. The Cabinet Member informed the Committee that the Council needed access to more deep clean machines.
- Whether the Council needed to increase its enforcement action to tackle rubbish dumping hotspots. The Committee were informed that work was underway with the Cabinet Member for Communities and Regeneration to increase enforcement.
- The number of EV charging points across the city and their accessibility, technology and location. Officers informed the Committee that the technology is changing on average every few months, so the Council also needs to ensure that they keep pace with these changes.
- The Committee praised the number of drop curves in Soho for wheelchair users and asked if more could be installed. Officers informed the Committee that work is underway with TFL and charitable partners to make the city more accessible.
- The number and location of cycle hangers across the city. The Committee were informed that the Council is currently engaging with residents on where more cycle hangers should be located.
- Street cleaning and public urination in Al-Fresco scheme areas. Officers informed the Committee that installing temporary public conveniences was demand lead and that other actions are being taken, such as directing the public to other public conveniences.
- Where the Council sends its food waste and whether this was eco-friendly. Westminster's food waste is processed in Hertfordshire and turned into fertiliser.

##### **Actions**

1. For Officers to keep Councillor Lorraine Dean up to date with making the City more accessible to disabled residents and visitors.

#### **5. CABINET MEMBER UPDATE: FINANCE AND SMART CITY**

5.1. The Committee received a written update from the Cabinet Member for Finance and Smart City, who responded to questions on the report and his wider portfolio. Questions and discussion themes included:

- The roll-out of full fibre broadband in social housing and whether this can be rolled out to special schools across the City. The Committee went on to discuss digital exclusion and the reasons why some residents experience digital exclusion.

- Privacy and data protection concerns of the Council. The Committee discussed the threat of terrorism and they were informed that the Council are currently working with security services to ensure their data is safely secured.
- The disaggregation of Bi-Borough IT shared services and the financial advantages this will bring to Westminster City Council.
- The budget forecast and the impact of inflation and COVID-19 grants. Officers informed the Committee that it was challenging to forecast future budgets as they are unsure if the Council will receive further central Government COVID-19 grants and what the local government funding settlement will be over the next three years. Officers reflected that they also need to analyse the post September 2021 figures in order to assess the impact of workers returning to the City.
- The success of the Inside Out festival and the COVID-19 safety measures in place. The Cabinet Member informed the Committee that the Council follows Government guidance and legislation on COVID-19 safety measures.

## **6. PROCUREMENT STRATEGY REPORT**

6.1. The Committee received a report from Ed Humphreys and Nicole Repetto, Interim Director of Commercial Partnerships (Job share) on the Council's procurement strategy. Questions and discussion themes included:

- The Committee reflected that the Council spends over £500 million on third party services and discussed what quality and quantitative objectives the procurement strategy is evaluated by.
- How the procurement team reviews contracts and learns lessons from them. Officers informed the Committee that they have developed a new survey system that goes out to clients and that 'lessons learnt' reviews were undertaken on large contracts.
- The Committee discussed diversity and inclusion and how the Council can ensure clients they work embody this. Veolia was used as an example; they had offered up to 10 places to people with SEND yet only 2 places had been allocated.
- The experiences of small businesses when tendering for Council contracts. Members reflected that the process was bureaucratic and often provided little feedback for applicants. Officers informed the Committee that they are looking to have more links with smaller suppliers and that tendering opportunities would be shared with a wider audience in order to attract more SME applicants.
- Members discussed [The Preston Model](#) and ensuring that Westminster City Council adopted a similar ethos, of procuring services locally that employ residents and contribute to the local economy where possible.
- Competitive tendering and the decline in companies putting themselves forward for contracts. Officers told the Committee that due to the COVID-19 pandemic, it was important to ensure service continuity in some areas, however more contracts would be coming out to tender over the next year.

### **Actions**

1. For the Committee to receive an annual report on procurement that includes a summary of the top ten procurement contracts at the Council, a summary of lessons learnt reports on procurement contracts and benchmarking data against other local authority contracts to ensure value for money

## **7. WORK PROGRAMME**

- 7.1. The Committee reviewed and noted potential items to be prioritised for the work programme over the remainder of the municipal year.
- 7.2. The Committee discussed moving the allocated agenda item for the November Policy and Scrutiny Committee to the next session. The Policy and Scrutiny Co-ordinator agreed to canvas for other agenda items ahead of the November Committee meeting.

## **8. TERMINATION OF MEETING**

- 9.1 The meeting ended at 8.45pm.

CHAIRMAN \_\_\_\_\_ DATE \_\_\_\_\_