



CITY OF WESTMINSTER

MINUTES

**Business and Children's
POLICY and SCRUTINY COMMITTEE
29 November 2021**

MINUTES OF PROCEEDINGS

Minutes of the meeting of the **Business and Children's Policy and Scrutiny Committee** held virtually on **29th November 2021** at **6.30pm**.

Hybrid meeting via Microsoft Teams and Rooms 18.01-03, 18th floor, 64 Victoria Street, London, SW1E 6QP.

Members Present: Councillors Karen Scarborough (Chairman), Pancho Lewis, Christabel Flight, Paul Dimoldenberg, Mark Shearer, Eoghain Murphy and Aicha Less

Co-Opted Members Present: Marina Coleman, Wasim Butt,

Also present: Councillor Timothy Barnes (Cabinet Member for Young People and Learning), Councillor Matthew Green (Cabinet Member for Business, Licensing and Planning), Sarah Newman (Executive Bi-Borough Director for Children's Services), Debbie Jackson (Executive Director of Growth, Planning and Housing), Gerald Almeroth (Executive Director of Finance and Resources) Raj Mistry (Executive Director of Environment and City Management, Ruchi Chakravarty (Head of Place Shaping) and Veronica Pinto (Place Shaping Lead), Artemis Kassi (Lead Scrutiny Advisor), and Lewis Aaltonen (Policy and Scrutiny Co-Ordinator).

1. MEMBERSHIP

- 1.1 Councillor Pancho Lewis and Councillor Paul Dimoldenberg.
- 1.2 Councillor Geoff Barraclough was unable to attend and sent apologies. Councillor Tim Rocca was unable to attend and sent apologies. Alix Ascough (Co-opted Representative) was unable to attend and sent apologies. Mark Hewitt (St James and St John CE Primary School) was unable to attend and sent apologies.

2. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

2.1 There were no declarations of interest.

3. MINUTES

3.1 The Committee approved the minutes from the previous meeting held on 27th October 2021.

3.2 There were no reports of any urgent safeguarding issues.

4. UPDATE FROM THE CABINET MEMBER FOR YOUNG PEOPLE AND LEARNING

4.1 The Committee received a written update from the Cabinet Member for Young People and Learning who responded to questions on the following topics:

- The closure of the Sir Simon Milton Westminster – UTC. Members queried how it had been able to reach its current status in just five years given the cost to develop the site. Members also sought clarification with regards to the Council's level of oversight and involvement. Members suggested the site be used as a 19+ trade skills educational establishment. The Committee queried if any lessons learned activities had been carried out to ensure the same mistakes were not made by future providers.
- Members sought an update on the Rainbow Family Centre and how the Council ensured that those children's educational needs were being prioritised. Members also queried the outcomes of the CAMHS work and timeline for completion.
- Members raised questions regarding Covid-19 and the Omicron variant, seeking answers on how the council would be ensuring that enough tests were available for children and staff for testing in schools. The Committee also queried the Council's position on wearing face masks in classrooms.
- Members asked about the Council's plans for the Holiday Activity and Food Fund (HAF) for 2022.
- The Committee queried the developments in tackling the Primary school capacity issues.
- The Committee sought clarification on the SEND provision for children with Autism and whether it included both secondary and primary education.
- The Committee also sought the Cabinet Members' thoughts on allowing young people to develop their own submissions rather than responding to a consultation exercise.

5. UPDATE FROM THE CABINET MEMBER FOR BUSINESS, LICENSING AND PLANNING

5.1 The Committee received a written update from the Cabinet Member for Business, Licensing and Planning who responded to questions on the following topics:

- The Committee sought an update from the Cabinet Member on Business Rates and the recovery of the West End, including any stats for Oxford Street footfall.
- Members sought an update on the Holocaust Memorial and the decision from the courts. Members also raised concerns regarding the Gambling Licence policy with respect of the Hippodrome and whether it would set a precedent.
- Members discussed Open Spaces, Greener Places, and queried if Barkour Park in the Paddington Rec was a dog park. Members also welcomed the new funding for the Adventure Playground in St John's Wood. Members queried whether the funding for Lisson Green Estate included a provision for lighting.
- Members discussed Westminster Wheels, welcoming its achievement and suggested that the remit be expanded to teach young people how to drive to further employment opportunities. Members also suggested a similar scheme for Technology, tech equipment and electrical goods.
- Members raised a query regarding Place Shaping, specifically the vision for the flyover on Edgware Road.

6. OXFORD STREET DISTRICT PROGRAMME REPORT

6.1 The Committee received a written report and presentation on the Council's progress regarding the temporary Oxford Street public realm works. The report provided an update on the review of the OSD programme to date and the proposed way forward for projects. Discussions on the report and questions from Members included:

- The Committee queried the finances and costs that had been spent on the Oxford Street District programme to date, including how much of the £150 million earmarked for the programme had been spent.
- Members welcomed the Soho Photography Quarter, however, queried why it was over budget. Members also sought clarification on how much of the programme was under the Council's control and what proportion was controlled by the private sector. Members were also keen to understand how these relationships worked and the balance between the partnerships.
- Members sought confirmation of the programme's ability to deliver the planned projects. Members also sought clarification on whether the Marble Arch area of Oxford Street would become part of the wider programme.

- Members queried employment stats across the programme. Members also suggested crèche facilities for certain demographics, to improve employment and retention rates.
- Members queried how the recommendations that were made at the previous meeting would be incorporated into the programme going forward. Members also queried the Council's plans and steps for filling empty shops.
- Members praised the work on Bond Street and suggested a 'hop on and off' electrical bus for the Oxford Steet District.
- Members discussed congestion charge proposals for Sunday shopping and lobbying the Mayor to amend hours. Members discussed the project management leadership skills for delivering a successful programme.
- Members sought clarification with regards to the Piazzas and whether they were included in the Oxford Street District Programme.
- Members queried how adequate public convenience facilities would feature in the plans for the Oxford Street District Programme.
- Members recommended that the programme should recognise that being upfront and communicating challenges was vital for engagement with all stakeholders.

6.2 ACTIONS

The Committee requested:

- The recommendations that were made at the previous meeting regarding the Marble Arch Mound would be incorporated in the programme going forward.
- Review public conveniences or sign posting exercise.

7. CYPMH SCRUTINY TASK GROUP

7.1 The Committee received an interim report and recommendations on improving the emotional well-being and mental health of children and young people in Westminster. The Chairman introduced the report and the task group members. Councillors Tim Roca, Aicha Less and Christabel Flight provided comments. The Cabinet Member for Children and Young People, and Sarah Newman, commented on the report. Discussions on the report and questions from Members included:

- Members queried moving away from the words "mental health" as they felt it could be stigmatising. Members also felt that CAMHS could also benefit from a name change.
- Members discussed the link between children's mental health and being outdoors, physical activities and play.
- Members discussed the 'Shout 45258' mobile phone apps from the Royal Foundation. The App is 24/7 and allows young people to access and SMS messages to support their mental health needs.
- Members thanked Artemis Kassi and the Task Group members for their hard work.

7.2 ACTIONS

- The Committee requested that a communications plan be produced to ensure the work, messages and recommendations of the Task Group were effectively communicated.

8. COMMITTEE WORK PROGRAMME

- 8.1 The Committee discussed its work programme for the remainder of the municipal year. It was agreed that the main agenda item for the next Policy and Scrutiny meeting on the 2nd February 2022 would be the final report for the Children and Young People Mental Health in Westminster Task Group report.
- 8.2 The Committee agreed that the other substantive items would be the school performance strategy and school uniform costs.

9. TERMINATION OF MEETING

- 9.1 The meeting ended at 9.24pm.

CHAIRMAN _____

DATE _____