



CITY OF WESTMINSTER

MINUTES

**Communities, City Management and Air Quality Policy & Scrutiny Committee
13 SEPTEMBER 2022**

MINUTES OF PROCEEDINGS

Minutes of a meeting of the **Communities, City Management and Air Quality Policy and Scrutiny Committee** held at **6:30pm** on **Tuesday 13th September** at Westminster City Hall, Room 18.01 - 03, 18th Floor, 64 Victoria Street, London, SW1E 6QP.

Members Present: Councillor Jason Williams (Chair), Councillor Melvyn Caplan, Councillor Laila Dupuy, Councillor Iman Less, Councillor Mark Shearer, Councillor Maggie Carman, Councillor Judith Southern

Also present: Councillor Aicha Less (Deputy Leader and Cabinet Member for Communities and Public Protection), Councillor Paul Dimoldenberg (Cabinet Member for City Management and Air Quality).

Apologies for Absence:

Cllr James Small-Edwards

1. MEMBERSHIP

1.1 Cllr Maggie Carman substituted for Cllr Small-Edwards

2. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

2.1 There were no declarations of interest.

3. MINUTES

3.1 The Minutes from 23rd June 2022 were agreed with no amendments.

4. Portfolio Update – Cabinet Member for Communities and Public Protection

4.1 The Cabinet Member provided a written update of work within her portfolio including its service areas, priorities for the year ahead and key service updates/issues. This was taken as read and the Cabinet Member opened the floor for questions. She then responded to questions on the following topics:

- Cllr Shearer asked about plans for busking particularly in Covent Garden. In response Cllr Less told the committee that engagement with local residents is upcoming as part of a consultation to form a strategy to find a solution.
- Cllr Dupuy asked about details of the ASB strategy. In response Cllr Aicha Less noted that it was in draft stage but is sitting with the PPL - community safety team awaiting informal partner engagement and will be ready for Members after this has done. Perhaps in the next four weeks. Rough sleeping will be a part of this.
- Cllr Caplan asked about graffiti and 'NOS Bullets' and what the plans are to tackle these issues. Cllr Aicha Less described the response is to engage with community groups, educate people of the dangers, secondary school engagement visits with the police and the work of the council's integrated gangs unit. Graffiti should be reported via the council website and is dealt with subsequently.
- Following ASB associated with the recent Notting Hill Carnival Cllr Carman and Cllr Iman Less asked questions about the feedback follow up event and 'NOS balloon' licensing respectively. In response Cllr Aicha Less noted comments and explained the difficulty given large volumes are bought online.

4.2 **ACTIONS:**

1. Update to be provided on a timeline for busking events and information on non-compliance and enforcement.
2. Data on Westminster Connects traffic to be distributed to members (Cllr Less)
3. Committee members to send any 'warm spaces' that might be available within respective Cllr's wards.

5. **Portfolio Update – Cabinet Member for City Management and Air Quality**

- 5.1 The Cabinet Member provided a written overview of his portfolio including its service areas, priorities for the year ahead and key service updates/issues. The Cabinet Member highlighted cycling as a particular priority and mentioned progress had been made. He then responded to questions on the following topics:
 - Cllr Williams started by asking that, given the transient population, would educational efforts to reduce fly-tipping be a viable long-term strategy. Cllr Dimoldenberg said that efforts will be site-by-site area specific and solutions/strategies will be devised accordingly.

- Cllr Iman Less asked on the rollout of food wastage bins particularly in mansion blocks who are not enthusiastic about the scheme. Cllr Dimoldenberg highlighted education and those who are enthusiastic spreading the word are key to greater adaption. It cannot be imposed, but there are ways to encourage take-up. Cllr Southern asked how one would obtain a food waste bin, Cllr Dimoldenberg explained that residents are informed and reached out to directly, they do not need to seek it out themselves.
- Cllr Iman Less then asked how the £700,000 that is available to schools for air quality improvement schemes. In response Cllr Dimoldenberg told the committee that schools make applications, there are few limits on what these applications can be. He also revealed that they are trying to provide advice to schools to make this process simpler.
- Cllr Carman asked on public conveniences about how the staffing and security is going to work. In response Cllr Dimoldenberg told the committee that attendants will be in place, on review. Some full time during open hours, others will be staffed intermittently. In follow up, Cllr Dupuy asked how the council was going to ensure the safety of staff working in public conveniences. Officers informed the committee that they are externally hired and their employee should take reasonable steps to ensure safety as well as CCTV being around the sites and designs that can discourage anti-social behaviour.
- Cllr Caplan asked for additional information on cycle routes 40, 43 and 51. He then referenced that TfL have a 'tendency' in the past to fund in year one, schemes that extend over multiple years, with no future funding guaranteed. He asked what the approach of the council will be in future to this issue. In response Cllr Dimoldenberg introduced Phil Robson – Head of Operations who told the committee that there are a couple of ways to protect from this, including drawing on other reserves and accepting funding at different stages of developments.
- Cllr Caplan asked about the problem of dockless-bikes being left out on the streets. He asked whether bike companies had to pay to get back the bikes that the council has had to move and whether the council is considering rolling out 'dockless parking bays'. In reply Cllr Dimoldenberg told the committee that at this time the council does not charge dockless bike companies the costs associated with removal, but that it is can be factored in for future discussions who the council shares a good relationship with. Parking bays for dockless bikes are being considered. Cllr Shearer suggested that some users could be banned after a number of instances. In response Cllr Dimoldenberg told the committee that they do already have this in place and that a number of users were permanently banned recently. This is something we work with them on.
- Cllr Caplan asked how much money was being spent on public conveniences and how it is being funded – he had not seen any Cabinet Member reports on this, so asked who approved the spend. In response Cllr Dimoldenberg told the committee that it had come out of current existing budget. Then there is an additional £4 million capital budget for the 8/9 west end conveniences. Cllr

Caplan requested additional information be provided on revenue costs after the meeting.

- Cllr Caplan asked on SMS parking, how the decision was made and how much money it was forecast to raise and whether this was greater than the amounts previously collected.
- Cllr Dupuy asked about the '100 hotspots' for waste/fly-tipping. She asked what strategies and actions will be taken now that the hotspots have been identified. In response Cllr Dimoldenberg, informed the committee that the list was not necessarily final and members are welcome to identify more. Inspectors are aware of these sites and public realm improvements can be considered.
- Cllr Shearer asked why some EV charging points had been placed in front of listed assets in Westminster, some metres from where they necessarily could be. In response Phil Robson said he would take a look at the specific locations referenced but that they are only installed when they have been requested in that particular area.
- Cllr Shearer asked for the Cabinet Member's view on the 'Park Lane Cycle Lane'. Cllr Dimoldenberg said that this is joint work with TfL. Personally, as a regular bus user, he had not noticed significant delays or tailbacks to his journey times. In response Cllr Shearer identified that it was a particular problem for car users. To which, Cllr Dimoldenberg said that he would be guided by the statistics that come out of the consultation before making a decision.
- Cllr Shearer then asked whether the scheme to convert Bin Lorries to EV vehicles was still going ahead. To which the cabinet member and officers confirmed it was, with a hope for roll-out in the new year but a precise launch time cannot be confirmed yet.

5.2 **ACTIONS:**

1. Responses to be given to Cllr Caplan's unanswered questions on the cycle routes, TfL, public conveniences, SMS parking and projected revenue gains from SMS Parking.

6. **Waste Management**

- 6.1 Nicky Crouch, Director of PPL introduced the paper and the reasoning behind the approach as set out in the report. Following this the floor was opened to questions from the committee.

- Cllr Williams asked about signage around bins to discourage fly-tipping. In response Nicky Crouch said that designs were being drawn up with the aim to roll-these out on the 26th September or perhaps the week after including the particular area mentioned. Signage would feature things that aren't acceptable.
- Cllr Iman Less and Cllr Carmen asked about community 'bulky waste' collections, given the current cost of requesting bulky waste collection (£32 for up to six items). In response Nicky Crouch told the committee that the cost of request is free for certain residents on housing benefits for example. Cllr Dimoldenberg mentioned that a community skip is being considered, as in Wandsworth, but there are associated risks with cross-contamination of waste (asbestos, gas canisters and hazardous waste) as well as the cost. Cllr Caplan suggested making use of the Warwick Avenue skip in the recycling centre that used to run. Cllr Dimoldenberg said it would be looked into.
- Cllr Caplan suggested a change in rota hours for city inspectors to prevent the current situation were some people/businesses are taking advantage of knowing when city inspectors won't be there – evenings and Sundays. Cllr Dimoldenberg noted that he had not been aware of that, but something that he would like to look into. Officers told the committee that it was being reviewed but understandably there is a finite amount of staffing resource.

6.2 ACTIONS:

1. Officers to consider staff resourcing and a variation to rota hours of City Inspectors in order to prevent offending which may be happening outside of traditional working hours - evenings/Sundays etc.
2. Officers to consider making use of the Warwick Avenue skip that previously operated out of the Warwick Avenue recycling centre.

7. WORK PROGRAMME

7.1 The Chair welcomed comments on the work programme:

- Cllr Iman Less asked if Air Quality as an agenda item could be swapped with Flooding. So that Flooding was brought as a substantive item sooner. Due to the impending Thames Water Report and the S19 Report which is due for Cabinet Member approval soon there is substantive works that it would be beneficial to have completed before Flooding is brought to the committee.
- Cllr Caplan asked if some items could be combined for example Policing and ASB. The Chair said that he was willing to consider this if officers felt they were able to report on both in time for the next meeting.

Actions:

1. Within the Cabinet Member update to include an update on flooding and the associated timelines that are likely for the papers mentioned.
2. A clear timeline of when flooding papers can be ready, to be provided to the Committee.

9. TERMINATION OF MEETING

9 .1 The meeting ended at 8.26pm.

CHAIR _____

DATE _____