



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 **Monday 6th March, 2023**, Rooms 18.01 & 18.03, 18th Floor, 64 Victoria Street, London, SW1E 6QP.

**Members Present:** Councillors Jason Williams (Chair), Melvyn Caplan, Laila Cunningham, Iman Less, 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: Nicky Crouch (Director of Public Protection and Licensing), Francis Dwan (Policy and Scrutiny Advisor), Amy Jones (Director of Environment), Tiffany Lymn (Head of Residential and Community Safety), Phil Robson (Head of Operations) and Serena Simon (Director of Communities).

### 1 MEMBERSHIP

1.1 There were no changes to the Membership.

### 2 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

2.1 During the meeting, once Thames Water had been brought up, Councillor Shearer declared that the Thames Water Foundation has provided funding to a children's environmental campaign that he runs and as a result he would recuse himself from discussions regarding them.

2.2 There were no other declarations of interest.

### 3 MINUTES

3.1 The Committee approved the minutes of its meeting held 12<sup>th</sup> December 2022.

3.2 RESOLVED

That the minutes of the meeting held on 12<sup>th</sup> December 2022 be signed by the Chair 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 then responded to questions on the following topics:

- Pedicabs: The Council's work on managing and licensing them and the latest on central Government legislative change.
- Maida Hill Markets: information on the strategic leadership group and the level of councillor engagement sought to date.
- Safe-haven scheme: Members asked for more detail on the scheme and how to get involved.
- External approach to equalities: understanding the staffing targets and importance of representation amongst all levels of the organisation, particularly in the leadership of the Council.
- Street Entertainment Policy: understanding planned councillor involvement.
- Community Alliance: questioning the purpose and impact this is hoped to have. A further explanation was requested as an action.
- Community Investment Strategy: detail on how the strategy will be measured in terms of Key Performance Indicators, this was marked as an action.
- CCTV and working with the Police: information on the plans and basis for CCTV and management of 'hotspots' identified by the police. Within this question Members raised the importance of appropriate communication between the Police, the Council and Members.
- Restructuring of Public Protection and Licensing (PPL): Members asked what was happening and how a planned restructure can have "no financial implications" as published. In follow-up, Members asked on what this restructure might mean for City Inspectors, the hours they can work and their shift patterns.

## 4.2 Actions

1. On the Maida Hill Market/strategic leadership group, Councillor Less to confirm the degree to which Members can be involved, particularly Maida Vale Councillors, and how this can be done.
2. On Busking and Street Entertainment 'targeted engagement exercise', Councillor Less to provide an explanation as to why Councillors were not informed and to comment on whether there would be a commitment to inform of changes and consultation going forward.
3. On Community Investment Strategy, Members requested a breakdown of how it will be measured as a success in terms of KPIs.
4. On the Community Alliance, Members requested a greater in-depth explanation of exactly what it is and the purpose it is set to serve.

## 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 updated the Committee of his meeting with Thames, questioning some of the claims about the number of residents Thames Water stated it had reached out to. The Cabinet Member also committed to providing Members of the Committee with the slides Thames Water had shared, which was marked as an action. The Cabinet Member then responded to questions on the following topics:
- Bulk Waste Collection: detail on the level of bulk waste collected and more information on how the service is advertised to residents.
  - Thames Water: a reaction to Thames Water's approach to protecting residents and their efforts with regards to a 'resident forum'.
  - Highway Inspector intervention levels: whether the threshold had changed and if inspectors had more discretion than previously.
  - Geo-fencing of dockless bikes: understanding why some providers do and others do not and whether the Council could weigh in on the matter.
  - Park Lane Cycle Route: the Cabinet Member was invited to spend an afternoon/evening around the park lane cycle route to experience the issues faced by motorists.

- Waste Action Squad: feedback from engagement and timeline for the action plan.
- School Streets: understanding the low level of 'Penalty Charge Notices' issued.
- Dumping hotspots CCTV trial: the degree to which cameras were having an effect, how locations were identified for the trial scheme and whether this method would be applied to other anti-social behaviour cameras may help prevent.
- Snow and ice removals: the Council's preparedness in the event of extreme weather.
- Dockless/E-Bikes: the basis for determining whether they are dangerous and whether they need to be removed by the Council. In follow-up Members asked how the Council can make it easier to report those in breach.
- E-scooters and dockless scooters: understanding their provision and council powers to deal with them.
- Provision of restrooms in premises: understanding why some premises are allowed to exist without the need for any conveniences, neither for staff nor customers.

## 5.2 Actions

1. The Cabinet Member offered to provide the slides Thames Water presented to him to all Members of the Committee.
2. Bulk waste collection: Members requested statistics on how bulk waste collection was going and more information on how the programme is being advertised to residents.
3. Waste Action Squad: Ward Councillors are to receive intelligence relating to their ward as well as a detailed action plan once ready.
4. School Streets: Members asked for direct Councillor engagement prior to future roll-out or changes to the programme.
5. Dockless Bikes: Members provided feedback on the user experience of some bike providers who are able to 'geo-fence' where the bikes can be stopped. Members suggested that companies not doing this, can easily incorporate this. It was suggested that officers look into this when negotiating going forward.

## **6 FOOD SAFETY AND RATINGS**

6.1 The Committee received an update from the Council's Head of Residential and Consumer Safety, Tiffany Lymn on a breakdown of the food safety service in Westminster. The Cabinet Member, with Tiffany's support, then responded to questions on the following topics:

- Prevalence of lower rated establishments in Maida Vale and Church Street: Members asked whether these areas were subject to particular focus and enforcement.
- Displaying certificates: the legal requirements in terms of showing a premises rating on the shop window.
- Counterfeit food: what the powers were to enforce and seize and whether these powers were sufficient.
- Outcomes: what happens when an area is identified with numerous low, or less than perfect, establishments concentrated in a particular area.
- Sanctions: whether there was felt to be enough power to catch and deal with bad premises and given the scale of Westminster's size whether resourcing was sufficient.
- Procedure for new businesses: how long a new premise could operate before inspection and initial certification.

## **7 WORK PROGRAMME REPORT**

7.1 The Work Programme was discussed, and Members were informed that the Work Plan for the next municipal year will be published as part of the papers for the next Committee. In discussion, Members asked to be provided with initial proposals for the next year for comment, this was noted as an action.

7.2 Actions

1. Circulate early drafts of the Work Plan for the next municipal year for Member comment, prior to publication in next Committee's papers.

There was no other business and the Meeting ended at 19.54.

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

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