



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 **Thursday 15th June, 2023**, Rooms 18.01 & 18.03, 18th Floor, 64 Victoria Street, London, SW1E 6QP.

**Members Present:** Councillors Jason Williams (Chair), Laila Cunningham, Mark Shearer, James Small-Edwards, Judith Southern, Hamza Taouzzale and Tim Mitchell

**Also Present:** Councillors: Paul Dimoldenberg (Cabinet Member for City Management and Air Quality) and Aicha Less (Cabinet Member for Communities and Public Protection) Officers: Mark Banks (Head of Waste and Cleansing), Wayne Chance-McKay (Head of City Operations), Francis Dwan (Policy and Scrutiny Advisor), Claude Hemsley (Head of I.P.D - Intelligence, Partnerships and Delivery), Amy Jones (Director of Environment), Frances Martin (Exec Director of Environment and City), Mehmet Mazhar (Director of City Highways), Jon Rowing (Head of Parking), Serena Simon (Director of Communities) and Shama Sutar-Smith (Head of Culture and Strategy). External Guest: Superintendent Beth Pirie of the City of Westminster Central West Basic Command Unit (Met Police).

### 1 MEMBERSHIP

1.1 There were no changes to the Membership.

### 2 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

2.1 There were no declarations of interest.

### 3 MINUTES

3.1 The Committee approved the minutes of its meeting held on 25<sup>th</sup> April 2023.

### 3.2 RESOLVED

That the minutes of the meeting held on 25<sup>th</sup> April 2023 be agreed 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 referenced the Council's mentoring scheme with the Police which is now on its third cohort and identified it as a topic the Committee could look into in future. The Cabinet Member then responded to questions on the following topics:

- Anti-social behaviour (ASB), when Members would receive an update on the mental health navigator proponent of the ASB strategy.
- Busking, a request for an update on the Council's work around busking and how the relevant ward councillors would be updated.
- Westminster Connects, the Committee asked to receive a breakdown of engagement targets and key performance indicators for the Westminster Connects programme and how they have compared to previous efforts and years. This might include the number of hours volunteered for example.
- Mental health support surrounding ASB, the Council's offering in terms of mental health related to ASB and how this might manage the prospective changes to the Met Police with their 'Right Care - Right Person' initiative.
- Briefing for volunteers, what briefing and contact points are provided to volunteers, such as Night Stars before they go out to avoid any future instances of confusion between volunteers and the police.
- CCTV, detail on any potential changes in policy and additional clarity on what is currently impacted by the freeze.
- Council structure, how the re-organisation of 'Public Protection and Licensing' (PPL) in Westminster had gone and what it has meant for neighbourhood coordinators.
- Ward pilot schemes for ASB, when pilot schemes for dealing with ASB were going to roll out, where they would be specifically located in Westminster and how the locations were identified and selected.
- Care home open week, additional detail was requested on the care home open week initiative, the types of activities on offer and the scale of it, in terms of number of care homes included.
- Pedicabs, Members asked what more can be done by the Council to tackle issues relating to Pedicabs. A further question was asked on whether the crackdown on potential money laundering ventures was continuing.
- 'Operation Panceta', the areas of North Westminster that are set to be included in 'Operation Panceta'

- Windrush75, detail on what was being done internally and externally to promote Windrush75 events. Members asked that all councillors receive additional information for themselves but also information that could be distributed to residents.

#### 4.2 Actions

1. The Committee to consider receiving a report on the police mentoring scheme which is now on its third cohort. This could come as part of the Cabinet Member Update, a substantive look at the scheme or general partnership programmes.
2. Westminster Connects, the Committee asked to receive a breakdown of engagement targets and key performance indicators for the Westminster Connects programme and how they have compared to previous efforts and years. This might include the number of hours volunteered for example.
3. ASB ward pilot scheme, additional information on how victims are identified and the areas that are covered by the pilot scheme was requested.
4. Care home open week, additional detail was requested on the initiative, the types of activities on offer and the scale of it, in terms of number of care homes included.
5. Windrush 75-year anniversary, Members asked if all councillors could receive additional information on Windrush75 events and initiatives for both them and for their residents.

### **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 gave an update on dockless bikes and the firms leaving the industry before updating that 650 people had currently responded to the 'C43' cycle lane consultation and it was to be extended by an additional two weeks following information received that some residents within the most affected areas had not received the initial consultation. Lastly, he promoted clean air day, drawing attention to some of the events that had been put on. The Cabinet Member then responded to questions on the following topics:

- Food waste bins, the difference in demand between bins and buckets in various wards. Members also asked the degree and difficulty in engaging residents living in mansion blocks and how this was going to be overcome.
- School streets, how many school streets had been created across the City, on Luton Street, which is a play street, some vandalism was also brought to the attention of the Cabinet Member.

- Anti-idling, what work NSL (the Council's parking enforcement provider) was undertaking to combat engine idling.
- Temporary cycle lanes, what changes were proposed to temporary cycle lanes in Bayswater and Westbourne.
- Dockless bike bay provision, the report identified the number of locations identified for dockless bike bays, Members asked if this number was sufficient and whether these would be rolled out all at the same time and if not how long the roll out would take.
- Timelines, what the anticipated timelines were for progress at Warwick Way, Jermyn Street.
- Planned preventive maintenance schemes, whilst appreciating the work done with amenities societies on planned preventative maintenance schemes, Members sought assurance on ward councillors being consulted. Assurance was granted in the announcement of the extension of the consultation.
- CCTV to tackle dumping, Members asked for an update on how the CCTV pilot to discourage fly tipping and dumping was performing.
- Food waste bin collections, Members identified that residents were dissatisfied with overloaded food waste bins which were attracting vermin, particularly around the Hallfield estate. There were additional questions on how information is being received and actioned by the Council.
- Dog-fouling, what plans were to reduce the presence of dog-fouling and what, if anything, might other councils have tried that could be implemented in Westminster.

## 5.2 Actions

1. The Cabinet Member was asked to look into an incident of vandalism on the play-street signage on Luton Street as well as Camden signage which has reportedly gone up in Alderney street. The Committee Member who raised this concern was asked to provide photographic evidence. In addition, a street sign in Alderney Street was identified as showing a different local authority, this was brought to the attention of the Cabinet Member.
2. The Cabinet Member was asked to provide an update on the CCTV trials to tackle dumping and fly-tipping.
3. The Cabinet Member invited Members to provide specific locations and bins that are overloaded with waste and food waste and they will be resolved.

## 6 POLICING IN THE CITY OF WESTMINSTER

6.1 The Committee received an update from Superintendent Beth Pirie of the City of Westminster Central West Basic Command Unit (Met Police).

Superintendent Pirie introduced herself and expressed great pride in holding the role. She then gave an overview of policing in Westminster, issues with resourcing, performance, Casey Report and the planned turnaround plan in response which will launch in May. Superintendent Pirie then took questions on the following topics:

- Action planned, Members asked what specifically Westminster Police plan to action and change in addressing the findings. In responding Superintendent Pirie committed to sending all Members of the Committee invitations to a briefing event on the findings of the Casey Report, plans to address the recommendations and the turnaround plan. The Committee heard how this is a community and key stakeholders event and similar events are being run by the Met in every other borough of London.
- Addressing racial disproportionality, Members asked about the decision in displaying the data as it was and the conclusions drawn out in the analysis, given the clear disproportionality in stop and search breakdowns and Westminster population demographics. Having heard about the transient population, Members challenged the implications this might have and asked how profiling was done and what is going to be done to tackle racism specifically.
- Addressing youth disproportionality, understanding the disproportionate impact stop and search has on young people, the potential effect this can have on their mental health; particularly when stopped on multiple occasions, and the process involved for stopping under-18s and even under-10s. Superintendent Pirie offered to undertake a dip sample of persons stopped under ten years of age and provide feedback as well as research into how many people were stopped multiple times.
- ‘Violence Against Women and Girls’ (VAWG), Members asked how the police supports and could better support the Council’s campaign to tackle VAWG. Further to this, Members asked for comment on the Night Stars programme and then clarity on neighbourhood police shift times and whether they operate through the night.
- Enhanced wards, Members enquired about what a ward would have to do or demonstrate to attain ‘enhanced’ status which results in focused attention and additional resource. Having heard from Members anecdotally about crime in Lancaster Gate, Superintendent Pirie agreed to go on a patrol in the ward to experience first-hand the issues raised.
- Police community support officers (PCSO) allocation, Members expressed frustration with MOPAC’s (Mayor’s office for policing and crime) resourcing model around London. Members enquired about the level of co-ordination

between neighbourhood policing and central units, expressing that it could be improved.

- Right care - right person, Members sought clarity on what the 'right care – right person' model might mean for callouts and the impact this could have on other council and emergency services.
- Budget constraints, having expressed support for the great work local officers do in the community, Members asked whether Westminster Police felt like they were given enough money to operate in the challenging environment that they do with all the various local but complex operations they run.
- Rising crime in Westminster, Members identified that the report highlighted a 32.7% rise in the total number of recorded instances of crime compared to last year. Members asked what factors had led to this and then asked for the last 12 months figure to be compared against the last 12 months before the pandemic, to get a more comparable figure in terms of footfall and other such measures.
- Reporting fatigue, Members wanted to draw attention to residents increasingly feeling the reporting process is onerous and there are issues in their reports being recorded and/or receiving a response. Superintendent Pirie offered to look into these issues with her senior management team as well as a potential issue with failure logging calls made to the 101 non-emergency police number. Members then recommended the usefulness of 'Whatsapp' groups in building trust. Local police support officers in one ward are utilising this and the feedback, according to Members, has been positive.

## 6.2 Actions

1. To provide the Committee with an update on work that will be done to tackle issues of racism within policing. It was identified that a future update could include the findings of the serious youth violence board and the young person's crime panel both of which are investigating issues of race more broadly in the criminal justice system.
2. The Committee asked whether it would be possible to provide information on the number of people who, in the reporting period (or outside of it), were (are) stopped on more than one occasion. It was also asked what follow-up care is available, if any, for those stopped and searched without charge, particularly for young people.
3. Superintendent Pirie to send Members of the Committee invites, as was already planned, to the briefing event on the findings of the Casey Report and plans to address the recommendations and the turnaround plan. The Committee heard how this is a community and key stakeholders event and similar events are being run by the Met in every other borough of London.
4. Superintendent Pirie, through dip sampling, offered to provide an explanation and background into the six stop and searches conducted, in the reporting period, of children under ten years old.

5. Superintendent Pirie to go out on patrol with the Safer Neighbourhood Team (SNT) in Lancaster Gate and around Queensway to get a first-hand experience of the issues faced which will better contextualise the problems and support efforts to campaign for increased resources.
6. The paper identified a 32.7% increase in the number crime offences in Westminster compared to last year. The Committee, whilst concerned, expressed sympathy with the difficulty in analysing year on year figures given recent interruptions in terms of the pandemic and associated lockdowns. As a result, Superintendent Pirie offered to provide the Committee with a comparison of the last 12 months crime figure (62,185 offences) compared to the last full year before Covid-19, in 2019.
7. Superintendent Pirie offered to look into reported issues about a lack of communication that reportedly occurs when crime is reported through the non-emergency '101' telephone line but the Safety Neighbourhood Team do not receive the intel. Should this yield any update, the Committee would wish to hear.

## **7 PARKING SERVICE UPDATE**

7.1 Jon Rowing, the Council's Head of Parking introduced the report which highlighted areas requested in November's Committee. The Cabinet Member for City Management and Air Quality, supported by Jon, then responded to questions on the following topics:

- Penalty charge notice (PCN) recovery rate, Members asked how the Council felt about the 71.3% recovery rate for PCNs and what could be done to improve this further.
- Cashless parking machines, the degree to which the Council was aware of (particularly elderly or vulnerable) people having difficulty with cashless parking.
- Tickets issued to internationally registered vehicles, what work was done or could be done to increase the payrate from the owners of vehicles registered internationally. It was suggested by Members that the Council could consider engaging with the relevant embassies or consulates which was noted as a consideration.
- Imported vehicles, what systems there are to register imported cars and if this can be done as soon as they enter the UK. It was also asked whether the DVLA (driver and vehicle licensing registry) held this information and if there was any way to obtain it.
- Suspension fees, Members asked whether it could work out cheaper to pay penalty fines rather than suspensions under the current charging scheme.

- Parking loopholes, Members enquired about claims that parking fines couldn't be issued to vehicles parked wholly on the pavement.
- Electric vehicle (EV) charge points, how the locations for the 40 new EV rapid charging bays across Westminster had been decided and where they were set to be.
- Community resolutions, how Members or residents can deal with problems of delivery bike drivers loitering on forecourts and on loading bays.
- Traffic marshal intimidation, how traffic marshals could be supported to avoid instances when they are aggressively intimidated and whether body-worn CCTV could aid them.
- Forecourt parking agreements, whether agreements could be made between the Council and private forecourt landowners who do not consent to having bikes parked on them and if so, what action could then be taken.
- Autonomy for escalation, Members asked what powers the Council had for repeat offenders who accrued multiple parking tickets, especially those that are not being paid particularly the internationally imported vehicles, which are harder to prosecute in the traditional way.
- Website crash, the website for renewing resident parking permits went down, Members asked how it had happened, how long it took to resolve and how it could be prevented from happening again in the future.
- Monetary value of lost spaces, Members asked for the monetary value of the approximately 2500 car parking spaces that have been got rid of or repurposed since the last survey.
- Parking payment changes, whether additional changes were planned for parking fees and how this was going to be structured and when rates would be decided.
- Acoustic cameras, Members asked how successful the acoustic camera placed in Waterloo Place had been in terms of fines issued and paid.
- Parking suspension notification, Members suggested officers consider a notification system or sign-up for residents to alert them of suspensions that may be about to happen. This would be particularly beneficial when they might be away from their property and if actioned could provide suggestions for alternative nearby locations.
- Boundary road parking, how the detail is agreed between other local authorities for resident parking situated on boundary roads.
- Parking occupancy, how the spread of parking pressures varies across Westminster. Anecdotally, Members suggested that pressure was felt in



particular areas in North Westminster so wanted to know whether the reduction in provision had been equally felt.

## 7.2 Actions

1. Internationally registered vehicles not paying PCNs issued, Members suggested officers consider working with consulates and embassies in identifying offenders. Officers committed to checking with Marstons (the Council's international debt collector) about ability to identify internationally registered vehicles, possibly through the DVLA, and feeding back to the Committee.
2. To find out whether agreements can be made between the Council and private forecourt landowners who do not consent to having bikes parked on them. If so, what action could be taken about this.
3. Acoustic Cameras, to provide information as to how the acoustic camera in Waterloo Place has performed. In terms of recorded breaches and PCNs ultimately issued.
4. The Cabinet Member, and Parking Team, were asked to consider a notification system for parking suspensions, which can easily be missed by residents especially when they might temporarily be away on holiday for example. Clear notification could provide piece of mind and open a dialogue for resolutions.
5. Occupancy Survey, officers to provide links to the occupancy survey results in full.

## 8 WORK PROGRAMME REPORT

- 8.1 The Work Programme was briefly discussed, and attention was drawn to the next planned Committee date overlapping with the school holidays.

The meeting ended at 20.48.

**CHAIR:**

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**DATE**

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