

MINUTES OF A MEETING OF THE CORPORATE COMMITTEE

MONDAY, 16TH MARCH, 2020

- Councillors Present:** Councillor Jessica Webb in the Chair
- Cllr Clare Potter, Cllr Susan Fajana-Thomas (Vice-Chair), Cllr Katie Hanson, Cllr Vincent Stops, Cllr M Can Ozsen, Cllr Ajay Chauhan and Cllr Peter Snell
- Apologies:** Councillor Mete Coban MBE, Councillor Brian Bell, Councillor Clare Joseph, Councillor Carole Williams, Councillor Steve Race and Councillor Michael Levy
- Officers in Attendance:** Gerry McCarthy, Head of Community Safety, Enforcement and Business Regulations Tyler Linton, Group Manager - Sustainable Transport and Engagemen
- Also in Attendance:** Tess Merrett, Governance Services

1 Apologies for Absence

Apologies for absence were received from Cllrs Coben, Bell, Joseph, Williams Race and Levy.

2 Declarations of Interest - Members to Declare As Appropriate

There were no declarations of interest.

3 Consideration of Minutes Of The Previous Meeting

The minutes of the meeting held on 11 September 2019 were agreed as a true record.

The minutes of the meeting held on 11 February 2020 were agreed as a true record.

4 Introduction to work of Corporate Committee to keep Hackney Pavements Clear

Councillor Stops gave some background to the work of the Corporate Committee in endeavouring to keep the pavements of Hackney free from obstruction. He had hoped that all the key heads of service, Enforcement, Parking, Street Scene and Markets would have been able to attend so that responsibility for the various aspects of this could be clarified. Unfortunately, this had not been possible and only officers from Enforcement and Street Scene were in attendance.

Councillor Stops stressed that the Committee considered this matter of high importance given the number of visually impaired residents in the borough.

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Councillor Hanson concurred and said the Committee had been asking for some time about, for example, licences being displayed but seemed to be given more reasons why this was not happening rather than seeing any action taken.

Councillor Snell did not feel that the agenda was appropriate. The Chair said that the meeting was for a general discussion about what was being done and the key officers should attend the next meeting. She expressed her annoyance that they were not present. Councillor Hanson said a joint memo from the relevant directors which set out where responsibility fell for enforcement in the different areas would be helpful. Cllr Ozsen said that the relevant officers should meet before the Committee meeting.

The Committee agreed that discussion on the agenda items on Traders Issues and Responsibilities and the Officer Licensing Panel would be deferred to the next Corporate Committee meeting.

5 Traders Issues and Responsibilities

Deferred to next meeting.

6 Pavement Parking

Pavement Parking - deferred to next meeting.

7 Bicycles

In respect of dockless bikes, Tyler Linton from Street Scene, took the Committee through the current procedures and powers and what the next steps were. The Committee had agreed at a special meeting on 2 October 2019 to recommend a bye law to Full Council for adoption which Full Council did at its meeting on 30 October 2019. This bye law would be going to London Councils for adoption and should come on stream in the autumn which would give the Council greater powers to remove the bikes.

Until this bye law came into force, the Council did not have many powers to remove bikes but under the 1980 Highways Act, the Council did have the power to move obstructions and Street Scene were working with Enforcement to remove bikes that were causing obstructions. Bikes were being removed but not to a huge extent. The Council did want to be able to issue a Fixed Penalty Notice (FPN) and a policy, based on the A Boards policy was being drafted to enable this. The policy was scheduled to be taken to Cabinet for approval in May.

Hackney Council was the first local authority in the country to have bays for dockless bikes. However, people were still leaving them on the pavement.

Councillor Stops gave the service 8 out of 10 on bikes. He suggested that the users should photograph where they left them and if they constantly left them inappropriately, the user should be removed from the app.

Councillor Hanson said that users would see the £2 fine for leaving them inappropriately as a cost rather than a penalty so it would not be a deterrent. She suggested that a higher fine would deter users from leaving them on the pavements.

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Councillor Snell asked where the telephone number was for reporting bikes left on pavements. Tyler Linton said that the contact details for Beryl and Jump, the two companies the Council had contracts with for these bikes, had gone out in a press release. He would check the details were available on the Council's website.

Tyler Linton said that there were 8,000 Jump users and increasing the fine was a fair point. The Council also needed to ensure that the dockless bike bays were kept clear of vehicles and the car shaped bike parks would be introduced in them shortly. In respect of users photographing where they had left the bikes, the Council had no powers to force the other 4 bike companies to remove the bikes. The Council could ask Jump and Beryl to put more staff on the ground to patrol where the bikes were left. 27,000 journeys had been made in January alone which would mean a huge number of photos would need to be stored. Tyler Linton said the Council could ask Jump and Beryl about the repeat offenders

Councillor Stops asked what was being done about abandoned bikes as there were lots of rusty dumped bikes in the borough. Gerry McCarthy said that if the bikes were dangerous then the Council could remove them without putting signage up to say that bikes would be removed. If they were not dangerous then the Council had to put signage up and give a 7 days' Notice of removal.

Councillor Fajana-Thomas said that she had raised a bike removal as one of her casework matters and it had taken 2 months to remove the bike. Gerry McCarthy said that whether the bike was deemed dangerous or not was at the discretion of the Enforcement Officer. If it was not deemed dangerous then as said previously, it required signage and Notice of removal to be given.

8 Overhanging Vegetation

Tyler Linton said that overhanging vegetation was also dealt with by the 1980 Highways Act. Every street was categorised which meant they were inspected either monthly or quarterly. From April 1 2019 to 10 March 2020, 193 hedge notices were issued. This meant that the owners had 14 days to cut the vegetation back. If the owners did not comply, they would receive a further letter giving them a further 14 days. If the owners still did not comply, the Council would cut back the vegetation and recharge the owner. The Council had cut 16 hedges back in this time period.

Councillor Stops said that he endlessly complained about hedges and his experience did not match the assertion that the streets were inspected regularly. He felt the service deserved a 5 out of 10 marking and the Council needed to be more industrious in tackling this. He asked if Enforcement could issue FPNs. Gerry McCarthy said that Street Scene were leading on this and it was not possible to issue FPNs on the spot. Enforcement had a procedure to follow which involved warning letters before an FPN could be issued. Tyler Linton said that if Street Scene received a complaint then the vegetation would be inspected to see if it met the threshold so if there was under 2 metres of footway, a 14 day Notice would be issued to cut the vegetation back.

Councillor Potter asked if the streets on the limits of the borough were inspected for example Blackstock Road. Tyler Linton confirmed they were and Gerry McCarthy said that and Enforcement Officer attended Blackstock Road weekly as there were other issues to attend to here.

Councillor Stops asked if he could attend the inspections with officers.

The Chair asked if the Council encouraged other Council staff such as waste operatives who were out and about in the borough daily to report any overhanging vegetation. Tyler Linton said this was something that could be looked into.

9 Officer Licensing Panel - Revised Procedures and Terms of Reference

Deferred to next meeting.

10 Draft Work Programme 2019/20

The Committee noted that the current work programme came to an end at the end of this Municipal Year. Parking on pavements, licensing conditions and market trading would be discussed at the June meeting and the heads of service from these areas needed to attend.

Councillor Snell asked that it be minuted that the introduction of new procedures be staged for all markets so that the Council respected its own enforcement policy. Key to this was the implementation of the procedures, right of representation from the traders and record keeping.

11 Any Other Business Which in The Opinion Of The Chair is Urgent

There was no other business which in the opinion of the Chair was urgent.

Duration of the meeting: 6:30pm – 7:30pm

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