

Notes of the City-Wide Residents' Meeting

9th May 2018 – 12.30-2.30pm and 6.30-8.30pm

Speakers:

- Deputy Tom Sleigh – Deputy Chairman of the Policy and Resources Committee (Lunchtime)
- Hugh Morris – (Evening)
- Peter Lisley – Assistant Town Clerk
- Ian Dyson – Commissioner, City of London Police
- Poppy Lyle – Greater London Authority (Lunchtime)
- Stephen Inch, London Borough of Hackney (Evening)

Item 1 – Chairman's Welcome:

The Chairman thanked those residents for attending and introduced the panel. The Chairman explained the pressures of living in the City and some of the issues associated with living in a densely populated, urban area and some of the opportunities that this brings:

Culture Mile

This year brought the launch of 'Culture Mile' bringing new organisations into the Culture Mile Network and developing the Culture Mile learning partnership. The work regarding the move of the Museum of London continues and we look forward to 'Smithfield 150' which is being led by the Museum.

Public Realm and Air Quality

Last year also saw the Bank Junction safety scheme and the rollout of the City's new free public Gigabit Wi-Fi. Further resources are being put towards improving air quality in the City with over 70 monitoring points and several high risks areas now meeting targets. Work continues to progress on implementing the Low Emission Neighbourhood at the Barbican.

Fire Safety

Since the Grenfell Tower tragedy, every City property is to be visited and residents will be given fire safety checks and advice as needed. The Chairman reiterated the importance of ensuring that community engagement is transparent with residents.

Estates

A £55 million Major Works Improvement Programme has commenced across the whole of our social housing portfolio. This includes repairs to roofing, windows, lifts, water tanks, and kitchens and bathrooms with a particular focus on the Golden Lane and Middlesex Street estates.

Construction and Development

With the current level of development across the City, we are starting a consultation on the standard hours for construction work, including the issue of works taking place on Saturdays. We are implementing a new construction levy based on the 'polluter pays' principle and the City will continue to enforce any infringements of planning conditions.

Item 2 – Assistant Town Clerk and Culture Mile Director's speech

Peter Lisley outlined some milestones from the past year: the 950th anniversary of the William Charter, major projects such as Bank Junction and the feasibility study for the new courts complex.

The new Corporate Plan which begins this year sets out the vision for the future and our aims for the next five years:

Shape Outstanding Environments

The City must have a landscape to support the changing needs of businesses and residents. The infrastructure and transport system must continue to evolve to support the quick, easy and safe movement of people.

The Bank on Safety Scheme is making the City safer and is just one part of further work taking place at the junction as part of the "All Change at Bank" scheme: reducing collisions, increasing capacity and improving air quality. The Aldgate Highway and Public Improvement project has also changed the previous traffic layout and will improve cycling, road safety and increase green space in the area.

Action is being taken against delivery-related congestion with restrictions on deliveries and off-site consolidation. Pedestrian flow modelling is currently taking place to assess the impact of Elizabeth Line opening this year and making the City more connected than ever. Congestion is contributing to poorer air quality as well as 'engine idling' which is now being built into Corporation contracts.

The introduction of the free-to-use service across the Square Mile, which is now live, will increase connectivity for all residents and visitors. This, alongside the enhancement of mobile coverage, will prepare the City for the introduction of 5G technology in 2021. Work also continues to roll out fast and affordable broadband for homes in the City Corporation's 12 housing estates, due for completion in the middle of 2019.

The Culture Mile will see the creation of a major new destination for culture and creativity in the North West part of the City building on the City's already rich cultural offer through events and major street and public realm enhancements.

Flourishing Society

Focusing on the key issues of homelessness and housing. The City is committed to creating 700 new homes by 20215 through the expansion of the social housing on our existing estates and delivering 3000 additional homes. This will be part of a wider housing strategy released later this year.

Tackling homelessness and rough sleeping is being prioritised with additional funding (£427,000) aimed at reducing this long-term trend. Extra support has also been sourced from neighbouring authorities to ensure accommodation and treatment are provided. The additional funding will also help deliver quarterly pop up hub assessment provision and offer support to vulnerable people previously living on the streets through the City Lodge.

Bridging Divides (City Bridge Trust)

Through the work of the City Bridge Trust, we are able to support projects across London and the UK on a wide range of issues. This year marks the beginning of CBT's new strategy, Bridging Divides which will see £100 million worth of funding provided over the next five years.

Supporting A Thriving Economy

With partners, such as TheCityUK, we are championing the interests of the City, working on key issues, such as Brexit. A key priority for the City Corporation is supporting London's young people to access opportunities, skills and employment. This is partly done through education and the City of London Academies Trust – the highest performing multi-academy trust in the UK. The promotion of the use of apprenticeships has been a focus and we are leading by example through the recruitment of 100 apprentices to the Corporation each year.

Item 3 – City of London Police Update

The Commissioner stated that he wanted residents to Proud of their Police Force. The context for the Force was provided inkling the different communities they serve and the wider issue of resourcing for the Force.

The priorities for the upcoming year were outlined: Counterterrorism, Cybercrime, Fraud, Vulnerable people, Violent and acquisitive crime, Roads policing and Public order.

The City of London Police have played a wider role within UK Policing and helping to protect us from serious threats such as counter-terrorism, for example during the London Bridge attacks. There has been a significant rise in terrorist plots since the Westminster Bridge attacks and this has, therefore, become a focus to ensure businesses and residents are protected. The Force also continue to have a lead role for Fraud and Cybercrime through agencies such as ActionFraud and the National Fraud Intelligence Bureau.

There has also been a rise in the amount of crime of online and the further challenge of how to support victims of these crimes. Fraud is currently the biggest crime type in the UK with cybercrime and fraud making up more than half of the total number of crimes.

However, traditional crimes still occurring including acquisitive and violent crime, particularly against vulnerable persons. Although there has been an increase in the past year, the number of crimes has reduced significantly from 2001 with under 6000 crimes reported compared to 10000 in 2001. Some increases have been evident, such as assault and motorcycle thefts, but this has been lower increases than elsewhere.

The current challenges include the changing nature of crime, growth of the city, constrained finances, the expanding night-time economy and growth of organised crime. There are several ways the City of London Police are tackling these issues through Project Servator, further engagement with residents and businesses and an uplift in armed officers.

Item 4 – GLA Air Quality

The key issue of tackling air pollution and quality is something the GLA are taking extremely seriously. The new Mayor of London had some key manifesto commitments to clean toxic air and meet targets of lower air pollution, here are some policies being introduced to contribute to this:

- New double-decker buses from 2018 will need to be hybrid, hydrogen or electric and from 2020, single-deck buses will be zero emission. Current diesel buses will also be adapted to meet standards.
- Taxi – from 2018 new taxis will need to be zero emission capable with no new diesel licensed. There is also a deadline for the older stock with incentives for drivers to make the switch to cleaner fuels
- T-Charge – a charge has been introduced within the existing Congestion Charge zone with higher polluting vehicles paying an extra fee.
- Ultra-low emission scheme – The GLA are currently accelerating and expanding these plans with the City area to be included. These will be the toughest measures of any City in the world.
- Cleaner Vehicle Checker – independently tested real-world emissions check of each vehicle, to encourage the purchase of cleaner models.
- Barbican Low Emission Zone is being supported by the GLA to improve air quality in the area.

Item 5 – Residents’ Questions

Lunchtime Session

Housing Improvements

With the promise of £55mil being spent on the refurbishment of the estates, there are still concerns over the timescale and are yet to see any improvements.

Paul Murtagh (Barbican and Property Services) – improvements have started across sites with concrete repairs, a refurbishment to the community centre, heating repairs and work on Great Arthur House. The window programme over the estate has proved more complex as this is not just a replacement, more complex issue. There is a 2020 start date with the tendering process up to 12 months incorporated, the design stage and extensive consultation with residents. Some blocks are to be prioritised due to neighbouring developments to ensure noise levels are countered.

It was confirmed that the £55mil was a gross figure and included service charges.

Question: Are there any proposals to increase social housing within the square mile?

Jacque Campbell (Housing and Neighbourhoods) - social housing is a London wide issue and the City has ambitions to increase current social housing stock, but this is difficult to do within Square Mile. Nine Middlesex Street flats are to become social housing and further units at Great Arthur House with the proposal of accessible ground floor flats. The COLPAI development is set to be all social housing with 66 flats and this allocation is being shared with Islington. There are also further proposals outside the square mile to increase social housing on our own land. Within the proposed housing strategy there will also be consideration given to empty properties within the Barbican.

Question: the current state of street furniture in Aldersgate/Goswell Road is very poor and needs to be improved.

Peter Lisley (Assistant Town Clerk) – the issues in this area have been reported and the Golden Lane strategy and the Culture Mile public realm projects will aim to improve the street scene in this area and give a different feel to the rest of the City.

Question: The Golden Lane repairs have started but the ordering of the works seems to be in the wrong order with refurbishments happening before work on the windows.
Elderly residents – charging for mobility scooters.

Paul Murtagh (Barbican and Property Services) – the redecoration works need to happen urgently so works have started where areas will not be affected by other repairs happening in the same programme.

Question: With the current lack of social housing, there are vacant flats being sold off on the market where this could increase current stock.

Peter Lisley (Assistant Town Clerk) – this is in line with current planning policy and to discourage random locations of social housing with residential properties next to businesses. It is now being encouraged that residential infill should be prioritised within established areas. Developers and needs to be considered and ensure that the plans are viable. Cash receipts will be used to deliver social housing outside of the borough.

Air Quality

Question: Is advice being given to pedestrians to move s back from the curb as this is shown to stop people inhaling as much toxic air.

Poppy Lyle (GLA) – The GLA is encouraging people to take quieter routes between key destinations to reduce intake of pollution, but further research needs to be undertaken Curb variation of pollution and is not something to promote currently. Look further into data.

Ruth Calderwood (Air Quality Manager) – the City of London have released some top tips about exposure which will be shared with residents and there is further work on street signage on these issues.

Question: London Wall traffic is often a standstill, can the traffic signals be altered around this area as there is currently a block up to Wood St.

Ian Hughes (Highways) – the primary issue is with volume and this is being encouraged to be reduced. The signals are managed by Transport for London but are guided by Local Authorities and the City will continue to feed in our local data.

Question: is there a car scrappage scheme in place in the City or any extra charging points for electric vehicles?

Jon Averbs (Port Health and Public Protection) – no current plans for scrappage scheme as this is often done nationally. There is one extra charging point being installed and this will be trialled for its success. It was added that there is an overall aim to reduce the number of vehicles.

The Chairman asked the audience about their opinion on the Bank Junction Safety Scheme and there was a positive response from residents about the impact.

Policing and Road Safety

Question: There has been a gradual deterioration on Little Britain with blatant drug dealing outside on the street with this being reported but nothing has been done. There are also rough sleepers in nearby Postman’s Park and due to this being locked, Police Officers have not been able to access the park in dangerous conditions for the sleepers.

Ian Dyson (Commissioner of the City of London Police) – After speaking with local officers this is something we are investigating, and arrests have been made. However, we are not complacent and will investigate these reports further. Rough sleeping is a national issue and we will continue to work with the Corporation on this issue.

Question: There seem to be fewer Policemen on the streets and 20mph limits are routinely ignored with fines having no impact, will there be more enforcement?

Ian Dyson (Commissioner of the City of London Police) – Officer patrols have increased over the last two years with a larger armed presence. The patrols do happen higher risk areas and led by intelligence.

Question: Why is the Police presence on the Golden Lane poor – can't remember saw a Policeman on the beat?

Ian Dyson (Commissioner of the City of London Police) – Officer patrols do happen – the number has grown over last two years. Some armed but more patrolling. Higher vulnerability and intelligence areas will have more. Work closely with the Met after recent issues. Stats not always helpful.

Question: What can be done about those who routinely ignore the 20pmph speed limit? Fines have no impact.

Ian Dyson (Commissioner of the City of London Police) 20mph – issues ticketed. 185 penalties issued for this last year but success is not measured in tickets issued. Overall we speeds are nearer 20mph – dampening effect has been seen. There has been Less enforcement last year due to CT issues.

Question: Bank Street where pedestrians difficult to cross with u-turns, reversing. What can be done?

Ian Hughes (Highways) RoadSafety team currently reviewing junction and is monitored/enforced due to the effect on cyclists and danger for pedestrians.

Question: What can be done about crowds at London Marathon where some drink all day long?

Ian Dyson (Commissioner of the City of London Police) – there has been a full debrief of the event. This will be factored into the planning for this event next year. Also looking at the best way to use Barriers and crowd control etc.

Miscellaneous

Question: What can be done about corporate squatters?

Ian Dyson (Commissioner of the City of London Police) – We are not currently aware of this. This is a civil law not criminal. Work with colleagues with City Corporation and owner of the property and look at this.

Question: What can be done about rough sleepers in the City?

Chris Pelham (Assistant Director People) – They are processed by StreetLink by people who refer rough sleepers. Victims of own success due to the campaign. The national system delivered by St Mungo's – some capacity issues. However, this is not an emergency service – usually have the intelligence of some sleepers but often they move.

No direct provision and need to use beds in other areas. Increase in demand for these people and additional funding has been secured but often not vacant (15 increase). 30 people survived rough weather borne out of using the streetlink service.

Outreach – delivered over the week. Increased over cold periods. Looking to raise provision and talking to central government. Pop up hubs, assessment centre working with clergy etc. quarterly basis and looking to expand this.

Evening Session

Air Quality

Question: Since the cycle superhighway was built on Upper Parliament Street has been increased congestion. This has resulted in the air quality in that area feels like it has worsened. What can the City do to alleviate this? Is there a possibility of implementation of "moss walls" as used in City of Westminster Council on Oxford Street?

Ruth Calderwood (Air Quality Manager) – the City Corporation monitors air quality at Walbrook Wharf and London Bridge. Since the installation of the Cycle Super Highway, there has been a significant reduction in levels of pollution. "City Tree" or "moss wall" is under consideration by City Corporation to see if suitable. Congestion should not increase air pollution as static queue creates less pollution. We have recorded a 25% reduction in Nitrogen Dioxide Pollution as a result of closing one lane of traffic.

Traffic and Noise

Question: What can be done about the noise of cars on Upper Parliament Street as they enter the tunnel? Possible use of speed cameras as have been implemented in Canary Wharf?

Iain Simmons (Assistant Director Transportation) – Road managed by TFL, piloted 20MPH except Upper Parliament Street. TFL currently considering safety and noise across central London and expecting to see 20MPH across central London.

Question: What can be done about smaller contractors who are creating noise when renovating offices on the weekends?

Jon Averts (Port Health & Public Protection Director) – The same rules apply regardless of the size of the development or contractors. There are rules against Saturday afternoons or Sundays. The City Corporation can provide details of a 24-hour contact number.

Question: What can be done where drivers are using Fann Street as a turnaround point?

Jon Averts (Port Health & Public Protection Director) – Exacerbated by other works, looking for a long-term fix. Make an assessment based on safety but currently no short-term solutions which work.

Question: Are satnavs guiding people down Fann Street?

Jon Averbs (Port Health & Public Protection Director) – The modern systems are able to update quickly but still some issues with older systems. Fann Street has seen a change since the ring of steel implementation, but the City Corporation was working to cut down traffic.

Question: What is being done to improve pedestrian experiences in the City?

Peter Lisley (Assistant Town Clerk) – There has been a vast reduction in traffic in the City over the last 25 years and willing to reduce this further. There is an increase in the proportion of pedestrian space over road space. Beech Street which is in collaboration with other authorities has been difficult.

Ian Hughes (Assistant Highways Director) – A Transport Strategy is being developed by the Planning Committee. We are increasing capacity for pedestrians and have invested in a model to predict demand. Strategy completed for March 2019.

Community Engagement

Question: What is the City's role in terms of communications between stakeholders in terms of residents and developers? Development at Barts Square and Farringdon East Crossrail, both now over schedule and City has let small stakeholder down with communications.

Jon Averbs (Port Health & Public Protection Director) - The City has a strict code of conduct for noise on construction and demolition. There are future plans for more officers to liaise with local residents on local works. There is still an expectation that developers would engage with residents.

Ian Hughes (Assistant Highways Director) - The City is looking at sites where construction is overflowing and overrunning schedule, but we are unable to impact on 3rd party programmes which run late.

Question: What consultation has there been with residents around Farringdon East Crossrail works?

Iain Simmons (Assistant Director Local Transportation) - On Crossrail, City stepping in as others have failed to act. Crossrail Act gives others the ultimate power and decisions were made years ago. The City stepped in as we did not believe they would be able to deliver at the right pace. The event on 24 May is not a consultation as there are no decisions to make. Trying to step in and make up for the lack of communication from Crossrail to residents.

Mobile Phone Coverage

Questions: Mobile Phone and TV Reception in the City has been impacted on by developments in the East of City. For mobile phone reception, this has taken a long time to mitigate. What else can be done to reduce impacts?

Peter Lisley (Assistant Town Clerk) – The City Corporation is working with CTIL to deliver better network due to layout and tall buildings. New small cells to try and mitigate these issues with delivery due for March 2019.

Hate Crime

Question: What is the picture of hate crime in the City?

Ian Dyson (Commissioner) - in the last year there has been an increase nationally, the City has not seen an increase. City Police have an outreach programme to communities with protected characteristics.

Crime and Drug Dealing

Question: Issue Little Britain with drug dealing on Thursday and Friday nights?

Ian Dyson (Commissioner) – There has been a slight increase in street drug dealing. Linked into local officers are coordinating responses. Arrests last year and intelligence acted upon.

Question: Are some of the new street beggars linked to organised crime?

Ian Dyson (Commissioner) – There has been an increased level of rough sleeping in the City and the COLP are investigating if there is an element of organised crime.

GP Services

Question: There has been an increased waiting time for a GP appointment at the Neaman Practice (now two and half months), what can be done about this?

Simon Cribbens (AD – Children and Community Service) – The City Corporation is aware of the difficulty of wait times at Neaman Practice. The waits are comparatively shorter than other practices but there plans to introduce new appointment system to reduce wait times. The Neamen Practice has fewer workers registered than other practices in the City. The City Corporation is supporting the CCG's review into the capacity for GP access in the City.

Housing

Question: What is being done to improve City of London housing?

Paul Murtagh (Assistant Director Barbican Estate) – There had historically been some neglect on Golden Lane and Middlesex Street Estates but there is now a £55m investment programme to make repairs and renovations. To ensure we do not get into this position again in the future we need to ensure that we continue to invest in these estates. The replacement of the Golden Lane estate windows is a complicated project as it more than just window and should be seen as a structural renovation as well. The City Corporation is now working to renovate bathrooms and kitchens.

Miscellaneous

Question: at future City Wide Residents can there be better female representation on the panel?

Hugh Morris (Member, City of London Corporation) – the event would normally be hosted by Policy and Resources Chair who is Catherine McGuinness but she has been otherwise engaged this year.

Peter Lisley (Assistant Town Clerk) – Also worth noting that at lunchtime session Poppy from GLA presented on air quality.
