

COMMUNITY & CHILDREN'S SERVICES COMMITTEE

Friday, 13 February 2015

Minutes of the meeting of the Community & Children's Services Committee held at Committee Rooms, West Wing, Guildhall on Friday, 13 February 2015 at 11.30 am

Present

Members:

Deputy Billy Dove (Chairman)	Gareth Moore
Deputy John Barker	Deputy Stephen Haines
Emma Edhem	Deputy Joyce Nash
John Fletcher	Judith Pleasance
Alderman David Graves	Delis Regis
Ann Holmes	Elizabeth Rogula
Deputy Henry Jones	Virginia Rounding
Vivienne Littlechild	Mark Wheatley
Professor John Lumley	Philip Woodhouse
Deputy Catherine McGuinness	Laura Jørgensen

Officers:

Natasha Dogra	Town Clerk's Department
Emma Sawers	Town Clerk's Department
Laura Donnegani	Town Clerk's Department
Ade Adetosoye	Director, Community and Children's Services
Neal Hounsell	Community and Children's Services Department
Chris Pelham	Community and Children's Services Department
Jacquie Campbell	Community and Children's Services Department
Gerald Mehrtens	Community and Children's Services Department
Sarah Greenwood	Community and Children's Services Department
Sam Cook	Remembrancer's Department
Paul Chadha	Comptroller & City Solicitor's Department
Peter Young	City Surveyor's Department
Karen Wilson	City Surveyor's Department
Mark Jarvis	Chamberlain's Department
Greg Williams	Public Relations Office
Rachel Mortell	Public Relations Office

1. APOLOGIES

Apologies have been received from Deputy Chairman Dhruv Patel, Alderman Bear, Tom Sleight, Dr Dudley, Deputy Fraser, Marianne Fredericks, Deputy Moss, Karina Dostalova, Adam Richardson and Deputy Welbank.

2. MEMBERS' DECLARATIONS UNDER THE CODE OF CONDUCT IN RESPECT OF ITEMS ON THE AGENDA

Mr Moore declared an interest in all housing related matters. Deputy Jones declared an interest in the non-public minutes as he was a leaseholder of a property on Middlesex Street.

3. **MINUTES**

Resolved – that the minutes of the previous meeting be agreed as an accurate record.

4. **PRESENTATION: 'FORGET ABOUT THE BENEFITS THINK ABOUT THE MONEY'**

The Committee received the presentation 'Forget about the benefits, think about the money' and noted the following:

- Mediation was useful in a number of situations, and the City of London Corporation advised residents to seek advice from the Southwark Mediation Centre in cases where disputes arose.
- Disputes were usually centred around neighbour problems.
- Although the staff from the Mediation Centre did a lot of work with the Metropolitan Police they did not currently work with the City of London Police
- Staff were able to offer mediation skills training to young people who were interested and other members of public.
- Members noted that the process was straightforward and free to all residents as the City of London Corporation paid a fee for the mediation centre services.

Members echoed the gratitude of the Officers to Mr Walker and his team for all of their support with complaints and disputes related to housing issues. Members agreed that this was a very helpful service which saved a great deal of Officer time and provided residents with useful advice.

RECEIVED.

5. **DISCLOSURE AND BARRING REQUIREMENTS FOR SCHOOL GOVERNORS APPOINTED BY THE COURT OF COMMON COUNCIL**

Members considered the City of London Corporation's obligations in relation to disclosure and barring service (DBS) requirements for chairmen and governors on boards of the City's independent schools, academies, and one maintained school.

Members noted the legal basis of the DBS requirements and were advised that the checks were mandatory in the context of academies and independent schools, and could be enforced by the Secretary of State for Education through the criminal courts. Members were advised of the policy recommendation made by the City of London Corporation's Education Board to make it obligatory of all members of the Court of Common Council who stand for nomination as a school governor to undergo DBS checks.

Resolved. That Members agreed that governors appointed by the City Corporation to maintained schools such as Sir John Cass Foundation Primary School be obliged to undergo DBS checks prior to commencing their appointment or as soon as practicable upon commencement.

6. **COUNTER-TERRORISM AND SECURITY BILL**

Members were informed of the relevant provisions of the Counter-Terrorism and Security Bill. The Bill will place two new duties on the Common Council. First, it will need to have due regard to the need to prevent people from being drawn into terrorism when it exercises functions as a local authority or police authority. Second, it will have to ensure that a panel of persons is in place to identify and provide support to those in the City who are vulnerable to being drawn into terrorism.

Resolved: Members agreed that that this report be referred to the Town Clerk, the Commissioner of the City of London Police and the Director of Community and Children's Services for consideration of follow-up action required in the light of the Bill.

RECEIVED.

7. **IMPLICATIONS FOR THE CITY CORPORATION OF AMENDED GOVERNMENT POLICY ON AFFORDABLE HOUSING**

Members were informed of The City of London Local Plan which required new housing development to make a contribution towards the provision of affordable housing, seeking either 30% of the proposed units as affordable if delivered on-site, or a financial contribution equivalent to 60% of the proposed units as a commuted sum. This approach was successful in generating financial contributions of £19.7m over the past 10 years out of total developer contributions towards affordable housing of £39.9m.

Members noted that whilst the national minimum threshold should have a negligible impact on the City Corporation's ability to seek affordable housing contributions, the vacant building credit could potentially significantly reduce future affordable housing receipts through s106 planning obligations, introducing significant risk to the City Corporation's ability to deliver new affordable housing to meet local and wider London housing needs.

In response to a query from Members it was noted that the changes in national policy did not affect s106 contributions already received or those that were generated through commercial development.

In response to a query Members noted that counsel's advice was sought on the weight to be attached to the Government's new policies and the scope to seek exemption for the City of London. This advice indicated that the Government and the Planning Inspectorate were likely to attach significant weight to the new national policy and would be unlikely to allow the policy to be undermined by existing local development plan policies. If the City Corporation wished to seek an 'exemption' from the new national policy this would have needed to be promoted and justified through a review of the recently adopted City of London Local Plan.

Members requested a report from Officers regarding "right to buy" schemes, which Officers agreed to submit to a future Committee meeting for Members' information.

Resolved. Members:

- a) Noted the implications of the Government's revised policies for affordable housing in the determination of future planning applications for residential development in the City, and
- b) Authorised officers to commence scoping work on the potential for a Local Plan Alteration to make a locally specific case that the vacant building credit should not apply in the City of London.

8. **CARE ACT IMPLEMENTATION**

Members were updated on the implementation of reforms introduced by the Care Act (the Act).

The Act introduced a major set of reforms to the way that care for elderly people and other adults with care needs are provided and paid for. The Act would be implemented in two stages, the first of which places a number of new duties on the City of London from 1 April 2015. It is anticipated that the second stage of implementation will take place from 1 April 2016.

Resolved: That Members:

- agreed to charging interest and costs in relation to deferred payment of care home fees
- agreed that no charge is made for arranging the care and support of those who self fund their own non-residential care – and to review this decision at six and 12 months after implementation
- delegated authority to the Director, in consultation with the Chairman and Deputy Chairman, to approve further amendments or additions to policies and procedures required for when the Act comes into force on 1 April 2015.

9. **GATEWAY 1 & 2 PROJECT PROPOSAL: GOLDEN LANE ESTATE PLAYGROUND REFURBISHMENT**

Members noted that the proposed project aimed to replace an insecure, unsightly facility which is not fit for purpose and not of benefit to the community, with one which provides safe, stimulating play opportunities for young children and contributes to the environmental enhancement of the Grade II listed housing estate. Raising the floor will be required to create the new, more accessible playground.

RECEIVED.

10. **COMMUNITY SMALL GRANTS SCHEME REVIEW 2013/14**

Members received a report on the support the City of London gives to community groups within the Square Mile and celebrated the diversity of projects and activities which have been recipients of a small grant in 2013/14.

Members thanked Officers for all of their work in relation to the scheme. Members noted that there was a need for more areas such as community centres to allow for groups of residents to meet. Officers noted that whilst the Lilac Room was available in the Barbican it may not be fit for purpose; Officers would investigate this further.

RECEIVED.

11. CORPORATE PARENTING STRATEGY

Members received a report on renewed Corporate Parenting Strategy. It was approved by the Safeguarding Sub Committee, and was supported by the City and Hackney Children's Safeguarding Board. It was brought to the Committee to highlight the important role and responsibility of all Members as corporate parents to the children who are in or who have left the City's care.

Received.

12. SPECIAL EDUCATIONAL NEEDS AND DISABILITY POLICY AND STRATEGY - PROGRESS UPDATE

Members received a report noting the progress made in implementing Part 3 of the Children and Families Act 2014 in regards to Special Educational Needs and Disability (SEND).

Members noted the progress made to date for each of the actions listed against the six priorities. Although the Action Plan updates showed significant progress in the majority of actions in all six priorities, as in all other local authorities there is still a considerable amount of work to be undertaken to meet the requirements of the SEND reforms in the Act, which came into force in September 2014. Over the coming months, efforts will be concentrated on the areas where sufficient progress has not been made.

Members requested that this report be considered by the City's Education Board at their next meeting.

RECEIVED.

13. CHAIRMAN OF THE CITY YOUTH FORUM

Members received a proposal regarding the creation of a Chairman of the City Youth Forum (Young Lord Mayor) was discussed at the December Policy and Resources and Community and Children's Services committees. Members of both committees agreed the formation in principle but raised a number of questions regarding the post and requested further information prior to formal approval.

Members noted that in order to meet British Youth Council (BYC) deadlines to enable the Chairman of the City Youth Forum (Young Lord Mayor) to be a member of the British Youth Parliament in 2015/16, the Chairman agreed for the Policy and Resources Committee Members to receive a verbal update at the January committee. Members subsequently agreed that elections could proceed during the February half term subject to a more detailed 'for

information' report being produced which responded to Members' original queries.

Members noted that the Chief Commoner Elect had offered to allow the Chairman of the City Youth Forum to shadow him at certain events once he took office in April 2015.

RECEIVED.

14. QUESTIONS ON MATTERS RELATING TO THE WORK OF THE COMMITTEE

There was a request from Members for an update regarding Horace Jones House. Members noted that it had been widely reported that Southwark Council has allowed Berkeley Homes to stop our tenants from accessing the communal gardens at One Tower Bridge.

Berkeley Homes submitted an application to Southwark Council to amend the access rights of City of London tenants of Horace Jones House in order to prevent their use of the communal gardens. This application was approved by Southwark's planning committee of 3 February.

Prior to making this application Berkeley Homes had requested in meetings with the City last year, that we implement such a restriction. The City refused, as it was our intention that tenants of Horace Jones House share the same rights of access to the communal spaces as all residents, subject of course to the agreement of service charges.

Subsequently, Berkeley Homes had sought to achieve this restriction through an application to vary the Section 106 agreement with Southwark Council.

As the City was not a statutory consultee in relation to this change there was no opportunity for us to challenge it. Had such an opportunity been available, the City would have reiterated its stance that residents of Horace Jones House should enjoy the same rights of access to the communal garden facilities as other residents.

Officers had contacted Southwark Council and put forward our concerns. The Council was reviewing these and had agreed to further discussions with Officers.

15. ANY OTHER BUSINESS THAT THE CHAIRMAN CONSIDERS URGENT

There was no urgent business.

16. EXCLUSION OF THE PUBLIC

MOTION - That under Section 100A(4) of the Local Government Act 1972, the public be excluded from the meeting for the following items of business on the grounds that they involve the likely disclosure of exempt information as defined in Paragraph 3 of Part I of Schedule 12A of the Local Government Act.

17. NON-PUBLIC MINUTES

Resolved – that the minutes of the previous meeting be agreed as an accurate record.

18. **SERVICE BASED REVIEW: TRANSFORMING LIBRARY SERVICES**

The Committee considered the report of the Director of Culture, Heritage and Libraries.

19. **COMMISSIONING REVIEW**

The Committee considered the report of the Director of Community and Children's Services.

20. **UPDATE ON ROUGH SLEEPERS**

The Committee considered the report of the Director of Community and Children's Services.

21. **QUESTIONS ON MATTERS RELATING TO THE WORK OF THE COMMITTEE**

There were no questions.

22. **ANY OTHER BUSINESS THAT THE CHAIRMAN CONSIDERS URGENT AND WHICH THE COMMITTEE AGREE SHOULD BE CONSIDERED WHILST THE PUBLIC ARE EXCLUDED**

There was no urgent business.

The meeting ended at 1.05 pm

Chairman

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