

HOUSING MANAGEMENT AND ALMSHOUSES SUB (COMMUNITY AND CHILDREN'S SERVICES) COMMITTEE

Thursday, 20 November 2014

Minutes of the meeting of the Housing Management and Almshouses Sub (Community and Children's Services) Committee held at Guildhall on Thursday, 20 November 2014 at 1.45 pm.

Present

Members:

Virginia Rounding (Chairman)
Revd Dr Martin Dudley (Deputy Chairman)
Alderman David Graves
Ann Holmes
Deputy Henry Jones
Dhruv Patel
Adam Richardson
Elizabeth Rogula

In Attendance

Officers:

- Director of Community and Children's Services
- Community and Children's Services
- Community and Children's Services
- Community and Children's Services
- Town Clerk's
- Chamberlain's

1. APOLOGIES

Apologies were received from Adam Richardson and Gareth Moore. Deputy Billy Dove, Alderman David Graves and Deputy, the Revd Stephen Haines submitted apologies as they had been required, at short notice, to attend another urgent meeting. (Alderman David Gaves left the meeting at 2pm.)

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

There were no declarations.

3. MINUTES

RESOLVED, that:

The public minutes and non-public summary of the meeting held on 10 July 2014 be approved.

4. **HOUSING REVENUE ACCOUNT (30 YEAR BUSINESS PLAN)**

Members received a presentation of the Chartered Institute of Housing (CIH) in respect of the City of London Corporation's Housing Revenue Account's 30-Year Business Plan.

Members noted the following headlines:

- The significant revenue repairs increase next year and an increase in capital contribution, also next year.
- That after a peak in spending on asset management in years 1-3 of the plan, for which significant investment in properties was planned, there would be a decrease in the funding required for asset management.
- The impact of Universal Credit on income collection.
- The City of London Corporation has a relatively high borrowing capacity. Members noted that there was a perception that the debt cap was unfair on some local authorities and the Chartered Institute of Housing supported increasing the limit. However, in the current financial climate, borrowing had decreased but this position might change after the 2015 General Election.
- The Richard Cloudesley site development represented an innovative approach to relieving London's housing shortage and the Housing Management and Almshouses Sub Committee would receive a further 'gateway' report in due course.

In concluding, the CIH representative commended the City of London Corporation's robust and sustainable Business Plan and placed it in the top 3 out of 70 presented to the CIH.

5. **HOUSING REVENUE ACCOUNT (HRA) AND CAPITAL BUDGETS 2015/16**

Members considered a joint report of the Chamberlain and the Director of Community and Children's Services, presenting the annual submission of the revenue (HRA) and capital budgets. The report also sought approval for the provisional revenue budget for 2015/16, for subsequent submission to the Finance Committee. Members noted that details of the HRA draft capital budgets had also been provided.

RESOLVED, that:

1. The proposed 2015/16 revenue budget be approved, for submission to the Finance Committee.
2. The draft capital budget be approved.

3. The Chamberlain be authorised to revise these budgets to allow for further implications arising from the departmental reorganisations and other reviews.

6. **HOUSING UPDATE REPORT**

Members received a report of the Director of Community and Children's Services, presenting the 6-monthly update on housing service performance and management information, which provided an update on progress against key areas of work. The report covered performance for the first half of the financial year (1st April to 30 September 2014).

During the discussion on this report, the following matters were noted:

- Members were very pleased to note that gas safety compliance was up 2% to 99%.
- Rent collection was on target and above the same period last year. However, Members noted that welfare reforms and the introduction of Universal Credit have an impact on rent collection and the target will need to be adjusted accordingly.
- Members asked if 'Housemark' could be invited to a future meeting to give a presentation on benchmarking.
- Members received a tabled copy of the latest 'Annual Report for City Tenants'.
- Post inspection pass rates had improved considerably in the past 6 months.
- The Residents' Celebration Day on 18 October 2014 had been very successful and the Director and Chairman commended officers for their hard work.

RESOLVED, that:

The Housing update report be noted.

7. **REMEMBERING YESTERDAY, CELEBRATING TODAY (AND FILM)**

Members received a report of the Director of Community and Children's Services, providing an overview of the City of London's Estates First World War centenary activities. Members also watched a short film, depicting the hard work and commitment shown by residents and officers. Kirsty Leitch was very highly commended for co-ordinating the project. Members noted that the project was also representative of current community initiatives; i.e. the pooling of time credits by Avondale residents, to assist a local school.

RESOLVED, that:

The report of the First World War centenary activities be noted.

8. **HOUSING ESTATES - ALLOCATED MEMBERS REPORT**

Members received a report of the Director of Community and Children's Services which provided an update on the City of London Corporation's Social Housing Estates. The report had been compiled in collaboration with allocated Members, who take an active interest in their estates; championing residents and local staff and engaging with residents.

Members suggested that shopkeepers be included in the next report and a Member be allocated to them. In response to further questions, Members noted that work to the Almshouses Community Hall was on-going and Horace Jones House would be handed over on 12 January 2015. Members would shortly receive an invite to visit the development on 14 January 2015.

RESOLVED, that:

The Allocated Members report be noted.

9. **PROJECT PROPOSAL (GATEWAY 1/2) - INTERNAL AND EXTERNAL REFURBISHMENT WORKS AT THE MIDDLESEX STREET ESTATE**

Members received a report of the Director of Community and Children's Services, in respect of the internal and external refurbishment works programme at the Middlesex Street Estate.

RESOLVED, that:

The report be noted.

10. **ASSET MANAGEMENT STRATEGY**

Members received a report of the Director of Community and Children's Services, which presented the Housing Asset Management Strategy and 5-Year Work Programme. Members were pleased to note that the strategy would enable officers to communicate with residents about the 5-Year Work Programme in more detail than before. The Director of Community and Children's Services advised that he would be chairing the Housing Programme Board and 2 full time Surveyors had been appointed to deliver the work. Members commended the clear presentation of the document, which was exemplar to similar documents for other committees. In response to a question about the Middlesex Street balcony doors, officers advised that this work would cover windows that had not already been replaced with triple glazing.

RESOLVED, that:

The Housing Asset Management Strategy and 5-Year work programme be noted.

11. **QUESTIONS ON MATTERS RELATING TO THE WORK OF THE SUB COMMITTEE**

There were no questions.

12. **ANY OTHER BUSINESS THAT THE CHAIRMAN CONSIDERS URGENT**

There were no items of urgent business.

13. **EXCLUSION OF THE PUBLIC**

RESOLVED - 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.

Item no (s)

15

Para no (s)

3

14. **NON-PUBLIC MINUTES**

RESOLVED, that:

The non-public minutes of the meeting held on 10 July 2014 be approved.

15. **HOUSING PROJECTS PORTFOLIO UPDATE**

Members received a report of the Director of Community and Children's Services in respect of housing projects which were being managed by the Housing Property Services Team or the City Surveyor.

16. **QUESTIONS ON MATTERS RELATING TO THE WORK OF THE SUB COMMITTEE**

There were no questions.

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

There were no items of urgent business.

The meeting ended at 3.05 pm

Chairman

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