

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

Monday, 2 November 2015

Minutes of the meeting of the Housing Management and Almshouses Sub (Community and Children's Services) Committee held at the Guildhall EC2 at 1.45 pm

Present

Members:

Virginia Rounding (Chairman)	Deputy Henry Jones
Ann Holmes (Deputy Chairman)	Deputy Catherine McGuinness
Randall Anderson	Gareth Moore
Revd Dr Martin Dudley	Dhruv Patel
John Fletcher	Mark Wheatley
Alderman David Graves	

Officers:

Philippa Sewell	- Town Clerk's Department
Mark Jarvis	- Chamberlain's Department
Howard Hillier-Daines	- City Surveyor's Department
Ade Adetosoye	- Director of Community & Children's Services
Jacque Campbell	- Community and Children's Services Department
Neal Hounsell	- Community and Children's Services Department
Robert Jacks	- Community and Children's Services Department
David Padfield	- Community and Children's Services Department
Elizabeth Donnelly	- Community and Children's Services Department
Jacqueline Whitmore	- Community and Children's Services Department
Mark Goodfellow	- Experion

1. APOLOGIES

Apologies were received from Deputy the Revd Stephen Haines and Elizabeth Rogula.

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

Deputy Henry Jones declared an interest in matter relating to the Middlesex Street Estate as a lease holder.

3. MINUTES

RESOLVED – That the public minutes and non-public summary of the meeting held on 14 September 2015 be approved as a correct record.

Matters Arising

Housing and Planning Bill

In response to a Member's question, officers advised that the Bill was still going through the House of Commons, but an update report would be provided at the Community & Children's Services Committee in January 2016. Officers advised that there would no longer be forced sales of high value properties but Local Authorities would have to pay a sum of money each year instead; studio flats were not exempt from the Right to Buy scheme; and changes to Section 106 monies would affect the Building Programme rather than the HRA Business Plan.

Residents' Celebration Day

The Chairman advised Members that this had taken place on 17th October, and had been well attended and very successful.

4. THE RENTAL EXCHANGE

The Sub Committee received a presentation from Mark Goodfellow from Experion who detailed the Rental Exchange Scheme, which provided social tenants with the opportunity to develop a good credit rating through the sharing of their rental payment data. This would enable residents to access more affordable financial deals.

Members noted that 99% of tenants had no significant arrears on their rent and their credit scores would improve as a result of incorporating rental data, with 1% of tenants having serious arrears on their rent so their credit score would be reduced by approximately 90-140 points. Only 6 tenants were on full Housing Benefit and so would see no effect on their credit score. The Sub Committee discussed the report, including issues regarding data protection, the option for residents to opt out of the service, and the practicalities of implementing the new system.

RESOLVED – That authority be delegated to the Director of Community & Children's Services to proceed with full membership of the Rental Exchange and to take the necessary steps to issue fair processing notices to tenants.

5. CITY OF LONDON ALMSHOUSES UPDATE

The Sub Committee received a report of the Director of Community & Children's Services regarding the City of London Almshouses, and noted that the services of Southwark Mediation Centre were being extended owing to the positive reviews it had received from several residents of the Almshouses. Officers also reported that the road repairs and lighting had been completed, satisfaction levels on repairs were being measured, and the London Borough of Islington had offered to manage the tree pruning contractors on the City's behalf.

RESOLVED – That the report be noted.

6. **HOUSING UPDATE**

The Sub Committee received the six-monthly report of the Director of Community & Children's Services providing an update on Housing Service performance. Members discussed the report, including timescales for responsive repairs, and asked for the incidents of anti-social behaviour to be reported by Estate.

In response to a Member's query, officers confirmed that two long-standing voids and ten units at Mais House were being 'set aside' to offer as homes to families of Syrian refugees. In effect, this meant they would not be let to anyone else in order to be used as part of the pan-London approach to the crisis with approximately six weeks' notice. The Sub Committee discussed City of Sanctuary, but noted that this was a grassroots charity and it was therefore up to residents themselves if they wanted to become involved.

RESOLVED – That the report be noted.

7. **ALLOCATED MEMBERS REPORT**

Members received a report of the Director of Community & 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 took an active interest in their estates, championing residents and local staff and engaging with residents.

In response to a Member's question, the Director advised that strong operational links were in place with other boroughs' Health and Wellbeing Boards, but strategic links needed to be strengthened. Officers reported that the final report and recommendation from the City Surveyor was awaited with regard to Great Arthur House; Members expressed their concern with how long this had taken, and were advised by officers that residents had been kept consistently informed and that delays were unavoidable as there was only one company able to make the windows. In response to a query from a Member regarding CCTV on Middlesex Street, officers reported that monies were anticipated for the end of the month.

The Sub Committee thanked the Area Manager for her work, as this was her last meeting.

RESOLVED – That the report be noted.

8. **CITY OF LONDON ALMSHOUSES TRUST RISK REGISTER 2015**

The Sub Committee considered a report of the Director of Community & Children's Services which provided the updated Risk Register for the City of London Almshouses Trust charity.

RESOLVED – That the register satisfactorily sets out the risks faced by the charity, and appropriate measures are in place to mitigate those risks.

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

There were no questions.

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

There were no items of urgent business.

11. **EXCLUSION OF THE PUBLIC**

RESOLVED – That under Section 100(A) of the Local Government Act 1972, the public be excluded from the meeting for the following items on the grounds that they involve the likely disclosure of exempt information as defined in Part 1 of Schedule 12A of the Local Government Act.

Item	Paragraph
12 & 13	3
14	-
15	7

12. **NON-PUBLIC MINUTES**

RESOLVED – That the non-public minutes of the meeting held on 14 September 2015 be approved as a correct record.

13. **4-6 GRAVEL LANE LEASE**

The Sub Committee considered a joint report of the Director of Community & Children's Services and the City Surveyor.

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

There were no questions.

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

There was one item of urgent business.

The meeting closed at 3.20 pm

Chairman

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