

HOUSING MANAGEMENT AND ALMSHOUSES SUB (COMMUNITY AND CHILDREN'S SERVICES) COMMITTEE
Tuesday, 26 September 2017

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

Present

Members:

Randall Anderson (Chairman)
John Fletcher (Deputy Chairman)
Mary Durcan
Marianne Fredericks
Alderman David Graves
Barbara Newman
Dhruv Patel
Susan Pearson
Deputy Elizabeth Rogula

Officers:

| | | |
|---------------------|---|-----------------------------------|
| Julie Mayer | - | Town Clerk's Department |
| Mark Jarvis | - | Chamberlain's Department |
| Jacquie Campbell | - | Community and Children's Services |
| Paul Murtagh | - | Community and Children's Services |
| Amy Carter | - | Community and Children's Services |
| Paul Jackson | - | Community and Children's Services |
| Adam Johnstone | - | Community and Children's Services |
| Jacqueline Whitmore | - | Sheltered Housing Manager |

1. **APOLOGIES**

Apologies were received from Deputy John Tomlinson and Deputy Henry Jones.

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

There were no declarations.

3. **MINUTES** – That the public minutes and non-public summary of the meeting held on 3rd July 2017 be approved.

Matters arising:

- A dashboard covering applications would be included in the Sub Committee's bi-annual report.
- Fire doors would be covered under item 9 on today's agenda.

- Frequency of meetings would be covered at the next meeting, when the Sub Committee will be asked to consider its Terms of Reference, for final approval by the Grand Committee and the Annual Court of Common Council in 2018.
- The Risk Register would be presented to the next meeting, when Members will be asked to consider how often they would like to receive this report.

4. **MAIS HOUSE DECANT PROGRAMME - UPDATE**

The Sub Committee received a report of the Director of Community and Children's services which provided an update on the Mais House Decant Programme. Members noted that a further resident had been re-housed, with another due next week, leaving a balance of 12 residents.

Members noted that the Merchant Taylors had offered assistance and the Sheltered Housing Manager was a member of the Almshouses Association Group, which provided networking opportunities and helped raise awareness. The Assistant Director reminded Members of the Outline Housing Programme, previously presented to the Housing Management and Almshouses Sub Committee, which sought to provide 700 units. The Assistant Director offered Members a delivery update at the next meeting. Members noted that all new homes in London must be 'lifetime standard' and particularly noted the City of London Corporation's aspiration to provide lifetime homes for older residents.

RESOLVED, that – the report be noted.

5. **CITY OF LONDON ALMSHOUSES UPDATE**

The Sub Committee received a report of the Director of Community and Children's Services which provided an update on the City of London Almshouses. Members noted that pre-planning permission was awaited from Lambeth Council for the windows and the contract of works could then go out to tender. The Chairman and Deputy Chairman had asked for estate updates to future meetings and the Assistant Director offered a presentation to the next meeting on the Major Works Programme, which would become a standing agenda item.

Members noted the date for this year's Christmas Hamper delivery of 1st December 2017 and the Town Clerk would confirm details and arrange transport in due course.

RESOLVED, that – the report be noted.

6. **CUSTOMER SERVICE STANDARDS REVIEW**

The Sub Committee considered a report of the Director of Community and Children's services in respect of the Customer Service Standards Review, which would re-launch the Customer Care Standard. Members noted the very strong performance in processing complaints and the other standards would be enforced with extra training for all front-line staff and by working with managers on appraisals and performance management.

RESOLVED, that – the implementation of the new Customer Service Standards be approved.

7. **HOUSING ALLOCATIONS SCHEME 2017**

The Sub Committee considered a report of the Director of Community and Children's Services in respect of the proposed City of London Corporation Housing Allocations Scheme 2017. Members had seen an earlier version of the report in May 2017 and noted that this later version followed consultation during the summer with partners and the public. Officers agreed to investigate whether a private pension would count as 'savings'. Finally, Members asked if key information could be more visible in the covering reports, rather than as part of several appendices.

RESOLVED, that:

1. The feedback received during the consultation and the suggested changes to the Allocations Scheme 2017 be reviewed and noted.
2. The amended Allocations Scheme for 2017 be recommended for approval by the Community and Children's Services Committee, subject to clarity about whether a private pension would count as savings.

8. **HOUSING STRATEGY**

The Sub Committee received a report of the Director of Community and Children's services which provided an outline of a proposed new Housing Strategy. Members were asked to consider whether the proposed areas of focus outlined were the right ones and to offer any initial feedback on the key questions posed within each area. Members agreed that the outline was very good and had found the recent programme of estate visits helpful. Members were asked to provide general comments on the report to adam.johnstone@cityoflondon.gov.uk and for comments or queries on Housing Strategy and the City of London Corporation's Housing Stock to paul.murtagh@cityoflondon.gov.uk.

RESOLVED, that – the report be noted.

9. **FIRE SAFETY**

The Sub Committee received a report of the Director of Community and Children's services which provided an update on fire safety since the paper was presented to the July Meeting, shortly after the Grenfell Tower fire. Members noted that they would receive updates at future meetings for as long as necessary. Officers highlighted the actions and ongoing works since the last meeting as follows:

- A communications plan was in place for the next 12 months.
- Guidance had been issued on what can and cannot be stored on balconies.
- A new programme of visits had been scheduled to carry out fire risk assessments and identify works required.
- The draft feasibility study into the potential installation of sprinkler systems in the City's tower blocks has been drafted and submitted to the London Fire Brigade for comment. Once this has been done, the study will be analysed and a subsequent report and recommendations presented to Members of this Committees.
- It was expected that the City of London Corporation's doors, where in their original state, would generally provide nominal fire resistance of between 15 and 20 minutes. In line with the City's commitment to upgrade the main entrance doors in its homes to up to 60 minutes fire resistance, a number of properties included in the Decent Homes Programme (Phase 2) have been identified to have replacement doors with the original doors sent off for testing.
- Following discussions with the City's Fire Safety Advisor, it has been agreed that future Fire Risk Assessments will be a 'Type 3' assessment. Type 3 assessment differs from the previous 'Type 1' assessments in so far as it includes an internal inspection of a sample number of flats to consider the means of escape and fire detection (i.e. smoke alarms) within the flats. The previously used Type 1 assessment covered common parts only. Inspections were due to start during early in October and completed by end of November, which was well within the Annual Review timescale of August 2018.
- The works identified by the Fire Brigade were well underway.

The following issues were raised during questions:

- If alarms were in a communal area or if they were notified by a resident of an alarm sounding, the Fire Brigade was obligated to attend.
- All works would be done as a single project rather than in isolation but the works to the doors would have priority.
- Home visits would provide information on vulnerable residents and those with mobility issues as well as highlighting any safeguarding concerns.
- Members praised officers' good communications with residents and asked for this to continue in respect of recharges to leaseholders with regard to fire safety works. Members noted that a barrister specialising in landlord/tenant matters has been instructed to advise on the legal position relating to recharging leaseholders for fire safety improvement

works. Officers will work with the City Solicitor to produce a report on the outcome of this advice to a future meeting of the Housing Management and Almshouses Sub Committee.

- The Fire Brigade generally advised against the use of fire extinguishers unless residents were very conversant in their use.

In concluding, Members commended the excellent work of officers in their response to the Grenfell Tower fire and the speedy production of this report and the follow up work.

RESOLVED, that – the report and comments as set out above be noted.

10. **GATEWAY 7 - OUTCOME REPORT: - REFURBISHMENT WORKS TO DOOR ENTRY SYSTEMS AT THE GOLDEN LANE (PARTIAL), HOLLOWAY AND YORK WAY ESTATES**

The Sub Committee considered a report of the Director of Community and Children's services in respect of the outcome of the refurbishment works to door entry systems at the Golden Lane (partial), Holloway and York Way Estates.

RESOLVED, that – the lessons learnt be noted and the project be closed.

11. **GATEWAY 7 - OUTCOME REPORT: DECENT HOMES WORKS TO PROPERTIES PREVIOUSLY OMITTED FROM PROGRAMMES PROGRAMMES (CALL-BACKS 2013-17)**

The Sub Committee considered a report of the Director of Community and Children's Services in respect of the Decent Homes Works to properties previously omitted from programmes (callbacks 2013-17). Members noted that works relating to the above reports had taken place while the current team was evolving. The Assistant Director advised that the current team had far more resources and greater project management skills in house, which would continue to show improvements going forward and enable more detailed surveys and analysis before works commenced.

Two Members had been on a site visit last week to Great Arthur House and, having found many issues unresolved, asked for a report to the next meeting. Members were particularly concerned that some Leaseholders had been making payments since the Section 20 Consultation had started. Officers were working with the City Surveyors to bring a speedy resolution to the outstanding building related issues and a new show flat had been prepared for residents to see how these outstanding matters could be resolved. Officers advised that any debts would not be enforced until all circumstances were fully understood. Members noted that the Service Charges Team were engaging with residents and producing a leaflet, offering a simple explanation, which they offered to share with Members.

In respect of the dirty windows at Crescent House, officers advised that there is a programme of external cleaning. Improvements would only be realised if the cleaning was done more frequently and this would have cost implications for residents. A Member suggested that dirt proofing technology be investigated for the City's new window replacement programme. The Assistant Director offered to include Crescent House in his November briefing to the Sub Committee.

Officers explained the loan scheme and interest free period and Members noted that the team worked on a case-by-case basis and helped residents in genuine hardship. Members noted that the works would be complete by the end of November and the internal works by end of December.

Members noted that the Housing Stock Survey was now underway and covered, in the main, the Decent Homes Standard and issues relating to the Health, Hazard and Safety Rating System (HHSRS) including asbestos and fire safety. The completed stock condition survey would provide the City of London Corporation with critical information, not only on the current condition of the stock, but will also inform future planned maintenance and major works programmes. Officers confirmed that there was a programme of works for signage maintenance and replacements for all of the City's Estates.

Finally, officers advised that a residents' survey was planned for November this year and the Chairman stressed the need for wide engagement in promoting integrated communities.

RESOLVED, that – the lessons learnt be noted and the project be closed.

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

There were no questions.

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

There was no other business.

14. **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
15-21

Paragraph
1,2,3

15. **NON-PUBLIC MINUTES**

RESOLVED – That the non-public minutes of the meeting held on 3rd July 2017 be approved

16. **THE CITY OF LONDON ALMSHOUSES (1005857)**
The Sub Committee considered and approved a report of the Director of Community and Children's services in respect of the City of London Almshouses (1005857).
17. **INCIDENT AT CITY OF LONDON ALMSHOUSES**
The Sub Committee considered and approved a report of the Director of Community and Children's Services.
18. **GATEWAY 5 - AUTHORITY TO START WORK: WILLIAM BLAKE ESTATE CCTV INSTALLATION**
The Sub Committee received a report of the Director of Community and Children's Services.
19. **WELFARE BENEFITS UPDATE & FINANCIAL INCLUSION PROGRAMME**
The Sub Committee received a report of the Director of Community and Children's Services.
20. **QUESTIONS ON MATTERS RELATING TO THE WORK OF THE SUB COMMITTEE**
There were no non-public questions.
21. **ANY OTHER BUSINESS THAT THE CHAIRMAN CONSIDERS URGENT AND WHICH THE SUB COMMITTEE AGREE SHOULD BE CONSIDERED WHILST THE PUBLIC ARE EXCLUDED**
There was no other business.

The meeting ended at 3.30pm

At the end of the meeting, Members stayed for a briefing session on rent setting and collection

Chairman

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