

COMMUNITY & CHILDREN'S SERVICES COMMITTEE

Friday, 8 February 2019

Minutes of the meeting held at Guildhall at 11.30 am

Present

Members:

Randall Anderson (Chairman)	Graeme Harrower
Munsur Ali	Deputy Catherine McGuinness
Rehana Ameer	Deputy Joyce Nash
Matthew Bell	Barbara Newman
Peter Bennett	Susan Pearson
Mary Durcan	William Pimlott
Marianne Fredericks	Henrika Priest
Alderman John Garbutt	Jason Pritchard
Alderman Prem Goyal OBE JP	James de Sausmarez
Alderman David Graves	Ruby Sayed
Caroline Haines	Deputy Philip Woodhouse
Deputy the Revd Stephen Haines	

Officers:

Mark Jarvis	- Chamberlain's
Chris Bell	- Chamberlain's
Andrew Carter	- Director of Community and Children's Services
Gerald Mehrtens	- Community and Children's Services
Paul Murtagh	- Community and Children's Services
Chris Pelham	- Community and Children's Services
Sam Bedford	- Community and Children's Services
Simon Cribbens	- Community and Children's Services
Julie Mayer	- Town Clerk's

In attendance: Besserat Atsebaha – Proper Officer's representative for Registration, London Borough of Islington

1. APOLOGIES

Apologies were received from Dhruv Patel, John Fletcher, Caroline Haines, Deputy Henry Jones, Natasha Lloyd-Owen, Benjamin Murphy, Laura Jorgensen and Matt Piper.

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

Ms Susan Pearson (Ward Member for Cripplegate made the following declaration:

"There are two items in the public section of this agenda that affect Golden Lane Estate, where I live. Item 11 concerns the progress of the COLPAI project next to the Estate. I shall ask questions under this item about the amount of dust that is being generated on the project site and a major gas leak. When I last applied for a dispensation from the Standards Committee, they seemed to think I could have a "pecuniary interest" in four trees owned by a public authority. They lay great emphasis on "consistency" in their new dispensation policy, so I suppose they would also think I could have a "pecuniary interest" in dust and leaking gas. Since item 11 is for information only, however, not decision, no dispensation for me to speak is necessary. On a reasonable interpretation, I don't have a "pecuniary interest" in the subject of my questions anyway. In item 12 I shall ask a question, of which I have given notice, concerning another aspect of the COLPAI project. Because it is a question, I again don't need a dispensation from the Standards Committee to speak."

Ms Susan Pearson indicated that she would ask questions under items 11 and 12. Since these were questions, and not matters for decision, she did not need a dispensation to ask them, and she considered that on a reasonable interpretation she did not have a "pecuniary interest" in the subject matter of the questions anyway.

Ms Pearson added:

"Item 17 concerns a contract for assessing and negotiating compensation for the Right of Light under the COLPAI development. I am one of the residents whose light will be affected by the development. I shall therefore not speak or vote on this matter."

Ms Susan Pearson indicated that as she was a resident who would be affected by the subject of this report, she would not speak or vote on this matter.

3. **MINUTES**

RESOLVED, that - the public minutes and non-public summary of the meeting held on 11 January 2019 be approved, subject to an amendment correcting Gregory Jones to Henry Jones in respect of the appointment of a Governor to Sir John Cass School.

Matters arising

In response to a question about Great Arthur House, and following the decision of the First Tier Tribunal, Members noted that officers had taken a decision to take Leave to Appeal and it would therefore be heard before a Second Tier Tribunal. The Chairman asked if the decision from the First Tier Tribunal could be circulated to Members once it had been published.

4. **BREXIT UPDATE**

The Director of Community and Children's Services was heard in respect of the latest Brexit implications. Members noted that there had been very few updates since the last meeting of the Committee; there had been some further guidance from government departments but no change to advice in respect of

stockpiling food and health supplies. However, there had been some new advice in respect of contingency planning for adults and children's social care and for colleges and apprenticeship schemes.

5. CITY OF LONDON ALMSHOUSES REVENUE AND CAPITAL BUDGETS 2018/19 AND 2019/20

Members considered a report of the Chamberlain in respect of the Almshouses' Revenue and Capital Budgets. Members were offered a presentation at a future meeting about the operation of the City of London Corporation and Gresham Almshouses.

RESOLVED, that – having reviewed the 2019/20 revenue budget to ensure that it reflects the Committee's objectives, it be recommended for approval by the Finance Committee.

6. PORTSOKEN COMMUNITY ENERGY PROPOSAL

Members received a briefing note on the above proposal, ahead of a full report and feasibility study. Members noted the comments from the Housing Management and Almshouses Sub Committee, which had received a presentation on 21 January 2019.

Members of the Sub Committee had noted the importance of installing the panels at an appropriate time in the major works programme with particular regard to roofing works. The solar panels would be positioned so as to capture the maximum amount of sunlight.

Officers confirmed that the project was progressing within the appropriate funding timescale; i.e. the electricity would need to start being generated a year after the application. Members also noted a draft committee path had been mapped, including the officers' Energy Board. A Member advised that the funding pot was being allocated on a first come, first served, basis and suggested that the scrutiny of financial modelling should reflect this. Members noted that it was possible to check the pot on a regular basis to see how much funding was available. The officer agreed to find out whether income from shareholder investment would be taxable and report back to Members.

Members noted that Repowering London would provide the necessary skills and support to deliver the project and the costs would be included in the feasibility study.

RESOLVED, that – the briefing be noted.

7. SOCIAL WELLBEING STRATEGY

Members received a report of the Director of Community and Children's Services in respect of the Social Wellbeing Strategy.

During the discussion, the following comments were noted:

The importance of printed literature for those who do not use IT and respect for those who prefer to be alone and not engage. Officers advised that the

evaluation would cover individuals across a range of circumstances and outcomes. Members also noted that a recent Age UK Survey had found social media uptake in the older age groups to be higher than expected.

Members asked what consideration had been given to safeguarding issues in developing research being undertaken by Goldsmith University using volunteer researchers. Officers provided assurance that there would be strong support from the Researcher, who would be responsible for in-depth interviews. Members noted that the research project and approach had been ethically approved by Goldsmiths; the interviews with peer interviewers would last no longer than 10 minutes and the interviewee could withdraw at any time. Members asked if the Researcher could give a presentation to a future meeting of the Committee.

Members were reminded about the Dragon Café initiative at Shoe Lane Library, which had also sought to address this. A Member suggested that the Libraries' Home Delivery Service be strongly promoted.

The Tower Hamlets project for increasing engagement among older Bangladesh Community was highlighted. Members noted how language restrictions limit communications; a major cause of loneliness, but there was no evidence to suggest that languages could not be learnt at any age and the classes would offer further opportunities to socialise. Officers said they would carefully consider the best options for reaching people who might be excluded by language restrictions within resources.

The importance of asking residents how they would like to engage and approaching different groups appropriately, as well as helping people to help themselves.

Officers agreed that there was further work to do in the area of clinical anxiety and depression, and its impact on loneliness, and noted that the work of the East London NHS Mental Health Trust in this area could help to address this.

If a Member has further suggestions they should contact Sam Bedford – sam.bedford@cityoflondon.gov.uk.

RESOLVED, that – the report be noted.

8. **COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT**

Members received a report of the Director of Community and Children's Services in respect of Community Engagement. During the discussion the following points were noted:

The City Corporation would support the Commissioners in promoting youth provision during half term.

The Lantern Community event had arisen from a community suggestion and Golden Lane residents had been present at the workshops and parade.

Members noted that the Community Builders Project had offered training, and this could be offered again in the future.

Members noted the success of the Golden Lane Community Centre and that the City Corporation had come a long way in engagement. Officers were thanked for their hard work in this area.

Whilst most funding was from the HRA and aimed at social housing, it was possible to extend this. Members noted this during the previous agenda item in respect of Shoe Lane Library and the Ward of Farringdon Without.

In response to a challenge as to the visibility of the Community Engagement Team on Golden Lane Estate, the officer advised that the team were on site 5 days a week. Members also commended the work of the new Community Centre Manager. It was fully acknowledged that the Golden Lane residents community were very well organised and had been running events for some time. Officers stressed that there was never any intention to 'interfere' but work together, if requested. Officers agreed that they could re-prioritise and re-direct resources in light of this well organised community.

Whilst the project was directed at the residential community, Members noted that the Economic Development Unit led on business engagement and there were City-wide events for businesses; i.e. meetings for all business rate payers and 'Heart of the City', aimed at business with charitable purposes. Alderman Goyal offered to speak to Members interested in Heart of the City.

RESOLVED, that – the report be noted.

9. UPDATE ON CITY OF LONDON CORPORATION CROWDFUNDING PROJECT

Members received a report of the Director of Community and Children's Services which provided an update on the Crowdfunding Project and the launch on 18th February 2019.

RESOLVED, that – the report be noted.

10. REGISTRATION SERVICE UPDATE 2018

Members received a report of the Director of Community and Children's Services and a presentation from the Proper Officer's representative from the London Borough of Islington.

During the discussion and questions the following points were noted:

Guildhall offered a walk-in service and the local hospitals and GPs were aware of the opening hours.

Private Citizenship Ceremonies were available at Islington and the officer agreed to investigate whether they could be offered at Guildhall. Members noted that all Registrars were multi-skilled and able to assist with Citizenship paperwork.

All work was on a cost recovery basis.

The Registration District was still referred to as 'London City', as had been the case for the past 40 Years. Given that the City's population was growing, Members suggested that it might be more consistent to change this to the City of London Corporation. Members also accepted that any such decision should be on a more formalised basis.

The Registrar notified the Coroner of any unexplained deaths, who would monitor any trend and then advise, generally within 48 hours, when the registration of death could go ahead.

RESOLVED, that – the report be noted.

11. **PROGRESS REPORT OF THE PROVISION OF ADDITIONAL PRIMARY SCHOOL PLACES AND SOCIAL HOUSING ON THE FORMER RICHARD CLODESLEY SCHOOL SITE**

Members received a report of the Director of Community and Children's Services in respect of the former Richard Clodesley School site project.

During the discussion, the following points were noted:

In response to a question in respect of the land transferring from the Golden lane estate to the CoLAT, and the legal/financial implications for lease holders on the estate, the officer agreed to feedback as to whether there would be any liability to COLAT.

In response to a further question, Members noted that a drop-in session at Tudor Rose Court had resulted in a very extensive discussion on the concrete crushing works. Environmental Health Officers from both authorities had agreed that, from an environmental perspective, crushing concrete on site would be preferable to sending it away. The current noise levels were within the 73db tolerance and compliant with Environmental Health Legislation. The levels of dust being generated were also within prescribed tolerance levels. Very small amounts of asbestos had been found, as was very common in buildings of this age. Members noted that the Health and Safety Executive had been notified immediately, operators had been protected and levels monitored, to ensure there would be no risk to residents. All these matters had been discussed at the Tudor Rose Court meeting and residents had been satisfied with officers' responses. Members also noted that two notice boards were on site and weekly contractor bulletins were produced. The Committee would also continue to receive progress reports.

RESOLVED, that – the reports be noted.

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

In response to a question about the Planning and Transportation Committee's decision to remove 4 trees from the COLPAI site, Members noted that the City Corporation had accepted this risk at the start of the project and were therefore liable. Members noted that, In the case of the hall having to be redesigned there would be considerable cost and delay, which the City would be at risk for and not the DfE. The officer advised that the position would not be the same in the event of items of archaeological interest or ordnance being uncovered.

A Member was concerned that recent enforcement action taken in Crescent House in respect of plants on staircases was somewhat extreme. The Assistant Director advised that discussions have been held with the London Fire Brigade on this matter and, it is necessary for us to ensure that exit routes are always maintained to provide the prescribed minimum width. However, he was concerned with the wording allegedly used in the letter to residents and would check the circumstances of the case.

In response to a supplementary question about Tudor Court, which had been asked at the last Committee Meeting, Members noted that the rent was similar to other social housing blocks in London and remedial measures would be considered in hardship cases.

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

Following comments at the last meeting and a survey of Members' preferences in respect of the day of the Committee, Members noted that, whilst a majority favoured staying with Fridays and/or had no preference, the Chairman was aware that Friday was not a popular day with many members who were not on the Committee and some had reported this as a deterrent to them joining the Committee.

Members therefore agreed to a trial of alternative days, starting from May 2019, as follows:

10th May to move to 8th May (Wednesday)

11th October to move to 9th October (Wednesday)

1st November to move to 7th November (Thursday)

Member noted that there would be more availability for alternative days from January 2020 onwards and, therefore, if the above trial proved successful, Members could consider whether to continue these arrangements later in the year.

14. **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 1, Schedule 12(a) of the Local Government Act.

Para no
16, 17

Item no
3

15. **NON-PUBLIC MINUTES**

RESOLVED, that – the non-public minutes of the meeting held on 11 January 2019 be approved.

16. **REVIEW OF RECENT HOUSING PROCUREMENT ISSUES AND PROPOSED MITIGATIONS TO IMPROVE COMPETITIVE TENDERING IN FUTURE**

Members considered and approve a report of the Director of Community and Children's Services.

17. **COMPLIANT WAIVER EXTENSION - City of London Primary Academy Islington (COLPAI). Compliant Waiver Extension of Rights of Light Consultant**

Members considered and approved a report of the Director of Community and Children's Services.

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

There were no questions.

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

There were no items.

The meeting ended at 1.15 pm

Chairman

**Contact Officer: Julie Mayer – tel 0207 3321410
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