

COMMUNITY & CHILDREN'S SERVICES COMMITTEE

Thursday, 7 November 2019

Minutes of the meeting of the Community & Children's Services Committee held at
Committee Rooms, West Wing, Guildhall
on Thursday, 7 November 2019 at 11.15 am

Present

Members:

Munsur Ali	Graeme Harrower
Rehana Ameer	Natasha Maria Cabrera Lloyd-Owen
Randall Anderson (Chairman)	Deputy Catherine McGuinness
Peter Bennett	Barbara Newman
Mary Durcan	Susan Pearson
Marianne Fredericks	Piper
Alderman John Garbutt	Henrika Priest
Alderman David Graves	Jason Pritchard
Deputy the Revd Stephen Haines	Ruby Sayed (Deputy Chairman)

Officers:

Mark Jarvis	- Chamberlain's Department
Julie Mayer	- Town Clerk's Department
Gerald Mehrtens	- Community & Children's Services
Paul Murtagh	- Community & Children's Services Department
Chris Pelham	- Community and Children's Services
Chandni Tanna	- COLC

1. APOLOGIES

Apologies were received from George Abrahams, Rehana Ameer Matthew Bell, John Fletcher, Caroline Haines, Laura Jorgensen, Deputy Joyce Nash, Dhruv Patel, William Pimlott, James de Sausmarez and Philip Woodhouse.

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

Mr Munsur Ali declared a general, non-pecuniary interest in respect an item on the outstanding actions list (a report scheduled for the December Committee on the Sir John Cass Foundation Primary School) as his son is a pupil at the Sir John Cass Nursery School.

3. MINUTES

RESOLVED, That – the public minutes and non-public summary of the meeting held on 9th October 2019 be approved.

4. **OUTSTANDING ACTIONS**

Members noted the Committee's Outstanding Actions list and those items which either appeared on today's agenda or had been scheduled for future meetings.

5. **LOCAL AUTHORITY DESIGNATED OFFICER (LADO) ANNUAL REPORT**

Members received a report of the Director of Community and Children's Services which provided an overview of the Local Authorities Designated officer (LADO) activity which had taken place between April 2018 to the end of March 2019. Members noted that the report had also been considered by the Safeguarding Sub Committee on 3rd October 2019.

In response to questions, Members noted that the rise in allegations in the past year was most likely due to raised awareness and there had been a slight increase across London generally. The report explained how levels had been scrutinised back to 2012/13 and Members also noted the spike in 2015/16 following the 'Notice the Signs' campaign.

RESOLVED, that – the report be noted.

6. **ACTION FOR CHILDREN ANNUAL SURVEY**

Members received a report of the Director of Community and Children's Services in respect of the Action for Children Annual Survey, which had been completed between April and July 2019. Members noted that the report had also been considered by the Safeguarding Sub Committee on 3rd October 2019. The Survey had identified that, overall, children and families were happy with the service they received and looked after young people and care leavers had good relationships with their social workers.

In response to questions, the following points were noted:

- Some misunderstanding of the terminologies for Independent Reviewing Officer (IRO) and Virtual Teacher had been clarified.
- Personal safety awareness is included in Service Development Plans and social workers worked with young people individually about staying safe. However, some looked after children (LACs) and unaccompanied asylum seeking children (UASC) were not used to living in a City, which could contribute to their feeling unsettled.
- Survey Monkey had been unpopular, so alternatives were being considered and the timing of surveys was also an important factor. Members noted that face-to-face was preferred but not always possible and it was important for surveys to be independent of social care providers.
- There wasn't an explicit policy in respect of providing accommodation above ground level, which was generally considered safer in City areas. However, accommodation options were considered on a case by case basis and officers agreed to ensure this issue would be considered when

carrying out placement finding. Members were reassured that, whilst finding good quality placements could be challenging, placement quality was subject to monitoring by the Commissioning and Safeguarding and Quality Assurance Services as well as the social workers themselves.

- The LAC Welcome Bags contained the 'City's Pledge' and the Care Leaver Policy (which sets out the entitlement and care leaver offer) was also available in an easy read format on the Internet. The Commissioning Service also set out requirements for the provider agencies to ensure all key documentation, required to support planning for the young people, is held by the agencies.
- Officers confirmed that all semi-independent living providers were checked and quality assured to ensure that, amongst a range of services, support was provided for young people in registering with GP services.

RESOLVED, That – the report be noted.

7. INDEPENDENT REVIEWING OFFICER - ANNUAL REPORT - 2018-19

Members received a report of the Director of Community and Children's Services which provided an overview of the Independent Reviewing Service in the City of London, covered by the IRO Annual Report for 2018-2019. Members noted that the report had also been considered by the Safeguarding Sub Committee on 3rd October 2019.

RESOLVED, That – the report be noted.

8. CITY OF LONDON CORPORATION SUFFICIENCY STRATEGY

Members received a report of the Director of Community and Children's Services which presented the City of London Corporation Sufficiency Strategy.

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

- Officers agreed to explore how foster caring opportunities could be promoted to City residents, given the City Corporation does not provide a fostering service.
- Officers confirmed that the majority of Unaccompanied Asylum Seeking Children presented at Bishopsgate Police Station and would then be assessed and supported by City of London Police and Children Social Care. Members noted that the numbers of Unaccompanied Asylum Seeking Children (UASC) had increased significantly. Officers confirmed that this was due to the National Transfer Scheme not being able to support the timely and safe moving of UASC to other Local Authorities outside of London. The City had increased from 8 to 29 UASC in a relatively short period of 18 months and whilst there had been an increase generally across London, the City's proportion was significant

due to its low number of residents. Members noted that additional social work support had been made available to meet this increase in demand.

- Members were informed that whilst Government funding for under 18's had increased recently, this had not been the case for over 18's care leavers which placed a significant financial burden on the Central Risk budget as the care leaver costs were being absorbed by the City Corporation. This was being monitored closely by the Chamberlain.

RESOLVED, that – the report be noted.

9. **STRONGER COMMUNITIES AND SMALL GRANTS PROGRAMME**

Members considered a report of the Director of Community and Children's Services in respect of the Stronger Communities and Small Grants Programme, which would be established on a rolling basis to ensure consistent access to the community. Members would receive their next update in January 2020.

RESOLVED, That:

1. The new Small Grants process be approved.
2. Authority be delegated to the Director of Community and Children's Services in respect of all small grant applications.
3. The revision to the criteria for the Stronger Communities Programme be noted.

10. **DIGITAL SKILLS STRATEGY, 2018-23 - ANNUAL REPORT**

Members received a joint report of the Director of Innovation and Growth and the Director of Community and Children's Services, which presented the first annual report for the City of London Corporation's Digital Skills Strategy for 2018-23, which was approved by the Policy and Resources Committee in September 2018. Members noted that whilst predominantly aimed at officers and elected Members, the detail in the report could be used for external facing communications. Following consultation with various City Corporation Committees, the Policy and Resources Committee would take a final decision on the report on 21 November 2019.

RESOLVED, that – the report be noted.

11. **SOCIAL MOBILITY STRATEGY, 2018-28 - ANNUAL REPORT**

Members received a report of the Director of the City Bridge Trust and Chief Grants Officer which presented the first annual report for the City of London Corporation's Social Mobility Strategy for 2018-23, which was approved by the Policy and Resources Committee in September 2018. Members noted that whilst predominantly aimed at officers and elected Members, the detail in the report could be used for external facing communications. Following consultation with various City Corporation Committees, the Policy and Resources Committee would take a final decision on the report on 21 November 2019.

Members noted that the City's Corporate Parenting Role was highlighted in the report.

RESOLVED, that – the report be noted.

12. HOUSING MANAGEMENT UPDATE - MISCELLANEOUS PROJECTS

Members received a report of the Director of Community and Children's Services in response to several matters raised during a recent presentation on social isolation on the City's housing estates. The report provided an update on the various projects currently underway and sought to provide reassurance that the areas of concern identified in the presentation were either being addressed, or due to be addressed soon, within existing budgets. Members noted that the Housing Revenue Account was outside of the City Corporation's Fundamental Review and acknowledged how social cohesion projects saved money in the longer term.

In response to questions about the condition of some of the City estate playgrounds, Members noted that it was sometimes necessary to close playgrounds for short periods if several items of equipment required repair. Where this had been done; i.e. – at Windsor House and Avondale, alternative facilities were available close by. The Assistant Director advised that a project was underway to bring all playgrounds up to standard, replacing equipment that might be up to 50 years old with more modern and inclusive designs. Members were reassured that the estate teams inspected equipment daily and reported faults. It was also a legal requirement for all playgrounds to be independently Inspected once a year. Officers agreed to consider expanding the offer to external gym equipment, which was already provided by some Local Authorities.

In response to a further question about the Golden Lane Community Centre, Members noted that this was starting to generate income and, as of the last monthly monitoring report, the cost to the HRA this year had been £40,000. Members noted that the Advisory Board monitored the budget and had recently reviewed charges. Officers were confident that it would break even and be cost neutral to the HRA by the end of this financial year.

RESOLVED, that – the report be noted.

13. PRIMARY CARE NETWORKS AND THE NEIGHBOURHOOD MODEL

Members received a report of the Director of Community and Children's Services in respect of the role of the Neighbourhood Model and its strategic fit within the City of London Corporation. Members noted that the key aspiration for the model was to improve access to better quality health and social care for residents and create a sustainable economy. The Chairman reminded Members that the City's residents were served by two clinical commissioning groups (CCGs). Only the City and Hackney CCG was formally involved in Integrated Commissioning with the City. The City is working to enhance coordination with the Tower Hamlets CCG.

Members discussed the ongoing issues with space at the Neaman Practice and noted that a satellite surgery had been considered. The Director reminded Members of increasing alternative methods for consulting GP's, such as on-line consultations, which would need to be taken into consideration. Officers explained how Primary Care Networks would bring various health services closer to practices but not all services would be available within all practices.

RESOLVED, that – the report be noted.

14. COLPAI - INTEGRATION OF HOUSING ONTO GOLDEN LANE ESTATE

The Director was heard in respect of use of Golden Lane Estate land for the new school and housing. Members noted that a similar question had been raised on behalf of Leaseholders a year ago. The advice then was that, whilst it was not possible for the City to take land away and give it to another organisation, it was open to housing services, through the Community and Children's Services Committee, to resolve that the land was no longer required for housing purposes and was therefore surplus. This action was taken in June 2018 and the land was appropriated for planning purposes, subject to the swap with former education land at Richard Cloudesly being taken into the HRA for the purpose of new social housing. The Director understood that all necessary consultation had been carried out and no further consultation was needed under S.105 of the Housing Act 1985.

Consequently, there was no need to specifically vary each lease (amend the terms of all the leases on Golden Lane Estate) nor was there any statutory power to do so. The Director had checked with Comptrollers and City Solicitors and the previous advice had not changed. Members noted that it was intended for the City of London Primary Academy, Islington (COLPAI) housing development to be managed alongside Golden Lane, in order to achieve economies of scale and a reduction in estate wide charges for Golden Lane lessees.

15. RESOLUTION FROM THE STREETS AND WALKWAYS SUB COMMITTEE

Members received a resolution from the Barbican Residential Committee in respect of the public realm in and around the Barbican Estate. Members noted that, 10 years ago, a budget of £50,000 was transferred to the Director of Community and Children's Services but this was rapidly subsumed into the landlord account and had not been uplifted since. Furthermore, a project to resurface the podium had been put on hold due to the City Corporation's Fundamental Review.

There was some discussion as to whether the Barbican Centre, Culture Mile Project and the Girls School should form a collective bid to address deferred maintenance and, therefore, the resolution should be referred to the Corporate Asset Sub Committee, to consider adding it to the Cyclical Works Programme. Members also noted that the forthcoming Governance Review might seek to redress this. Whilst accepting that there had been some historic deficit in respect of budgetary provision for maintenance works, Members also noted

that the Barbican Estate was 50 years old and there had been issues with the structure in recent years.

RESOLVED, that – the Barbican Residential Committee note Members' comments as set out above and suggestions as to their next options.

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

There were no questions.

17. ANY OTHER BUSINESS THAT THE CHAIRMAN CONSIDERS URGENT

There were no items.

18. 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 Part 1 (Schedule 12A) of the Local Government Act.

Item nos.	para no
19-25	3

19. NON-PUBLIC MINUTES

RESOLVED, that – the non-public minutes of the meeting held on 9th October be approved.

20. ISLDEN HOUSE INFILL DEVELOPMENT PROJECT - ISSUE RE EXPENDITURE

Members received a report of the Director of Community and Children's Services

21. POLICE ACCOMMODATION STRATEGY - DECANT CAR PARKING - MIDDLESEX STREET CAR PARK - GATEWAY 5

Members considered and approved a report of the City Surveyor.

22. AVONDALE SQUARE ESTATE, GEORGE ELLISTON AND ERIC WILKINS HOUSES - ROOFS AND WINDOWS

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

23. REPORT OF ACTION TAKEN

Members received a report of the Town Clerk and noted the following reports agreed under urgency:

Housing Delivery Programme – provision of social housing on the Sydenham Hill Estate - Gateway 4: detailed options appraisal.

Isleden House Infill Project – Gateway 5 – Issues Report

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

There was one question whilst the public were excluded.

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

One report was considered whilst the public were excluded.

The meeting ended at 1.15 pm

Chairman

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