

HOUSING MANAGEMENT AND ALMSHOUSES SUB (COMMUNITY AND CHILDREN'S SERVICES) COMMITTEE
Monday, 21 January 2019

Minutes of the meeting held at Guildhall at 11.30 am

Present

Members:

Randall Anderson (Deputy Chairman)
John Fletcher (Chairman)
Mary Durcan
Marianne Fredericks
Alderman David Graves
Susan Pearson
William Pimlott
Peter Bennett

Officers:

Paul Murtagh	- Assistant Director, Barbican and Property Services, Community and Children's Services
Liam Gillespie	- Community and Children's Services
Jacqui McKeating	- Community and Children's Services
Dean Robinson	- Community and Children's Services
Mohammed Hussain	- Community and Children's Services
Mark Jarvis	- Chamberlains
Goshe Munir	- Chamberlains

In attendance:

Afsheen Rashid	CEO and Founder – Repowering (item 6 only)
Jason Pritchard	Ward Member, Portsoken (item 6 only)
Munsur Ali	Ward Member, Portsoken (item 6 only)

1. APOLOGIES

Apologies were received from Dhruv Patel.

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

The following Members declared pecuniary interests in respect of Agenda Item (18) – Housing Management System Upgrade - by virtue of being leaseholders on the Barbican Estate:

- Mary Durcan
- Susan Pearson
- Alderman David Graves

William Pimlott also declared an interest, although the legislation is silent in respect of his particular circumstances.

3. **MINUTES**

RESOLVED – That the public minutes and non-public summary of the meeting held on held on 27th November 2018 be approved.

Matters arising

In respect of the review of car park charges, and specifically disabled parking provision, Members noted that, should Committee cycles permit, this report would be presented to the Housing Management and Almshouses Sub Committee, in addition to the Community and Children's Services and Barbican Residential Committees.

4. **OUTSTANDING ACTIONS**

Members received the Committee's outstanding actions list and noted the following updates since the last meeting of the Sub Committee:

- A report on ParkGuard Ltd would be presented to the March Housing Management and Almshouses Sub Committee.
- Tenders for Cullum Welch House were due back at the end of January 2019. Officers had been working closely with colleagues in City Procurement and Members would receive a detailed report at the next meeting of the Grand Committee.
- Existing fire extinguishers had been removed from all common areas and car parks.
- A Member asked if future outstanding actions lists could include target dates, wherever possible.

5. **ALMSHOUSES REVENUE AND CAPITAL BUDGET REPORT FOR 2018/19 AND 2019/20.**

Members considered a report of the Chamberlain in respect of the Almshouses Revenue and Capital Budget. A query about the proportion of contributions, as part of service charge income, would be captured when the report was presented to the Grand Committee.

RESOLVED, that – the Almshouses Revenue and Capital Budget for 2018/19 be recommended to the Community and Children's Services Committee, for final approval by the Finance Committee.

6. **PORTSOKEN COMMUNITY ENERGY PROPOSAL**

Members received a briefing note which provided information on the proposal to establish the City of London's first community-owned solar power station in Portsoken Ward, on the Middlesex Street Estate.

Members noted that the proposal was being led by a group of Portsoken residents, working in partnership with Repowering London; a not-for-profit organisation with a strong track record of delivering five award winning community energy projects on social housing estates. Members noted that the partnership had successfully secured funding from the Mayor of London's 'London Community Energy Fund' and they were required to pre-register for the scheme before the 31st of March 2019. Members also received a presentation on the proposal, delivered by the Co-founder and CEO of Repowering.

During the presentation and questions, the following points were noted:

1. The panels would be fitted to roofs which are due to be resurfaced as part of the current Major Works Improvement Programme and, whilst the scheme could still go ahead, there would be cost implications if the solar panels were fitted ahead of the roof works. Furthermore, the issue of routine maintenance of the roofs would also need to be taken into consideration.
2. Members noted the approximate size of the solar panels and the feasibility study would confirm the actual number that could be installed.
3. The scheme would offer local employment opportunities both during installation and potentially for longer term appointments within the Co-op and/or on other projects.
4. There is potential for other financial support beyond the Mayor's fund; i.e. donations and carbon offset funding, along with the community share capital. The price of electricity is always rising but market forces would indicate exact prices.
5. There were some solar panels on Golden Lane's Community Centre and the payback period, when compared to double glazing, was very low.
6. Repowering used standard templates for leases with other local authorities, which were of similar long terms, negotiated to meet their circumstances. Members asked if the templates and heads of terms could be shared as part of the next report.
7. Portsoken Energy would generate the Co-op and formal service agreement. The Co-op would own the panels and have statutory responsibility for meter readings; billing etc, supported by Repowering.
8. The proposal should be presented to the City Corporation's Energy (Officer) Board and Members noted that, given its very high expenditure in this area, the City Corporation achieved very large economies of scale with current arrangements. However, given the scope and size of this project, it is unlikely to impact on the work of the Energy Board.
9. In previous projects, the majority of share offers had been for a minimum investment of £250.00, with a few contributing larger amounts. It was

just £1.00 to join the Co-op but this would be for membership only with no return. The Co-op would have a governance structure and annual general meeting. Under Co-op rules, no individual could apply for more than a third of the total share value and all members would have equal status.

10. The schemes were marketed on social and environmental benefits, not financial. Whilst returns were not guaranteed, there would be provision every year for returning capital. Members would not be personally liable and the Co-op would be registered as a corporate entity, with an asset lock in the event of insolvency.

11. Shares were not transferable but are refundable and, in the event of death of a shareholder, they could appoint a nominee at the point of application. The funds were invested with the Co-op Bank, with a possibility of future investments in other trusted, ethical institutions. In order to protect those who needed to withdraw funds promptly, there would be no long-term, locked-in investments.

12. Whilst investments beyond the residents of an estate were welcome, internal targets were generally for 20% of an estate. Members noted that Vauxhall was at 25%.

In concluding, the Chairman acknowledged Members enthusiasm for this project as it promoted both renewable energy and the spirit of community involvement and partnership working. The Chairman thanked Repowering London for an exciting and innovative presentation.

In order to progress the proposal, Members and officers noted the deadline of the end of March 2019, for the works to be commissioned for March 2020. Officers would therefore need to be mindful of the various Committee cycles; likely to include the Energy Board, the Community and Children's Services Committee, Planning and Transportation Committee, Procurement Sub Committee, Policy and Resources Committee and possibly the Court of Common Council. The Chairman of the Housing Management and Almshouses Sub Committee asked to see a progress report at the next meeting.

RESOLVED, that – the briefing note and plans for progressing the proposal be noted.

7. **HOUSING MAJOR WORKS PROGRAMME - PROGRESS REPORT**

Members received a report of the Director of Community and Children's Services in respect of progress on the Housing Major Works Programme. During the discussion and questions, the following points were noted:

1. There has been an amalgamation of two teams following the recent retirement of an Assistant Director and a new structure would be in place by April 2019. The restructure would provide additional resources to deal mainly with specialist fire safety works and construction health and

safety matters. Members were particularly pleased to note the presence of City Corporation Clerks of Works on site.

2. The Assistant Director emphasised the need to avoid a repeat of the current 'catch-up' works emphasising that a planned maintenance programme is in place, which will ensure the longer-term sustainability of the housing stock. This report, however, focusses on the current Major Works Programme. Members noted that the new housing developments would not be part of this report.
3. With regard to the external redecoration programme, it was noted that some redecoration could not be finished until the concrete repairs were complete.
4. Saville's 30-Year report is an important part of the Corporation's 30-year Business Plan and, Members will start to see this reflected in a new 5-year plan that will be developed for approval towards the end of the current calendar year.
5. Members would receive a report at the next meeting in respect of the revised Window Replacement Programme. This new programme is intended as a realistic programme with realistic timescales and, reflects the previously agreed approach to breaking down the programme into more manageable sized projects.

In concluding the discussion, the Chairman commended officers for their progress and due diligence, considering the complexities of some projects, particularly in Cripplegate Ward.

RESOLVED, that the report be noted.

8. **HATE INCIDENTS POLICY**

Members considered a report of the Director of Community and Children's Services in respect of a draft Hate Incidents Policy. Whilst noting that the Law Commission were re-examining definitions, there was a general agreement that 'transgender identity' should be wider, particularly in respect of misogynistic behaviour. Members noted that policy officers worked closely with the Establishment Committee to ensure all policies were in sync.

In respect of 'trolling' on social media etc., Members noted that officers worked closely with the Police to promote agencies such as 'Stop UK', which offered help for victims of on-line abuse. Officers agreed that the appendices to the Policy would include information on helplines. In the event of severe cases, where tenants felt at risk and had asked to be moved, this was captured by current Housing Legislation.

RESOLVED, that – the Hate Incidents Policy for use by the Housing Service be approved, with the addition of an appendix in respect of helplines, as referred to above.

9. **HOUSING UPDATE AND RISK REGISTER (1ST APRIL TO 30TH SEPTEMBER 2018)**

Members received a report of the Director of Community and Children's Services which provided a 6 monthly update on housing service performance and management information. During the discussion on this item, the following points were noted:

Future reports would include a 'dash board' format, which is generally more user-friendly.

The Fire Safety Risk would be amended as it did not accurately reflect what the Department were trying to achieve. Members would receive a detailed overhaul of the Fire Safety Plan at their next meeting.

Members commended the excellent performance on rent collection.

Whilst the expenditure on breakdowns and emergency repairs was fairly high, when compared to contract and cyclical works, Members noted that the major works programme, discussed in the previous agenda item, was steadily reducing the amount and the position was being monitored.

Officers agreed to provide additional information in respect of the number of successful placements on the Housing Waiting List.

The Assistant Director was aware of the recent rise in formal complaints, which might have arisen as a result of rising expectations in respect of the major works programme. There was further discussion on managing expectations, within agreed service level agreements, and the need to ensure they were being widely communicated.

In respect of the repairs and maintenance table in the report, Members asked if the direction of travel could be included and if there could be a comparison with the number of complaints received.

RESOLVED, that – the report be noted.

10. **DISCRETIONARY HOUSING PAYMENT POLICY**

Members considered a report of the Director of Community and Children's Services in respect of the Discretionary Housing Payment Policy. Members noted that the Policy had been agreed by the Sub Committee in 2013. This update was in response to a recommendation arising from an Internal Audit Welfare Reform recommendation in 2018.

RESOLVED, that – the updated Discretionary Housing Payment Policy be approved, to ensure it reflects new legislation and caselaw.

11. **TENANCY VISITS PROGRAMME**

Members received a report of the Director of Community and Children's Services in respect of the Tenancy Visits Programme. Members noted that emerging issues would be grouped and analysed in the final report on the

visits. In respect of the rate of completion, officers explained that the programme had gained momentum during the visits to Avondale and they remained confident of a 31 March 2019 completion date. Members also noted that, generally, the visits had been well received and residents co-operative.

RESOLVED, that – the report be noted.

12. COLLECTION OF WATER CHARGES FROM TENANTS

Members received a report of the Director of Community and Children's Services in respect of the collection of water charges from tenants and the City Corporations arrangements with Thames Water. Members noted that all residents would receive a letter from Thames Water this week; setting out tariffs and officering support available for those on benefits and with medical conditions etc. In addition, the City Corporation had also briefed all of its estates about the arrangements. Given the take up of concessionary tariffs was low, and there had been some confusion amongst tenants about water meters; officers agreed to speak to Thames Water's Account Liaison Manager in respect of visiting resident drop-ins or resident association meetings.

RESOLVED, that – the report be noted.

13. CITY OF LONDON (AND GRESHAM) ALMSHOUSES, EAST LODGE AND COMMUNAL AREAS - REFURBISHMENT WORKS

Members considered a report of the Director of Community and Children's Services in respect of refurbishment works to the City of London (and Gresham) Almshouses, East Lodge and Communal areas and sought approval to start work.

RESOLVED, that:

1. The use of £254,300 from the City of London Almshouses Trust cash balances for initial refurbishment works in 2018/19 be approved.
2. Investment assets be disposed to the value of £432,679, to fund future refurbishment works, fees and staff costs, which will result in a future loss of investment income. (NB: To be advised)
3. TSG Building Services be appointed to carry out internal, external and common parts refurbishment works at the City of London Almshouses, at a cost of £654,300, as part of a wider contract to encompass similar works to the Gresham Almshouses. (NB. This is subject to approval through a separate 'gateway 5' report).
4. The of £707,440 be approved for the COLA works.
5. A staff cost budget of £25,000 be approved, to be used to for project management costs up to the completion of the works (including £5,341 spent to date).
6. A budget of £28,140 be approved for Quantity Surveyor fees to take the project to completion (including £15,120 spent to date).

7. The Risk Register and a potential mitigated risk budget of £92,400 be noted.

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

A Member asked about Cornerstone Telecommunications Infrastructure Ltd (CTIL) which plan; *“to build 4G mobile “small cells”, which will be housed on City street furniture such as lampposts, street signs, buildings and CCTV columns, to provide enhanced mobile coverage at street level and ensure that the City is best placed to become an early adopter of 5G, which is widely expected to become available in 2020.”*

The Member had particular concerns about the health implications, especially as those in respect of 5G are as yet unknown, the contract would be for 15 years, and all revenue would go to City funds, not the HRA or residents who would be affected. The Member asked whether the City Corporation, as a responsible landlord should have been allowed to debate the issue in the first place. The Members also asked what, if anything, could be done now, in the event of possible installations on the roofs of our residential and educational buildings, where people’s long term health might be at risk ?

The Assistant Director acknowledged that the matter had caused considerable interest and anxiety for Members and residents. Whilst the Assistant Director could not answer in full at this time, he outlined the position as follows:

- Cornerstone Telecommunications Infrastructure Limited (CTIL) signed a contract with the City of London Corporation in March 2017, which gave CTIL permission to install mobile equipment on City owned assets (including rooftops) to improve wireless connectivity across the Square Mile, including the Golden Lane Estate.
- CTIL sent a pre-planning application letter to Mark Field MP and Cripplegate Ward Members notifying them of its intention to install mobile equipment on the rooftop of Bowater House, as a result of the termination of a lease at Florin Court, Charterhouse Square.
- Officers in the Department of Community and Children’s Services, specifically Housing, were unaware of this application and CTIL’s intentions. It would appear that the City, as the landlord, had not been consulted on this matter.
- The Assistant Director has been advised that CTIL actions on this occasion were not part of the contract it has with the City. CTIL had apparently sent out several ‘speculative’ notices of the kind referred to above, in the hope that one or more of them met with a favourable response.

- In terms of the Contract with CTIL, it does give CTIL exclusive access to specific City owned assets for the installation of mobile equipment. However, the Assistant Director had been assured that CTIL must firstly seek the approval of the City as Landlord. CTIL must also secure planning approval and listed building consent where appropriate.
- The City will need to be satisfied that the installation of mobile equipment will not pose any health risks to residents and occupiers and will not affect the fabric of the building or its day-to-day operational use.
- The Planning Department have now written to GVA, who is acting on behalf of CTIL, advising that its proposals for Bowater House was unlikely to receive approval.
- Going forward, the Assistant Director has requested a formal process for applications.

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

There was no other business.

16. **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
18

Paragraph
3

17. **NON-PUBLIC MINUTES**

RESOLVED – That the non-public minutes of the meeting held on 27TH November 2018 be approved as a correct record.

18. **HOUSING MANAGEMENT SYSTEM UPGRADE**

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

19. **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.

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

There were no non-public questions.

The meeting ended at 1.30 pm.

Chairman

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