

COMMUNITY & CHILDREN'S SERVICES COMMITTEE

Friday, 17 December 2021

Minutes of the meeting held at 11.00 am

<https://youtu.be/CoBJusrUlkM>

This meeting was held as an informal one, with the views reached by the Committee approved formally by the Town Clerk after the meeting, in accordance with the Court of Common Council's Covid Approval Procedure. This process reflects the current position in respect of the holding of formal Local Authority meetings and the Court's decision of 15 April 2021 to continue with virtual meetings, with formal confirmation of decisions provided through a delegation to the Town Clerk (or his nominated representative) after the informal meeting has taken place and the will of the Committee is known. The link to the public part of this meeting is shown above and will be available for one year from the date of the meeting.

Present

Members:

Ruby Sayed (Chairman)
Randall Anderson (Deputy Chairman)
Rehana Ameer
Matthew Bell
Peter Bennett
Nicholas Bensted-Smith
Mary Durcan
Alderman Professor Emma Edhem
Helen Fentimen
John Fletcher
Marianne Fredericks
Caroline Haines
Graeme Harrower
Christopher Hayward

Deputy Jamie Ingham Clark
Alderman Gregory Jones QC
Deputy Henry Jones
Alderman Alastair King
Natasha Maria Cabrera Lloyd-Owen
Alderman Bronek Masojada
Deputy Catherine McGuinness
Dhruv Patel
Susan Pearson
William Pimlott
Dawn Wright

Officers:

Andrew Carter	- Director of Community & Children's Services
Bob Roberts	- Director of Communications
Simon Cribbens	- Community & Children's Services Department
Paul Murtagh	- Community & Children's Services Department
Chris Pelham	- Community & Children's Services Department
Andrew Tratham	- City and Hackney Public Health
Ola Obadara	- City Surveyors
Julie Fittock	- City Surveyor's Department
Mark Jarvis	- Chamberlain's Department
Julie Mayer	- Town Clerk's Department
Andrew Buckingham	- Communications Department

1. APOLOGIES

Apologies were received from Mark Wheatley, Sir Michael Snyder, Elizabeth Rogula, Keith Bottomley, Jason Pritchard, the Rev. Stephen Haines and Benjamin Murphy.

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

There were no declarations.

3. **MINUTES**

RESOLVED, that – the public minutes and non-public summary of the meeting held on 8th November 2021 be approved, subject to an amendment to Susan Pearson's Declaration of Interests in respect of projects on the Golden Lane Estate at items 10 and 17, and not items 8 and 22.

4. **OUTSTANDING ACTIONS**

The Committee received the outstanding actions list.

5. **COVID 19 - COMMUNICATIONS TO RESIDENTS**

The Committee received a report of the Director of Communications in response to their request for an update on resident communications regarding COVID-19. The report set out the view of the Communications Team in that a high-standard of service was delivered to residents throughout the COVID-19 pandemic, despite a reduced budget and a substantial number of media officers being seconded to the pan-London Strategic Co-ordination Group.

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

- In accordance with General Data Protection Regulations (GDPR), mailing lists must be created and used for specific purposes; i.e. - resident communications in respect of COVID. The Chairman suggested referring this matter to the Digital Services Sub Committee, as its remit covers GDPR compliance.
- A variety of videos had been produced in different languages, targeting hard to reach communities and encouraging take up of first, second and booster vaccines.
- Delivery issues with 'City Matters' had largely been resolved and Members were asked to advise the Director of Communications of any areas not receiving copies.
- There is a Covid specific banner on the front page of the City Corporation's website and the residents' section can be reached in 3 clicks. The Director welcomed suggestions for improving the website generally but suggested that the Covid emphasis should remain for the time being, particularly during the Omicron wave. Members also noted the resource implications in setting up specific websites.

RESOLVED, that – the report be noted.

6. **COVID UPDATE**

Members received the Director of Public Health's regular update on case numbers and other matters, particularly noting the following :

1. Whilst there is a good supply of lateral flow tests (LFTs) at the LFT Centre, community pharmacies could only hold a limited amount of stock. Residents had been advised to try the LFT centre if they experienced shortages.
 2. The LFT and PCR test centres would remain open over Christmas, and there would be mobile vaccination units in the City on 20th and 24th December. Barts and Goodman's Fields would be offering vaccinations from 20th December 2021, and further information would be provided in 'City Matters' and on the City Corporation's web page.
 3. Additional PCR testing sites are being set up across Hackney. PCR testing is NHS driven and officers were working with NHS colleagues to ensure that information is updated as quickly as possible.
 4. The City's low resident population can cause a sharp uptick in case numbers.
 5. Workforce issues across health care settings would be addressed as part of business continuity plans.
 6. Track and Trace had created pressures on the Environmental Health Team's routine work and, therefore, the service had moved to the Hackney Team, which had more suitable infrastructure and funding in place until March 2022. Hackney also operates a public questions in-box, which is valued by the community.
 7. There would be further communications on self-isolating and officers would be contacting local resident groups about mobilising community services, such as the food bank. The Director had been impressed at resilience levels generally and reiterated his message about being 'good neighbours' and contacting services if more support is needed.
 8. There is NHS Guidance in place in respect of downloading the track and trace app, but this is not legally binding. There had been an IT refresh recently about corporation devices, encouraging staff and Members to load the app.
 9. Ward Members in the East of the City were commended for their engagement with residents and success in pushing up vaccination levels, and the Outreach Vaccination Clinics were seeing a higher demand. The Outbreak Control Board constantly reviews areas with vaccine hesitancy.
7. **THE PAN-LONDON HOMELESS TESTING AND CONTACT TRACING 2022/23 - CITY OF LONDON'S ROLE IN THE SUPPORTING OF FINANCIAL COORDINATION OF THE PROJECT ON BEHALF OF LONDON BOROUGHs**

The Committee considered a report in respect of a request to the City of London Corporation, from the Association of Directors of Public Health (ADPH) and the Greater London Assembly (GLA), to manage and coordinate the

financial contributions of the Covid-19 testing, treatment and tracing service for homeless and vulnerable groups. Members noted that the cost to the City Corporation would be funded from resources collected and there would be no additional financial implications.

RESOLVED, that – approval be given to the City of London Corporation being named as the co-ordinator for the financial element only of the pan-London Homeless Testing and Contact Tracing 2022/23 programme.

8. DEPARTMENTAL BUDGET ESTIMATES - EXCLUDING THE HOUSING REVENUE ACCOUNT (HRA)

The Committee considered a joint report of the Director of Community Children's Services, which presented the budget estimates for the Department of Community & Children's Services for 2022/23 (excluding the HRA) and within the envelope allocated to each Director by the Resource Allocation Sub Committee.

Members welcomed the helpful format of this report and noted that the current outturn position was better than anticipated, due to the Afghan Resettlement Grant being more than expected. The Chamberlain explained that the deficit was expected to fall to between £200k and 300k by the end of financial year, and the Quarter 3 figures would be presented to Members in February. Members noted that overspends were generally carried forward to the following year, but due consideration would be given to the circumstances over the past year.

The Director had been working through the pressures on Children's Social Care and continued to look for value for money wherever possible, but this would not have any impact on care provision.

RESOLVED, that:

1. The Community and Children's Services Department's proposed revenue budget for 2022/23 (excluding the HRA) be recommended for submission to Finance Committee.
2. The Community and Children's Services Department's proposed capital and supplementary revenue projects budgets for 2022/23 (excluding HRA) be recommended for submission to the Finance Committee.
3. The Chamberlain, in consultation with the Director of Community and Children's Services be authorised to revise these budgets; to allow for any further implications arising from Corporate Projects, changes to the Cyclical Works Programme and realignment of budgets emanating from the new Target Operating Model.
4. Any minor amendments for the 2021/22 and 2022/23 budgets, arising during the corporate budget setting period, be delegated to the Chamberlain, in consultation with the Director of Community and Children's Services.

5. The factors taken into consideration in compiling the Community and Children's Services Department's Business Plan, including efficiency measures, be noted.

9. **HOUSING REVENUE ACCOUNT (HRA) AND CAPITAL BUDGETS 2022/23**

The Committee considered a joint report of the Chamberlain and the Director of Community and Children's Services, which presented the annual submission of the revenue and capital budgets and the HRA draft capital budget.

During the discussion the following points were noted:

1. The water rate refunds would be reflected in the year-end actuals and were not part of the estimates in this report.
2. The COLPAI development had been funded by Section 106 Funding, as it was a new development, whereas the HRA covers existing housing stock.
3. There is some expectation of borrowing on all Local Authority HRAs, in order to maintain housing stock, and the City Corporation's borrowing would peak at the end of 2023/24, at £28m. The Chamberlain advised that the loan rate aligns with the Public Loan Board rates.
4. The City Corporation was entering a period of significant investment in housing stock and the developments underway would generate income to cover the borrowing costs. Due to the pandemic, there had been a delay to some projects which, has been reported to and considered by the Housing Management and Almshouses Sub Committee (HMASC) on a regular basis. A further update report will be presented to the HMASC at its next meeting on 14 January 2022.
5. Rental income is index linked and reflects inflation, and the borrowing requirement may go up in line with construction expenditure. It was also noted that construction cost inflation is currently higher than regular inflation, and there is a risk in that an uplift in rents might not match this.

RESOLVED, that:

1. The provisional 2022/23 revenue budget be recommended for submission to the Finance Committee.
2. The draft Capital Budget be recommended for submission to the Finance Committee.
3. The Chamberlain, in consultation with the Director of Community and Children's Services, be delegated approval to revise these budgets to allow for further implications arising from departmental reorganisations and other reviews.

10. **GREEN BOX (PORTSOKEN HEALTH AND COMMUNITY CENTRE) OPTIONS**

The Committee considered a report of the Director of Community and Children's Services, which set out the Department's responsibility in relation to the Green Box (Portsoken Health and Community Centre). Members noted a very recent update in this matter in that the Guinness Trust would not enter into a new lease with the developer; i.e. – one of the options set out in the report.

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

1. Whilst the cost of removing the Green Box structure and making good the site would need to be borne by the Department's local risk budget, it might be possible to defer the expenditure to 2022/23, as procurement works are likely to have a lead-in time. A costing exercise was underway, together with options for recycling or selling the container units which make up the building.
2. The terms of the Lease are specific to a community centre/health provision and the Guinness Trust has indicated that any renewal or Sub Lease, would not be at a peppercorn rent.
3. Parking space on the estate was a major concern for residents and there had been issues with contractors' vehicles.
4. The original structure had been intended for 5 years' usage, but it had been in place for 15 years. It remained highly unlikely that any community provider could afford to take it over.
5. The exit requirements had been known from the outset, but the construction of the new Community Centre had been dependant on the delivery of the new hotel complex which started later than anticipated and been delayed by the pandemic.

RESOLVED, it be noted that - the Green Box (Portsoken Health and Community Centre) is surplus to requirements and the Department of Community and Children's Services is required to pay for the disposal of the asset and restoration of the site on which it stands.

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

Members noted that the Safeguarding Sub Committee is due to receive a report on the City Corporation's Youth Services offer. The Chair advised that the Sub Committee's remit extends to youth provision across the City Corporation as a whole. The Member, who put the question, was invited to attend the Sub Committee when the report is scrutinised and suggested that Ward Members in the East of the City be sent a copy of the report. The Chair suggested that the report should also be included in the information pack for Community and Children's Services Committee (CCSC). Furthermore, Members (of the Sub Committee) reserved the right to escalate any matters of concern to the CCSC

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

The Chair and Members thanked retiring Member and former Chair of this Committee, Dhruv Patel, for his hard work in supporting the Community and Children's Services Committee since 2013, and for his compassion and commitment to the inclusion, health and wellbeing of the City Corporation's residents.

13. **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 I of the Schedule 12A of the Local Government Act.

Item no	Para No
16-18	3
19-20	2

14. **NON-PUBLIC MINUTES**

RESOLVED, that – the non-public minutes of the meeting held on 8th November 2021 be approved.

15. **OUTSTANDING ACTIONS - NON-PUBLIC ITEMS**

The Committee received the outstanding actions list in respect of non-public items and noted an item which would be picked up under agenda item 17.

16. **AVONDALE SQUARE RE-DEVELOPMENT OF COMMUNITY CENTRE PROJECT - GATEWAY 6 - OUTCOME REPORT**

The Committee considered and approved a report of the City Surveyor.

17. **PORTSOKEN PAVILION UPDATE**

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

18. **AGREEMENT FOR LEASE OF 1A AND 1B, SNOW HILL COURT, LONDON EC1: TO PROVIDE AN ASSESSMENT HUB AND SHORT-TERM ACCOMMODATION FOR ROUGH SLEEPERS**

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

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

There was one question whilst the public were excluded.

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

Two items were considered whilst the public were excluded.

The meeting ended at 1pm

Chairman

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