

**HOUSING MANAGEMENT AND ALMSHOUSES SUB (COMMUNITY AND
CHILDREN'S SERVICES) COMMITTEE**
Wednesday, 30 September 2020

Minutes of the meeting of the Housing Management and Almshouses Sub
(Community and Children's Services) Committee held at VIRTUAL MEETING –
ACCESSIBLE REMOTELY on Wednesday, 30 September 2020 at 1.45 pm

Present

Members:

Randall Anderson
Mary Durcan (Deputy Chairman)
John Fletcher (Chairman)
Marianne Fredericks
Alderman David Graves
Susan Pearson
William Pimlott
The Revd Stephen Haines
Ruby Sayed

Officers:

- Town Clerk
- Town Clerk
- Chamberlains
- Chamberlains
- Chamberlains
- Community and Children's Services
- Community and Children's Services

1. APOLOGIES

Apologies were received from Jason Pritchard.

The Revd Stephen Haines (Senior Commoner) moved that Alderman David Graves to the Chair.

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

There were no declarations.

3. ELECTION OF CHAIRMAN

The Committee proceeded to elect a Chairman in accordance with Standing Order No. 29. John Fletcher, being the only Member expressing willingness to serve, was duly elected Chairman for the ensuing year.

4. ELECTION OF DEPUTY CHAIRMAN

The Committee proceeded to elect a Deputy Chairman in accordance with Standing Order No. 30. Mary Durcan, being the only Member expressing willingness to serve, was duly elected Deputy Chairman for the ensuing year.

5. **TERMS OF REFERENCE**

The Committee received its Terms of Reference.

6. **MINUTES**

RESOLVED – That the public minutes and non-public summary of the meeting held on Monday, 20 July 2020 be approved as a correct record.

7. **OUTSTANDING ACTIONS**

Tenancy Visits

The Sub-Committee was informed the reference to meeting in the tracker was from the meeting 23 March 2020.

Housing Risk Register

The Sub-Committee was informed that this would be removed from the action tracker.

New Portsoken Community Centre – Governance options

The Sub-Committee was advised that this was an item to the Grand Committee but was deferred. A report on this will be presented to the Sub-Committee at a later date.

Housing Revenue

The Sub-Committee was informed that this would be removed from the action tracker.

Fire safety

The Sub-Committee was updated that that as part of the overall fire safety report to the Sub-Committee, the fire safety update will also be included in that report.

Visit the north and south estates

The Sub-Committee was informed that due to COVID-19, no visits are viable; this will be left until the new Committee is appointed in May 2021.

Great Arthur House – Recladding Works

The Sub-Committee was informed that all the necessary submissions relating to the appeal had now been made. The appeal will not be heard until January 2021 at the earliest and as such, this will be left on the action tracker.

Housing Policies Renewal Timetable

The Sub-Committee was advised that the critical policies will be reviewed first and as such, some of the policies will be presented to the Sub-Committee in 2021. A revised timetable will be presented to the Sub-Committee.

Draft Parades Policy

The Sub-Committee was informed that the work to develop a Draft Parades Policy could not be undertaken due to COVID-19, and Members agreed to park the policy for the interim.

In response to a question from a Member, it was confirmed that there is no current Parades Policy.

Tenancy Renewal Policy

The Sub-Committee was advised that this was agreed in March 2020 and, all the approvals which were required are now in place.

Middlesex Street Garage

The Sub-Committee was advised by the Director that the leak to the podium has now been dealt with.

Presentation relating to the Repairs and Maintenance Service

Officers agreed to facilitate a virtual presentation at the meeting of 30 November 2020, which would be followed by a more detailed presentation at a later date when Committee meetings return to normal.

8. MAJOR WORKS PROGRESS REPORT

The Sub-Committee received a report of the Director of Community & Children's Services on the Housing Major Works Programme – Progress Report.

The Sub-Committee was informed that COVID-19 continues to have a significant impact on the Housing Major Works Programme. Nevertheless, the City of London continues to make good progress with several projects. . The Department has decided to temporally defer the heating project at Middlesex Street to allow the completion of other projects to minimize disruptions to residents.

The Chairman asked as to when the Major Works Programme would come to an end, as Members have asked for a timeline for the work period so that this can be tracked. A Member commented that there is funding in place for the current Major Works Programme but, not for future works identified as part of the Savills Stock Condition Survey. With the current loss of income from commercial tenants, there is significant pressure on the HRA and, future funding streams cannot be confirmed at this stage.

The Assistant Director agreed to bring a report to the Sub-Committee on the future Major Works Programme every other meeting cycle to ensure it remains on the radar.

A Member expressed concern that the report indicates that the Window Replacement Programme is showing an end date of 2026, which is significantly beyond the remainder of the current five-year programme. It was explained that the majority of the window programme is expected to be completed by 2022/23. The Member also asked as to where the reroofing programme will sit.

The Assistant Director agreed to bring to the Sub-Committee an update report that sets out the incremental changes from the initial programme to the current one. Members were reminded that the existing Major Works Improvement

Programme has increased significantly to incorporate over £25million of extra works including fire safety improvement works and, re-roofing projects.

RESOLVED – That the Sub-Committee noted the report.

9. **ESTATE INSPECTIONS PERFORMANCE - NOVEMBER 2019 TO MARCH 2020**

The Sub-Committee received a report of the Director of Community & Children's Services on the Estate Inspections Performance – November 2019 to March 2020.

The Head of Housing Management stated that the Members had requested six months data, but the report sets out data from the last five months was due to COVID-19.

The Chairman noted that there is a new and robust reporting system in place, which will allow the City of London to keep track of the works that are being carried out within the Estates. The new system will enable Members to appraise the services across the Estates.

A Member asked how the new system relates to the Service Level Agreements and who is responsible for the inspections. The Head of Housing Management responded that not all estates have Service Level Agreements in place, but Officers are working towards addressing the issue. The inspections are carried out by the Estate Officers and the Estate Service Manager. All the Officers are trained to carry out the inspections, which are moderated.

A Member commented that the narrative on page 40, which states that 75% is the minimum threshold, this will trigger an improvement plan, but he observed that the rating on Middlesex Estate is 60%, an improvement plan would be instigated. The Head of Housing Management responded and reassured the Sub-Committee that an improvement plan for Middlesex Estate had been initiated, which was due to the low results caused by a poor inspection result in a car park, but other areas within the Estate had rated well. Officers are waiting for the latest result from September 2020 to check the most up-to-date data on the matter.

A Member questioned if the Service Level Agreements can be rolled out across all the Estates within the City of London. The Head of Housing Management responded that the Service Level Agreements are still being reviewed. As in more work is required in some areas than other areas. This will be reported to the Sub-Committee bi-annually.

This was followed by a Member who inquired if there can be residents' involvement within the inspection process, which will provide an independent view to the City of London. The Sub-Committee was informed that there is a web page where the results of the inspections are provided, as well as in on notice boards with the averages of all the figures. The Department will explore the options of having a resident scrutiny panel for the future.

A Member commented that the City of London does not have Service Level Agreements for all the Estates; some of the services are covered by the contractors. The Member asked if the Department can look at the specifications, such as the windows cleaning contracts. Members were informed that the windows cleaning contracts are currently under review and will soon be going out to tender.

The Chairman, with the permission of the Sub-Committee, noted that he had a message from the Alderman and Members of the Portsoken Ward, that they wished to place on record that they are deeply concerned that their Estate should be the listed as the worse on the list. They would like additional time to be allocated on their meeting with Officers on the 14 October 2020 to discuss the performance in detail.

RESOLVED – That the Sub-Committee noted the report.

10. **SERVICE IMPROVEMENTS FOLLOWING THE TENANCY VISITS PROJECT**
The Sub-Committee received a report of the Director of Community & Children's Services on the Service Improvements Following the Tenancy Visits Project

The Head of Housing Management informed the Sub-Committee that the project had come to an end last year with visits to 95% tenancy households within the City of London being visited; this was later complete with further audits and visits. The project was well executed by the Project Manager and the wider team; the Department is now awaiting a new reporting system, which will permit the pathways for further improvements in the way the City of London delivers its services across the Estates.

This was followed by a Member who queried about the Personal Emergency Evacuation Plan (PEEP) for disabled residents, as this is a statutory duty upon the City of London. The Head of Housing Management informed the Sub-Committee that the Department does not currently have a PEEP for every resident who needs one but will update Members on this later on. He assured the Sub-Committee that the vulnerable resident's list is renewed every three months.

The Assistant Director commented that residents are asked to advise their Estate Offices of any disability or vulnerability so that we can act appropriately in case of emergency.

The Chairman asked that the PEEP is added to the outstanding action with the intention of a report being brought to the Sub-Committee at a future meeting.

As the City of London has gathered a large number of email addresses of residents across the Estates and if the plan is to rely on email communication, the City of London needs to be sure that a large number of residents can access to the internet, as we know there are at least 50 families on the Golden Lane Estate who do not have internet access.

The Head of Housing Management responded that at present, the Department has two-thirds of the tenants on the mailing list, which went up significantly as a result of the exercise being carried out, but the Department does not have data for all the Estates. With the review of communication strategy, the Department aims to ensure that the residents who can access emails are included within the mailing list.

RESOLVED – That the Sub-Committee noted the report.

11. COMPENSATION POLICY REVIEW

The Sub-Committee considered a report of the Director of Community & Children's Services on the Compensation Policy Review.

The Sub-Committee was informed that this is an existing policy which had been reviewed with no material changes and requires approval from the Members. A report on this will be presented to the Sub-Committee at its next meeting. Furthermore, Members agreed to review the policy every three years.

RESOLVED – That the Sub-Committee approved the Mutual Exchange Policy for use by the Housing Service.

12. MUTUAL EXCHANGE POLICY REVIEW

The Sub-Committee considered a report of the Director of Community & Children's Services on Mutual Exchange Policy Review.

RESOLVED – That the Sub-Committee approved the Mutual Exchange Policy for use by the Housing Service

13. SOCIAL HOUSING TENANCY FRAUD - 2019/20 ANNUAL REPORT

The Sub-Committee received a report of the Director of Community & Children's Services on the Social Housing Tenancy Fraud – 2019/20 Annual Report.

The Sub-Committee was informed by the Head of Audit & Risk Management that the Department had managed 16 successful outcomes of tenancy fraud cases. When found that tenants were using their properties unlawfully, the Department works with the tenants to hand over their properties back to the City of London without having to go through the court process, saving the City of London further money on the court cases, however where required a court action is initiated.

A Member asked that as there are no evictions notices at present, whether this was open to abuse. The Department had managed to bring back six priorities from residents who were no longer eligible for social housing.

RESOLVED – That the Sub-Committee noted the report.

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

A Member asked about the drainage issues on the Golden Lane Estate. Officers assured the Sub-Committee that the City of London has recently developed a drainage plan for the Golden Lane Estate and across the City of London. Officers agreed to report back to the Committee with the details of the drainage plans.

This was followed by another Member who asked, in terms of the reroofing, if the Sub-Committee could explore energy-saving methods across the Estates. The Member had a supplementary question on having hand sanitizing points installed across the Estates.

The Assistant Director, Barbican Estate & Property Services, responded to the Member that the City of London is exploring at every opportunity through the Major Works Programme. We can make improvements. An example of solar panels being installed in Middlesex Street was noted. The City of London is working with Community Groups to install solar panels at lower levels, which will provide a reduced electricity price across its estates. The Department intends to look at all its buildings and come up with efficiency savings where possible.

The Assistant Director, Barbican Estate & Property Services, agreed to come back to the Sub-Committee on the question with a response to the hand sanitizers.

This was followed by a comment from another Member who observed that the green roofing provides insulation to the building. This is in line with the Climate Change Strategy and may become statutory duty subject to it being approved at the next Court of Common Council.

The Chair of the Grand Committee (CCSC) had requested a report on the funding of the Climate Action Strategy. The Assistant Director, Barbican Estate & Property Services agreed that a report would be presented to the Grand Committee as well as the Sub-Committee.

Roof Plant Installation on Crescent House, Golden Lane Estate

In response to a question about the installation of roof ventilation on Crescent House, which was in breach of planning law. The Assistant Director acknowledged the situation and advised that steps were being taken to rectify it. The Department is waiting on the outcome of the planning application, and the team will work on a permanent solution.

Sydenham Hill Planning Application

The Deputy Chairman informed the Sub-Committee that the City of London has now received an approval on the Sydenham Hill development which will allow social housing and asked that the energy savings are taken into the design stages of the new builds.

A Member asked what the preconditions to the approval were. Officers agreed to update the Member at a later stage, upon the scrutiny of the approval papers.

A Member noted that one of the preconditions for the approval was around the landscaping, which may add to the cost.

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

17

Paragraph

3

17. NON-PUBLIC MINUTES

RESOLVED – That the non-public minutes of the meeting held on Monday, 20 July 2020 be approved as a correct record.

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

There were no non-public questions.

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.

The meeting ended at Time Not Specified

Chairman

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