

COMMUNITY & CHILDREN'S SERVICES COMMITTEE

Monday, 11 March 2024

Minutes of the meeting held at Guildhall at 2.00 pm

Present:

Members:

Ruby Sayed (Chair)	Steve Goodman OBE
Helen Fentimen (Deputy Chair)	Beverley Ryan (Co-optee)
Jamel Banda	Naresh Hari Sonpar
Anne Corbett	Ceri Wilkins
Mary Durcan	
Deputy John Fletcher	

In attendance:

Eamonn Mullalley (Chair of the Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Sub Committee)

Officers:

Judith Finlay	- Executive Director, Community and Children's Services
Mark Jarvis	- Chamberlains
Deborah Bell	- Community & Children's Services
Michael Gwyther-Jones	- Community & Children's Services
Jason Hayes	- Community & Children's Services
Simon Cribbens	- Community & Children's Services
Sharon McLaughlin	- Community & Children's Services
Chris Pelham	- Community & Children's Services
Teresa Shortland	- Community & Children's Services
Greg Knight	- Community & Children's Services
Ellie Ward	- Community & Children's Services
Gerri Scott	- Community & Children's Services
Pam Wharfe	- Community & Children's Services
Julie Mayer	- Town Clerks
Chandni Tanna	- Town Clerks
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1. APOLOGIES

Apologies were received from Munsur Ali, Deputy Nighat Qureishi*, Henrika Priest*, Ben Murphy*, Alderman Christopher Makin*, Alderman Alastair King, Caroline Haines, J Griffiths, Deputy Marianne Fredericks*, Aaron De Souza, Matthew Bell, Ian Bishop Legatt and Philip Woodhouse*

**Members joining remotely*

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

The Chair reminded Members of their responsibilities in respect of declaring any interests in good time for Committee meetings, as explained by the

Comptroller and City Solicitor/Town Clerk at the last meeting. Members were asked to be mindful of Item 8 on the agenda (Financial Support for Major Works) which is for information/discussion today but is likely to require a Committee decision in the future.

In respect of Agenda item 19, City of London Children Services Centre Review; Beverley Ryan declared a general non-pecuniary interest by virtue of her position as Chair of Governors for the Aldgate School and Deputy John Fletcher by virtue of his position as a Governors of the Aldgate School.

3. **MINUTES**

RESOLVED, that – the public minutes and non-public summary of the meeting held on 25th January 2024 be approved.

4. **OUTSTANDING ACTIONS**

The Committee received the outstanding actions list.

Members noted that a number of the items had been scheduled for the May meeting.

Golden Lane Leisure Centre

- Members had received complaints about the Pool being out of use. The Assistant Director advised that an Options Appraisal in respect of the Sports Strategy was due to be considered by the Resource Allocation Sub Committee (RASC) and the recommended scheme would then be reported to the Community and Children's Services Committee (CCS).
- The Deputy Chair was concerned in that RASC would not be considering a report until July 2024, with the likelihood of CCS receiving it in September 2024. The Chair was aware of an early draft report and the Deputy Chair had asked for this to be shared with the Committee at the earliest opportunity.
- The Chair also asked about the podium works, which are crucial to the sustainability of the Centre, and noted that they would be subject to a Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) funding bid. The Assistant Director advised that he would be attending a meeting the following day to look at the scope of the works and agreed to provide an update to the next meeting of the Committee.

Asset Management Strategy

The Deputy Chair expressed concern at the ongoing delays to progressing the Asset Management Strategy and asked for an update to Members in the next few days.

5. **HOMELESSNESS AND ROUGH SLEEPING SUB COMMITTEE'S TERMS OF REFERENCE**

The Committee considered a report of the Town Clerk in respect of an update to the Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Sub Committee's Terms of

Reference; focussing on External Membership and frequency of meetings. The Chair reminded members that the annual review of the all of the Sub Committees' Terms of Reference would take place at the May Committee meeting; i.e. the first of the civic year

RESOLVED, that:

1. The increased number of co-opted external members, from two to three, and removal of the vacant City of London Police Authority Board membership be approved.
2. The decreased number of meetings to 4 per year be approved.
3. The Schedule detailing the Appointments, Member Scheme, and Annual Plan be approved.

6. **DRAFT HIGH LEVEL BUSINESS PLAN 2023/24**

The Committee considered a report of the Executive Director, Community and Children's Services, which presented the High-level Business Plan for the Community and Children's Services Department for 2024/25. At Members' requests, it also presented a five-year horizon scan.

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

- a) The target for the Adult Social Care Service User Satisfaction Survey was based on an NHS digital survey, which had a low response rate, but the NHS are reviewing their consultation processes.
- b) The Golden Lane refurbishment refers to the windows programme and officers agreed to reword this to make this clearer.
- c) The Social Mobility Target for staff would be reflected in the People Strategy, as well as the 5-Year Business Plan.
- d) The challenged to the methodology for children in care predictions, due to unknown factors.
- e) The officer agreed to look at the Blake Tower and COLPAI figures to make them clearer.
- f) It could take some time to get a SEND plan in place, so consideration should be given to supporting in the interim period.
- g) The scope and direction of travel for the 5-Year Business Plan would be presented to the next meeting, ahead of a detailed report for decision by Members.

RESOLVED, that:

1. The factors taken into consideration in compiling the Community and Children's Services Departmental Business Plan be noted.

2. The departmental Business Plan for 2024/25 be approved.
3. The five-year horizon scan be noted.

7. **CITY OF LONDON ANTI-SOCIAL BEHAVIOUR POLICY**

The Committee considered a report of the Executive Director, Community and Children's Services in respect of the revised City of London Anti-social Behaviour Policy. Members noted that the document would remain as a draft as it was subject to approval by the Safer City Partnership.

The Committee considered a report of the Executive Director, Community and Children's Services in respect of the revised City of London Anti-social Behaviour Policy. Members noted that the document was in draft as it was subject to approval by the Safer City Partnership.

During the discussion the following points were noted:

- a) The Policy collates existing approaches that use the tools and powers of national legislation that define the approach to anti-social behaviour and how it is defined and responded to by the City of London Corporation and its partners.
- b) The Streets and Walkways Sub Committee had received reports on E-Scooters and Dockless bike hire schemes, which would be shared with the Committee. DONE
- c) The Port Health and Environmental Services Committee had received a report on the cleaning contract in respect of dealing with public urination, which would also be shared with the Committee. DONE
- d) The Chair asked if Members could also be sighted on the minutes from these meetings. Link to all City Corporation Agendas, Reports and Minutes:
<https://democracy.cityoflondon.gov.uk/mgListCommittees.aspx?bcr=1>
- e) The City Corporation's community patrolling (delivered by the organisation Parkguard) do not hold or use the powers under this Policy but can be used to assist in gathering evidence and intelligence that would support the City Corporation's use of powers.

RESOLVED, that:

1. The draft City of London Anti-social Behaviour Policy be approved.
2. Authority be delegated to the Town Clerk, in consultation with the Chairman and Deputy Chairman of the Community and Children's Services Committee, to approve any amendments required by the Safer City Partnership.

8. FINANCIAL SUPPORT WITH MAJOR WORKS (LONG LEASEHOLDERS)

The Committee considered a report of the Executive Director, Community and Children's Services, which set out the current range of options for financial support for leaseholders in relation to major works costs; provided information on options offered by other landlords and sought to facilitate discussion on possible variations or alternative offers.

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

- a) A Member asked to share queries and concerns from residents with officers and the responses would be shared with the Committee.
- b) The appendix to the report set out a comparator across London Boroughs, noting that 25-year terms on loans are fairly uncommon. Officers in Housing and Chamberlains agreed to look at this modelling and the impact on the Housing Revenue Account (HRA). The Chamberlain's officer explained that, if the HRA borrows from the General Fund, then it has to repay it at 3%. Officers also agreed to look at the cap and discretionary schemes.
- c) It is possible to put a voluntary charge on properties but this is currently restricted to cases of extreme hardship. The Chair asked if this could be explored further, both in terms of options for the City Corporation, and if the family should decide to stay or move into the property following the death of the loan recipient. It was suggested that a number of residents are asset rich but cash poor and, therefore, the risk to the Corporation would be relatively small.
- d) Whilst agreeing that all options should be explored fully, the Chair also reminded Members of their obligations in terms of protecting the HRA.

RESOLVED, that – the report be noted

9. COMMUNITY & CHILDREN'S SERVICES (NON-HOUSING) REVENUE OUTTURN FORECAST AS AT QUARTER 3 2023/24

The Committee considered a report of the Executive Director, Community and Children's Services, which set out the Quarter 3 estimated outturn for the Community & Children's Services Committee Budget (excluding the ring-fenced Housing Revenue Account (HRA) Repairs and Maintenance Budget.

RESOLVED, that – the report be noted.

10. **HOUSING STRATEGY UPDATE**

The Committee considered a report of the Executive Director, Community and Children's Services, which provided an update on the development of the new Housing Strategy.

During the discussion, the following points were noted:

- a) From April 2024 all social housing landlords will feature in a league table.
- b) Damp and mould is now captured by building standards and there will be far greater scrutiny arising from the Homes and Fitness for Human Habitation Act .
- c) There is a perception of a lack of consultation with residents and the Chair advised that work is underway with the Comms Team to ensure that the Committee's requirements are met. As Members have access to residents' WhatsApp Groups, they should receive a comms timelines and notification of any residents with SEND and/or communications difficulties.
- d) The Chair had been assured of due diligence in terms of the Strategy's affordability.
- e) The programme of tenancy visits and audits will help new tenants sustain their tenancies and ensure they know where to get assistance. Tenancy audits take place every 3 years, regardless of support needs. Resident Services Officers establish relationships with tenants who might need extra help.
- f) The Chair asked for it to be noted that the Strategy will be applicable to all social housing tenants and leaseholders, both in and out of the City.

RESOLVED, that – the report be noted.

11. **COMMISSIONING UPDATE**

This report provides Members with highlights of current activities, successes, issues and priorities for the Department of Community and Children's Services (DCCS) Commissioning Team.

Members stressed the importance of early notice in respect of initiatives such as the Holiday and Food Programme for children in receipt of free school meals, which is delivered by the Aldgate School. Officers advised that they have additional funding to extend this to the Golden Lane Estate. The Committee noted that all children at the Aldgate School are eligible for free school meals and any comms strategy should reflect this.

RESOLVED, that – the report be noted.

12. **UPDATES FROM THE ALLOCATED MEMBERS, PORTFOLIO HOLDERS AND SUB COMMITTEE CHAIRS**

Members noted the following updates:

Homelessness and Rough Sleeping

- The Strategy for 2023-27 had been published and this would be a live document, linking to the work of the Sub Committee.
- The budgetary requirements for the coming year had been submitted. There had been some modelling in terms of improving the Severe Weather Emergency Plan. (SWEP).
- The Sub Committee had received a presentation on substance abuse from the Public Health Team in Hackney.
- The Assessment Centre is due to have a provisional opening on 13th March, following a short delay, which had been beyond the City Corporation's control.
- The annual rough sleeping figures had been published, showing a steady rise since the pandemic.

Allocated Members

Members noted the reports on Middlesex Street and Golden Lane, which they had received ahead of this meeting.

Middlesex Street

- The Contractors and Project Managers were working to resolve issues with the heating system.
- Residents remain concerned about the sprinkler installation.
- The works to the new Police Estate had been granted Planning Permission.

Golden Lane

- Residents remain concerned about the leak on the podium.
- Hatfield House basement, where electricity meters are stored, is leaking and damp. This had been chased as it presents a health and safety issue.
- Fundamental structural problems remain due to a lack of maintenance over a number of years, with the biggest issues being roofs and the fabric of the concrete, which should feature in the Major Works Programme.
- Quick fixes, such as broken railings should not be left for weeks and close to a school. There appears to be an issue with the Property Services Repairs Reporting system.
- The Executive Director advised of a meeting this week on Golden Lane, where these issues could be considered further.

The Chair reminded Members that the Committee is still carrying vacancies for 'Allocated Member' positions and asked for expressions of interest.

Integrated Care Sub Committee (City and Hackney Place-based Partnership)

The Deputy Chief Executive at the Homerton Hospital will take up her appointment as Chief Executive (of the Hospital) with effect from May and will continue to be the Neighbourhood Lead. The next meeting of the Board would take place later this week.

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

In response to a question about the availability of Adult Education to City of London residents, the Director advised that there are subsidised fees for residents to access these services. There is an annual community event to promote the offer and details of this would be shared with Members after the meeting. It was noted that first aid, food hygiene, caring and languages are very popular with residents. DONE

The Director understood residents' frustration about bureaucratic paperwork when enrolling on courses but the City Corporation are bound by grant funders' requirements. The Chair asked that, if this is a barrier to some residents, the availability of support be made clear. The Director also agreed to feed these comments back to the grant funders.

14. ANY OTHER BUSINESS THAT THE CHAIRMAN CONSIDERS URGENT

- Chair thanked officers for the hard work that had gone into all of the reports on today's agenda.
- Members noted that the discretionary business rates exemption for Nurseries and Early Years' Service Providers had been approved at Court of Common Council.
- The Chair asked Members to bid farewell to an officer who would be moving on and two long serving officers who would be retiring shortly.
- The Deputy Chair also noted that it would be the Chairs last meeting before her term expired in May 2024 and paid tribute to her excellent work over the past 3 years; particularly in championing care leavers and ensuring the large number of refugees, who arrived in City over the past couple of years, received a warm welcome and that their education and health needs were met.

At 3.40 pm Members agreed to extend the meeting to conclude the business on the agenda.

15. 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 I of Schedule 12A of the Local Government Act.

Item Nos	Paragraph No
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16-22	3
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16. **NON-PUBLIC MINUTES**

RESOLVED, that – the non-public minutes of the meeting held on 25th January 2024 be noted.

17. **OUTSTANDING ACTIONS**

The Committee received the non-public actions list.

18. **COMMISSIONING UPDATE - NON-PUBLIC APPENDICES**

Members noted a non-public appendix in respect of Agenda Item 11.

19. **CITY OF LONDON CHILDREN'S CENTRE SERVICES - REVIEW**

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

20. **SUMNER BUILDINGS AND AVONDALE SQUARE ESTATE**

DEFERRED.

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

There was one question whilst the public were excluded.

22. **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 4.20 pm.

Chairman

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