

**HOUSING MANAGEMENT AND ALMSHOUSES SUB (COMMUNITY AND
CHILDREN'S SERVICES) COMMITTEE**
Monday, 23 July 2018

Minutes of the meeting held at Guildhall at 11.30 am

Present

Members:

John Fletcher (Chairman)
Randall Anderson (Deputy Chairman)
Mary Durcan
Marianne Fredericks
Alderman David Graves
Barbara Newman
Dhruv Patel OBE
Susan Pearson

Officers:

Mark Jarvis	- Head of Finance - Citizen Services, Chamberlains
Jacquie Campbell	- Assistant Director, Housing and Neighbourhoods, Community and Children's Services
Paul Murtagh	- Assistant Director, Barbican and Property Services, Community and Children's Services
Liam Gillespie	- Head of Estates, Community and Children's Services
Jacqueline Whitmore	- Sheltered Housing Manager,, Community & Children's Services
Martin Goodwin	- Housing Needs Manager, Community and Children's Services
James Illsley	- Project Manager, Community and Children's Services
Dean Robinson	- Tenancy Visits Project Manager
Emma Martin	- Tenancy Support, Community and Children's Services
Julie Mayer	- Town Clerks, Community and Children's Services

1. APOLOGIES

Apologies were received from Peter Bennett and William Pimlott.

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 5th June 2018 be approved.

Matters arising

Members noted that the September meeting of the Community and Children's Services Committee would receive a detailed report on Fire Safety, including the outcome of the Hackett Review.

4. REWIRE THE LANDLORD'S ELECTRICITY SUPPLY AT SOUTHWARK ESTATE (PARTIAL) AND THE SYDENHAM HILL ESTATE

Members received a report of the Director of Community and Children's Services in respect of a rewire of the Landlord's electricity supply at Southwark Estate (partial) and the Sydenham Hill Estate.

Members noted that the report had been approved by the Projects Sub Committee and they were being asked to approve Option 2; i.e. for Sydenham Hill and Pakeman House to be addressed under response repairs; and for Middlesex Street repairs to be undertaken under two separate contracts (chargeable and non-chargeable). Option 2 was recommended as being the quickest route to completing the required repairs affecting tenants. Finally, Members noted that the PT4 Procurement Form, circulated to Members last week, required further work but they were happy to approve the report on this basis. The Assistant Director confirmed that all urgent and safety critical works had been completed.

RESOLVED, that:

1. That approval be given for the necessary repairs to Lammas Green (flats) and Pakeman House communal electricity supplies to be removed from this project and undertaken instead under response repairs using the minor works framework.
2. Otto Close communal electrics be removed from this project and instead be inspected under the Phase Four Electrical Contract.
3. Approval be given for Middlesex Street Estate to be included within this project.
4. Emergency repairs already carried out at Middlesex Street be noted.
5. Approval be given to seek two separate tenders for works at Middlesex Street as follows:
 - i) Works that do not require section 20 Long Leasehold consultation at an estimated cost of £393,750, including staff costs and fees;
 - ii) works which require section 20 Long Leasehold consultation at an estimated cost of £337,500, including staff costs and fees.
6. Estimated staff costs of £3,000 and estimated fees of £13,000 (2% of works costs) be approved to develop the specification and seek procurement.
7. The project be renamed Middlesex Street Non-Emergency Electrical Works.

5. **CITY OF LONDON ALMSHOUSES UPDATE**

Members received a report of the Director of Community and Children's Services which provided an update on the City of London Almshouses in Lambeth and the eight Gresham Almshouses on the Estate.

In respect of the pre-planning application for window replacement, officers had discovered that the original glass had been replaced after World War 2 and the 'Rogers' windows had been retro-fitted. A further fire risk assessment had been undertaken and there had been 15 letters from residents in support of double glazing. Members noted that this information, along with a heritage statement would be included in the application, to be submitted in the next 4-6 weeks. Members also noted that it was likely to be heard by the full Planning Committee and not decided under delegated authority. Finally, the tender was currently with City Procurement and would be presented to the next meeting of the Housing Management and Almshouses Sub Committee.

RESOLVED, that – the report be noted.

6. **FIRE AT HOLLOWAY ESTATE - BRIEFING NOTE**

Members received a briefing note in respect of a recent fire at Fairweather House on the Holloway Estate. Most of the damage had resulted from smoke and water to the flats below but was less than expected. The insurance claims had been submitted and behaviours in respect of discarding cigarettes would be addressed. Members noted that this incident had evidenced the importance of compartmentation and were pleased that residents had followed the Fire Brigade's advice to stay put.

RESOLVED, that – the briefing be noted.

7. **HOUSING UPDATE AND RISK REGISTER (INCLUDING WAITING LIST DETAIL)**

Members received a report of the Director of Community and Children's Services which provided the 6-monthly update on progress against key areas of work, covering October 2017 to March 2018.

During the discussion, the following points were noted:

- The Head of Estates advised that the meeting of the Community and Children's Service Committee in September 2018 would receive a more detailed report. in a revised format; i.e. less block text and more 'dash board'. In the interim, Members were invited to comment on how they would like to see the information presented.
- The current maximum Right to Buy discount was capped at £108,000 but, given the market value of properties in the City, this was still beyond the reach of many tenants. Members noted that some applications were subsequently withdrawn if tenants were unable to get mortgages. A small number of fraudulent applications had been detected at an early stage.

- In respect of target scores, Members would find it helpful if future reports provided a better explanation on repairs and maintenance performance. The Assistant Director, Barbican & Property Services offered a Member Briefing on performance indicators, which would explain the detail behind the data. Officers carried out random checks on contractor returns and Members were encouraged to provide feedback.
- Members noted that tendering was underway for the new Repairs and Maintenance Contract and the Residents' Working Group would be fully engaged.
- The Community and Children's Services Committee in September would receive a full report on the Mais House demolition and rebuild. The type of properties that would become available would be known later in the year.

RESOLVED, that – the report be noted.

8. **ESTATE STANDARDS REVIEW**

Members received a report of the Director of Community and Children's Services in respect of a review of estate standards, which would be implemented by the end of the year. Members noted that the review would seek to make estate walkabouts and inspections more effective. The Consultant was working on comparisons with housing best practice and would be invited to attend future walkabouts. Members noted that the Consultant had commended the high standard of most the City Corporation's estates.

RESOLVED, that – the report be noted

9. **ANTI-SOCIAL BEHAVIOUR POLICY**

Members considered a report of the Director of Community and Children's Services in respect of a revised Anti-Social Behaviour Policy, which had been re-written to reflect best practice and protect vulnerable tenants. Officers advised that the majority of cases concerned disputes between neighbours and repeated interventions on minor issues. Given the high visibility of estate staff, the number of incidents was low. Members noted that, following a recent software upgrade, future housing update reports would include a summary of issues.

Members suggested, for future Policy updates, that it would be helpful to show where changes had been made. The Officer advised that, in the case of the Anti-Social Behaviour Policy, there had been no changes to the policy line and more detail added.

Officers advised that anti-social behaviour casework is often complex. Generally, the perpetrators are known to estate officers, who use their professional judgement to act with discretion; managing risk, proportional outcomes and expectations. Members discussed the staff procedure note which informs under the policy. Officers advised that, whilst these document are referenced in the policy, staff procedures notes are not conventionally

public documents. There was a suggestion that it might be helpful to have a publicly available summary, so that residents can understand the next steps in a complaint/investigation. Officers agreed to check with the City Solicitor whether this would be viable. Members were asked to be mindful that if staff procedures were too prescriptive, they might stifle flexibility and set a precedent for future cases. Officers agreed to add a disclaimer, making it clear that all documents available on the web site would be the latest version.

RESOLVED, that – the Anti-Social Behaviour Policy, for use by the Housing and Neighbourhoods Service be approved.

10. HOUSING MANAGEMENT POLICY SCHEDULE

Members received a report of the Director of Community and Children's Services in respect of a Review of Housing Management Policies and Procedures in 2018/19, which sought to fill policy gaps and update existing policies which were due for renewal. Members asked officers to ensure that the title of each policy was full and precise and, as discussed in the previous item, to check with the City Solicitor whether it would be viable to have a publicly available summary of staff procedures supporting the policies.

RESOLVED, that – the report be noted.

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 a pilot to include Golden Lane leaseholders and, if successful, this could be rolled out following the completion of the tenancy visits. The officer advised that the report on the outcome of the visits; expected to conclude in March 2019, would include the approach to leaseholder visits. In the interim, leaseholders were entitled to a fire safety visit from the Estate Office or Fire Brigade.

RESOLVED, that – the report be noted.

12. MAIS HOUSE DECANT PROGRAMME - FINAL UPDATE

Members noted the final update in the Mais House decant, ahead of it being handed over to Community and Children's Services for demolition and rebuilding. The Officer advised that previous tenants would be advised of the demolition date and were able to gain access to collect any belongings. The Chairman and officers asked for their thanks to go on record to the officers for their professionalism, sensitivity and excellent customer care during this challenging project.

RESOLVED, That – the report be noted.

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

There were no questions.

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

Members noted the good community engagement arising from the Aldgate Square Festival and thanked officers for their hard work and giving up their weekends, which made the event a success.

Members also commended officers for the successful opening of the Golden Lane Community Centre, despite the delays on infrastructure.

The Chairman had started his programme of walkabouts and estate visits and noted how much residents and staff appreciate them. There was a common theme emerging in respect of communal areas, lighting and car parking. This week, on 25th July, there would be a walkabout to Golden Lane and Middlesex Street Estates and a Member briefing on Avondale. The Chairman would be visiting the Golden Lane Estate on 26th September 2018.

The Chairman asked for fire safety and major projects to be standing items on all Housing Management and Almshouses Sub Committee agendas, even if the updates were minimal.

Members congratulated acting Head of Estates, Liam Gillespie, on his permanent appointment to this position.

15. **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
16

Paragraph
2 & 3

16. **NON-PUBLIC MINUTES**

RESOLVED – That the non-public minutes of the meeting held on 5th June 2018 be approved as a correct record.

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

There were no non-public questions.

18. **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 1pm

Chairman

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