

COMMUNITY & CHILDREN'S SERVICES COMMITTEE

Friday, 14 September 2018

Minutes of the meeting held at Guildhall at 11.00 am

Present

Members:

Randall Anderson (Chairman)	Deputy Henry Jones
Dhruv Patel OBE (Deputy Chairman)	Deputy Catherine McGuinness
Munsur Ali	Benjamin Murphy
Rehana Ameer	Barbara Newman
Matthew Bell	Susan Pearson
Peter Bennett	William Pimlott
Mary Durcan	Henrika Priest
John Fletcher	James de Sausmarez
Marianne Fredericks	
Alderman Prem Goyal OBE JP	Lorna Jorgensen – Co-optee
Deputy the Revd Stephen Haines	
Graeme Harrower	

Officers:

Andrew Carter	- Director of Community and Children's Services
Jacquie Campbell	- Community and Children's Services
Simon Cribbens	- Community and Children's Services
Natasha Dogra	- Town Clerk's
Julie Mayer	- Town Clerk's
Mark Jarvis	- Chamberlain's Department
Mike Kettle	- Community and Children's Services
Gerald Mehrtens	- Community & Children's Services
Paul Murtagh	- Community & Children's Services
Peter Young	- City Surveyors
Carol Boswarthack	- Community and Children's Services

1. APOLOGIES

Apologies were received from Ruby Sayed, Jason Pritchard, Deputy Joyce Nash, Mark Wheatley, Caroline Haines, Alderman David Graves, Alderman John Garbutt and Philip Woodhouse.

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

Members noted that Susan Pearson had not been granted a dispensation to speak or vote on either COLPAI or Golden Lane matters and, therefore, Mr Graeme Harrower would be speaking on her behalf.

General concerns were expressed about the rejection of dispensation requests, particularly where they had been granted for the Barbican Residential Committee (BRC) but not for the Community and Children's Services Committee. Members felt that the policy was not being applied consistently.

Whilst the Chairman would not want to discourage Members from appealing against the decisions, he also suggested, and Members agreed, that the Committee take a resolution to the Standards Committee setting out these concerns.

Members also experienced a Member attempting to comply with the Standards Committee's suggestion that residents, and electors, can be adequately represented by communicating their views through another Member. Members agreed that this proved to be something of a farce, when responses to comments led to further questions conveyed via that Member who eventually came to refer to himself as a 'ventriloquist dummy'.

Given that Community and Children's Services addresses many matters of substantial interest to residents in the City, it was the Committee's view that precluding those Members who represent residents from speaking on these issues leads inevitably to an inability to fully consider residents' interest.

Further, the Committee did not believe that hearing from Members who live in the City would cause any harm which the Standards laws and rules are intended to avoid. Members believe the current position causes harm to residents, particularly in the context of the City where many Members are not resident in the City and represent wards pre-dominated by non-residents. Members also expressed concern that the breadth of the denial of dispensations contrasted unfavourably with the way in which apparently similar concerns related to Temple's commercial residents were dismissed.

Therefore it was RESOLVED, That - the Standards Committee be asked to craft a set of dispensations that ensures that residents' interests can be fully represented by their elected representatives. To this end, Members of the Community and Children's Services Committee urge the Standards Committee to research the dispensations policies of nearby London Boroughs that seek to address this issue.

3. **MINUTES**

RESOLVED, that - the public minutes and non-public summary of the meeting held on the 8 June 2018 be agreed as an accurate record.

Matters arising

Members asked about the Ward Mote Resolution in respect of the Golden Lane works and noted that works to the windows may come forward in order to mitigate noise disturbance from the COLPAI development. In response to a question as to whether the other blocks could be expedited, the Assistant Director advised that this was possible on the less complex blocks but Members should be mindful of the timing of planning applications. Members would receive a more detailed report at the November meeting and residents would be kept advised of delivery dates.

4. **DCSS BUSINESS PLAN: QUARTER 1 UPDATE**

The Committee received a report of the Director of Community and Children's Services on the Department's Business Plan. The report highlighted the progress made during Quarter 1 (Q1) in delivering the Business Plan, the Departmental Risk Register and the service's budget.

RESOLVED, that - the report be noted.

5. **CHILD CARE SUFFICIENCY AUDIT**

The Committee received a report of the Director of Community and Children's services which provided an update on the findings of the Child Care Sufficiency Audit 2018.

RESOLVED, that - that the report be noted.

6. **ANNUAL HRA OUTURN**

The Committee received a report of the Chamberlain and Director of Community and Children's Services in respect of the Housing Revenue Account (HRA) 2017/18. The Director advised that he was working with the Chamberlain to avoid over-ambitious targets in the future.

Members noted that the Housing Management and Almshouses Sub Committee met 6 times a year and received a full report on slippages at each meeting.

RESOLVED, that - that the report be noted.

7. **THE GENERAL DATA PROTECTION REGULATION**

The Committee received a report of the Director of Community and Children's Services on the activities undertaken by the Department to ensure compliance with the General Data Protection Regulation.

RESOLVED, that - that the report be noted.

8. **DRAGON CAFÉ**

The Committee received a report of the Director of Community and Children's Services on the Dragon Café, which sought to engage with City workers and residents in respect of their mental wellbeing. Members noted that the response to the project has been very positive.

Members noted that, as the Café was based in the Library, there were no additional space costs. Clients included low paid workers but there was currently no breakdown of attendance statistics. Officers advised that the health offer has been rolled out across the City, to all lending libraries and community centres, but not under the 'Dragon Cafe' banner. These sessions cover a wide range of topics including "health shots", narcotics anonymous and smoking cessation and Members were pleased to note the wide area covered; i.e. Portsoken to Shoe Lane. Members would receive a further report on the Dragon Café's sustainability.

RESOLVED, that - that the report be noted.

9. FINAL EDUCATION SKILLS STRATEGY

The Committee received a report of the Director of Community and Children's Services in respect of the Final Education Skills Strategy for the period 2019-2023. The report also outlined the consultation and approval process for the strategies.

RESOLVED, that - that the report be noted.

10. DECENT HOMES UPGRADE WORKS TO AVONDALE SQUARE ESTATE, HOLLOWAY ESTATE AND WILLIAM BLAKE ESTATE

The Committee considered a report of the Director of Community and Children's Services on the Decent Homes upgrade works to Avondale Square Estate, Holloway Estate and William Blake Estate. The report advised that 98 properties had been omitted from the programme, due to the additional expense of unforeseen works. The work in these properties was completed under a separate contract.

Members were pleased to note that the contract had come in under budget, despite issues throughout and noted the key areas for improvement and lessons set out in the report. The Assistant Director advised that, since taking up his post 2 years ago, robust project managers and clerks of works were in post across all contracts.

RESOLVED - that the lessons learnt be noted and the project be closed.

11. HOUSING REGISTER AND ALLOCATIONS

The Committee received a report of the Director of Community and Children's Services in respect of the Housing Register and Allocations.

Members welcomed a helpful report, which provided detailed information about the City of London Corporation's Housing Register, responded to Members' queries and provided a comparison to other boroughs' social housing waiting lists. Members asked for a high level, quarterly update on the success and challenges of meeting targets, noting that providing comparative data was challenging if other boroughs recorded theirs differently.

Members noted that the Housing Delivery Working Group had met twice and officers were progressing the actions. Members asked if a further meeting could be arranged as soon as possible.

RESOLVED, that - the report be noted.

12. HOUSING GOVERNANCE - BRIEFING PAPER

The Committee received a report of the Director of Community and Children's Services in respect of Housing Governance, ahead of a more detailed report which would be presented to Members next month.

RESOLVED, that - the report be noted.

13. STRONGER COMMUNITIES GRANT

The Committee received a report of the Director of Community and Children's Services in respect of the Stronger Communities Grant's. Members asked for their thanks to go on record to both John Fletcher (Chairman of the Housing Management and Almshouses Sub Committee) and Jack Joslin (Senior Grants Officer) for championing this application.

RESOLVED, that:

- I. The changes to the criteria to include a specific small grants process for applications of £3,000 or less be noted; and
- II. The report be noted.

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

A question was raised in respect of this week's Planning Committee, which had considered an application for a change of use of the Golden Lane Community centre and agreed it on a narrow margin. The Member was concerned that it contravened residents' wishes.

The Chairman of the Policy and Resources Committee, also a Member of this Committee, stressed how residents' views were paramount to the City Corporation and was fully aware of recent issues which had caused discontent. The Chairman of the Community and Children's Services Committee reminded Members that this development sought to provide 3 much needed housing units (2 for families and 1 for rehabilitation following hospital discharge). However, he also accepted that the future use of the estate office was not urgent and could warrant further consideration. A Member emphasised the value in retaining on site housing offices, as they had helped the City Corporation cope with the challenges arising from universal credit. The Director advised that the unit cost of providing Social Housing was higher in Inner London.

In concluding, the Director reminded Members that officers were required to act on policy decisions taken by Members and offered the Committee a further report, including the minutes from the Planning Committee, taking into consideration some further information which had come to light during the Planning Committee this week.

The Chairman of the Housing Management and Almshouses Sub Committee referred to this week's Court question and advised that there had been expressions of interest in the former car park space on the first floor of Middlesex St Estate. Officers advised that they had been working with organisations experienced in the best use of the space. The Chairman asked officers to prepare costings for dedicated stair and life access to the floor, and

explore options for useful occupation, ready for the working group meeting on the 4th December 2018.

In respect of Great Arthur House, Members would receive a report on the final cost and recharges to leaseholders, which would seek to avoid litigation as far as possible.

15. ANY OTHER BUSINESS THAT THE CHAIRMAN CONSIDERS URGENT.

Members noted that Tower Hamlets had terminated a massage parlour licence opposite Middlesex Street.

The Chairman advised that there was a vacancy for an 'Allocated Member' for the Avondale Estate and asked for expressions of interest to be sent to the Town Clerk.

16. 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

17 -28

Paragraph No

3

17. NON-PUBLIC MINUTES

RESOLVED – that, the non-public minutes of the meeting held on 8 June 2018 be approved.

18. HOUSING DELIVERY PROGRAMME - PROVISION OF SOCIAL HOUSING ON THE SYDENHAM HILL ESTATE, LEWISHAM

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

19. HOLLOWAY ESTATE

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

20. PROGRESS REPORT OF THE PROVISION OF ADDITIONAL PRIMARY SCHOOL PLACES AND SOCIAL HOUSING ON THE FORMER RICHARD CLOUDESLEY SCHOOL SITE

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

21. COMPLIANT COMMITTEE REPORT

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

22. HRA COMMERCIAL ARREARS

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

23. HOUSING DELIVERY PROGRAMME - PROVISION OF SOCIAL HOUSING ON THE AVONDALE SQUARE ESTATE

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

24. HOUSING DELIVERY

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

25. POLICE ACCOMMODATION STRATEGY - DECANT CAR PARKING GATEWAY 3 ISSUES REPORT

The Committee received a report of the City Surveyor and the Director of Community and Children's Services.

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

There was a question raised, whilst the public were excluded in respect of the Golden Lane Community Centre (agenda item 14).

27. 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 1.15 pm

Chairman

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