

**HOUSING MANAGEMENT AND ALMSHOUSES SUB (COMMUNITY AND
CHILDREN'S SERVICES) COMMITTEE**
Tuesday, 26 March 2019

Minutes of the meeting held at Guildhall at 2pm

Present

Members:

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

Officers:

Paul Murtagh	- Assistant Director, Barbican and Property Services, Community and Children's Services
Liam Gillespie	- Community and Children's Services
Dean Robinson	- Community and Children's Services
Michael Harrington	- Chamberlain's Department
Karen Marks	- Department of the Built Environment
Polly Dunn	- Town Clerk's Department

1. APOLOGIES

Apologies were received from Peter Bennett.

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

In respect of agenda item 7 - Consultation Schedule for City of London Primary Academy Islington (COLPAI) Susan Pearson declared an interest in this matter and informed the Committee that she would not speak or vote on this item, having not applied for the relevant dispensation.

3. MINUTES

With respect to item 2, Members' Declarations under the code of conduct in respect to items on the agenda, Members commented that it should read "- by virtue of being leaseholders on the Barbican and/or Golden Lane Estate."

RESOLVED – That, subject to the correction, the public minutes and non-public summary of the meeting held on 21 January 2019 be approved as an accurate record

Matters arising

In respect of the update on the window replacement project, given the scale and interest in the project, an update would be submitted to a forthcoming Community and Children's Services Committee.

Members were informed by officers had been in correspondence with CTIL to ensure that they followed an agreed application and planning approval process before approaching anyone with speculative notices of mobile equipment installation.

4. OUTSTANDING ACTIONS

Members received the Committee's outstanding actions list and noted the following updates since the last meeting of the Sub Committee:

- A report on Parkguard Ltd would be considered under item 12 of the agenda.
- A report on Tenancy Visits would be considered under item 10 of the agenda.
- The Housing Update and Risk Register, including the new 'dashboard' format, would be submitted for consideration at either the May or July 2019 Sub Committee meeting.
- A report on the Portsoken Community Energy Project would be considered under item 14 of the agenda.
- An update on the collection of water charges from tenants would be provided at the May 2019 Sub Committee meeting.

RECEIVED.

5. MAJOR WORKS PROGRAMME PROGRESS REPORT

Members considered a report of the Director of Community and Children's Services in respect of progress on the Housing Major Works Programme. The following matters were raised:

- Following feedback from Members, the Assistant Director agreed to revise the key in appendix 1 to make project 'slippage' clearer to identify within the delivery forecasts.
- The results of destructive testing for the front door replacement project at Great Arthur House had demonstrated that the removed door did not comply with current fire safety requirements. Work was underway to improve the fire resistance of the sample door and if this also failed then there would be a requirement to replace all doors. There would be no testing on the panelling as the project team were already aware these were not in line with current fire regulations; the Project Team were working directly with the Planning Team to find a solution. A key issue

remained with the Parcel Cupboard, which was also non-compliant; it was proposed that the cupboard may need to be replaced with something that looked similar but functioned differently. A Member asked why the doors were so unsatisfactory. The Assistant Director explained that, at the time of installation, all City of London Corporation buildings met the contemporary fire safety regulations and that current regulations were not enforced retrospectively. However, when a Fire Risk Assessment is completed and buildings are considered unsafe with improvements needed, the Corporation were obliged to make these improvements.

- A Member identified that the five-year Major Works Programme had reached its halfway point and a number of projects beneath that umbrella had been completed. Members queried when any planned future projects would be brought to the Committee's and to residents' attention. The Assistant Director explained that towards the end of 2019 a forward look would be provided. There was concern that this would give too little time for residents to plan ahead. The Assistant Director added that the scale of future works, with the exception of the roof replacement programme, would be far smaller than the current Major Works Programme. It was agreed that officers could consider providing some form of 'good news' notification for residents, sooner rather than later, explaining that there was very little work needed in the following five years. It was suggested that this communication could be sent to residents by the respective Estates' Offices in conjunction with their annual service charge circulation. The Chairman wanted to ensure that, even if the size of the projects were going to be smaller, that the current level of report detail and scrutiny be maintained by the Sub Committee going forward.

RESOLVED, that – the report be noted.

6. FIRE SAFETY UPDATE - HRA PROPERTIES

Members received a report of the Director of Community and Children's Services in respect of a fire safety update on HRA properties.

The Chairman requested that, once an item in the Fire Safety Action Plan had been reported as "complete", it no longer be included in subsequent reports to the Housing Management and Almshouses Sub-Committee.

RECEIVED.

7. CONSULTATION SCHEDULE FOR CITY OF LONDON PRIMARY ACADEMY ISLINGTON (COLPAI)

Members considered a report of the Director of Community and Children's Service in respect of the consultation schedule for the City of London Primary Academy Islington.

The Assistant Director explained to Members that the report included the list of conditions that had come to them as a result of the planning application. He

explained that residents would not be denied an opportunity to comment on the items marked as “accepted” or as “consultation not necessary” but there were other areas that needed a more in-depth approach. On this basis, a consultation schedule had been agreed to reasonably reflect what had been asked for by residents and planning. This schedule had been published prior to the Sub Committee meeting and featured monthly “Drop-in” sessions and quarterly “Public” focussed consultation meetings.

[Marianne Fredricks joined the meeting at 11.59]

A Member thanked officers for taking the initiative on areas where there needed to be consultation and for considering how they were going to fulfil these conditions. It was suggested that residents who were more directly affected should get greater representation than those who lived further away from the site. It was also requested that future consultation meetings be distinct from the construction progress updates. Some Members felt that residents would prefer more regular public consultation meetings, proposing that meetings should be held monthly and alternate between public consultation and drop-in sessions. Points were made regarding the advantages and disadvantages of the different formats of meetings, this included whether drop-ins gave value for officer time; the ability for residents to feel heard amongst other strong voices in public meetings; and how in all forms, these meetings could be intimidating. The Assistant Director felt that the current proposal was fair but agreed to review the balance between the two formats of meetings within the schedule at the end of the quarter. Dates for consultations in the proceeding months may have needed to be published before this review was due to take place, however, it was agreed that the nature of these meetings could remain flexible until after the Committee had reviewed their effectiveness. It was confirmed that future consultation meetings would be separate to the construction progress updates.

A specific concern was raised at the drop-in session held on 21 March 2019 with regard to the waste collection proposals for Baltic Street West. A meeting of officers had been organised to discuss the alternatives and to address why the most reasonable option was not the option proposed at planning stage. An update would be provided at the next meeting.

Members were assured that, if changing the testing parameters for certain planning conditions, residents would still be consulted, even if not necessary. This was also true of any other material changes that would have an impact on residents, but not on planning conditions. All information would be made available for residents for comment, regardless of whether consultation was obligatory.

Following questions from the Sub Committee, Members heard that there was a dedicated website for the project, on which residents could see what areas were being consulted on and when that was happening. The website also allowed questions to be submitted virtually. These questions were reviewed on a weekly basis and were responded to in a timely manner. A record of questions raised at the drop-in sessions were drawn up and circulated in bulletins, on the website and elsewhere.

RESOLVED, that –

- The report be noted;
- The proposed Consultation Schedule relating to the discharge of the remaining planning conditions for the COLPAI development, be approved; and
- That the Consultation Schedule be reviewed at the Sub-Committee's July 2019 meeting.

8. **PORTSOKEN COMMUNITY ENERGY PROJECT**

The Committee agreed to take item 14, Portsoken Community Energy Project, at this point on the agenda.

Members received a report of the Director of Community and Children's Services Department in respect of the Portsoken Community Energy Project. The Chairman invited Afsheen Rashid from Repowering, to address the Sub Committee.

Members heard that it was good news to have a site identified, however, the site meant that the project was no longer able to benefit from the Feed-in-Tariff (FIT) pre-accreditation. As determined in the feasibility investigations, the solar panels would need to be connected to meters in the communal areas, which were classed as "domestic", rather than through the Artizan Street Library meter, which was designated as "non-domestic". Only non-domestic sites were eligible under the FIT scheme. Whilst this resulted in the lost security of FIT income on the project, it did remove time constraints that had been imposed by the FIT.

In order to address the lack of FIT income, an alternative financial model had been proposed to the Sub Committee. The model was a blend of funding sources including at least 50% of community shares, with the remaining 50% of capital costs sourced from carbon offset funds, Corporate Social Responsibility and Social Value contribution.

Recent engagement with residents included door-to-door visits and a consultation evening, both of which had been overwhelmingly positive. Engagement with residents would continue to run on a monthly basis, with a prospect of more tailored events in due course.

Members were still in support of the project and were hopeful of its success. They expressed their thanks for the work done on recalibrating the financial model following the withdrawal of the FIT eligibility. A question was raised as to the long-term view on the sustainability of the project. Ms Rashid assured Members that there were a number of funding options including exporting surplus energy out to market at a commercial rate. There was a lot of appetite for corporate involvement in this sort of scheme. One Member suggested that

this model may be rolled out to other City of London Corporation run-estates, which may then collectively result in a more substantial contribution.

The Chairman informed the Committee that he had been having ongoing conversations about how this project was complementary to, and could link with proposed electric vehicles charging points being installed on the Middlesex St. Estate.

RECEIVED.

9. **COMMUNITY CENTRES POLICY**

Members considered a report of the Director of Community and Children's Services Director in respect of the Community Centres Policy.

The policy had been drawn up as a matter of priority to address operational matters following an audit recommendation. Consequent to approval, a Community Centres Strategy would be drafted in line with this policy and wider Corporate aims. Residents would be invited to consult on the strategy and final approval would be sought from Committee in July 2019. Members asked that the strategy include detailed KPIs and be reported alongside a more detailed financial model.

At present, no Community Centre generated surplus and therefore all were subsidised by the HRA. On the event that a surplus was generated, the service charge would be adjusted in the following financial year to avoid over-recovery from leaseholders, though at most locations this is unlikely to happen. Conversely, due to HRA subsidies and relatively low value of overheads, where centres make a loss, the costs that needed to be recovered from leaseholders would be limited.

With regard to restrictions of hire, a Member asked for assurance that non-resident and commercial lettings would not result in disturbances, such as excess noise, for residents. This issue was covered by the terms and conditions of the hire which apply to any booking. Any breach of these terms and conditions would result in the user being prevented from re-booking the premises. In addition, all lettings were dealt with by the respective Estate Managers, all of whom are acutely aware of the sensitivities of local residents.

A further audit recommendation was that the Estates' finances should be reported to and monitored at committee level, a process which would be introduced in due course.

Thanks were given by the Sub Committee to Liam Gillespie for his work on the policy.

RESOLVED, that the Community Centres Policy for use by the Housing Service, be approved.

10. **CLOSED-CIRCUIT TELEVISION (CCTV) POLICY**

Members considered a report of the Community and Children's Services Director in respect of the Closed-Circuit Television (CCTV) Policy.

The Chairman recognised that the City of London's CCTV usage on its housing estates needed to be regulated by policy but raised concern over the prohibition of the installation of doorbells with integrated cameras. There was a sense that these were already in use across the Estates and that they were of benefit to a number of those in the community, particularly those who were most vulnerable.

Under the ICO's guidelines, there was no distinction between CCTV and doorbells with integrated cameras. As a result, the policy restricted personal use of CCTV, self-contained image recording devices (including doorbells with cameras) and automated camera systems. This ban was further supported by the tenancy agreement which did not allow the installation or affixion of anything outside of the owner's property. It was noted, however, that residents install their own regular doorbells without issue.

The issue particularly affected any cameras that were recording communal areas, such as hallways. Individual residents could be criminally liable for any conduct that constituted harassment, however, the liability of the City of London Corporation in a case such as this was uncertain.

Members felt that, if enforced, these restrictions needed to be better publicised. Following a suggestion that residents apply for specific consent to install a camera, Members determined that this would not resolve the issue as they would almost never be permitted under current ICO guidelines. It was therefore agreed that further consideration and legal advice was needed on the matter of doorbells with integrated cameras, however, Members recognised the need to ensure they had a working policy in place.

RESOLVED, that

- the Closed-Circuit Television (CCTV) Policy for use by the Housing Service, be approved; and
- investigation into the use of doorbells with integrated cameras be continued and reported back to the Committee in due course.

11. **TENANCY VISITS PROJECT UPDATE**

Members received a report of the Director of Community and Children's Services in respect of an update on the Tenancy Visits Project.

To date, there had been a 95% completion rate of interviews with a few remaining appointments arranged. Following comments from residents, there were changes made to the Tenancy Visits Team's leaflets and correspondence to make them more noticeable, this had proven very successful. Approval was being sought by the Team to approach those tenants that had not yet responded to the survey. There were approximately 90 tenants that had not replied.

A full report with more substantive findings from the visits was due to be reported to the Community and Children's Services Committee in July 2019.

RECEIVED.

12. **HOUSING PROPERTY SERVICES - ACHIEVEMENTS 2018**

Members received a report of the Director of Community and Children's Services in respect to the Housing Property Services achievements of 2018. Thanks were extended to officers for their hard work and continued efforts.

RECEIVED.

13. **RESIDENTS REASSURANCE & ENGAGEMENT SUPPORT SERVICE UPDATE (PARKGUARD LTD) UPDATE**

Members received a report of the Director of Community and Children's Services in respect of an update on the Residents Reassurance & Engagement Support Service (Parkguard Ltd).

The Residents Reassurance & Engagement Support Service had been very well received and served as a visible reassurance to residents. Patrol officers had become a font of local knowledge and in some cases acted a source of intelligence for police.

Financing of the contract with Parkguard Ltd would need to be considered when it came for review in early 2020. Officers identified a potential need for costs to be recharged, in part, to leaseholders. Members commented on the success of the service and that, if it were necessary to pass costs on, it would be worthwhile to somehow demonstrate the value of their contribution. This would involve setting clear KPIs and publicising the benefits of the patrols.

A list of interventions was collated by Parkguard Ltd and shared with the City of London Corporation. Officers suggested they could draw on this data and publish an appropriate summary for residents' information.

RECEIVED.

14. **PROJECT TO INCREASE RECYCLING ON MIDDLESEX STREET ESTATE**

Members received a report of the Director of Community and Children's Services in respect to the project to increase recycling on Middlesex Street Estate.

Recycling performance across the City of London had been stagnating in comparison to national performance. In June-July 2018 42% properties in the Middlesex Street estate were participating in Dry Mixed Recycling (DMR) and 25% in food waste. Officers intended to trial a recycling incentivisation scheme by offering Middlesex Street estate a one-off £1000 award for communal use in the Estate for a 5% increase in recycling participation. It was noted that a 50% participation rate would be considered a "good" level.

It was felt that seeing actual numbers of households etc. would allow the Sub Committee to better understand the matter. The figures were due to be updated following the collection of more recent data and would be reported both in numerical and percentage terms to the May 2019 Sub Committee meeting. It was clarified that the data pertained to the number of household's that partook in recycling, as opposed to the tonnage of recycling and waste collected.

The City's recycling was collected and transported to the current contractor's UK recycling centre (Veolia), at which it was processed mechanically and separated into various materials. Bails were then taken to a mixture of domestic and foreign plants for processing. These destinations were determined by the contractor and changed periodically. The City of London Corporation's recycling contract with Veolia was reaching its end and had been awarded to an alternative supplier.

Following a question from a Member, officers confirmed that the Corporation would continue to engage with supermarkets to encourage plastic wrap minimisation.

RECEIVED.

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

There were no questions.

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

There was no other business.

17. **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 no(s)	Para no(s)
18	3
20	3, 5

18. **NON-PUBLIC MINUTES**

RESOLVED – That the non-public minutes of the meeting held on 21 January 2019 be approved as a correct record.

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

There were no non-public questions.

20. **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 1.15 pm

Chairman

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