

HOUSING MANAGEMENT AND ALMSHOUSES SUB (COMMUNITY AND CHILDREN'S SERVICES) COMMITTEE
Monday, 12 January 2015

Minutes of the meeting of the Housing Management and Almshouses Sub (Community and Children's Services) Committee held at Committee Rooms, West Wing, Guildhall on Monday, 12 January 2015 at 1.45 pm

Present

Members:

Virginia Rounding (Chairman)
Ann Holmes
Dhruv Patel

Officers:

Philippa Sewell	Town Clerk's Department
Mark Jarvis	Chamberlain's Department
Ade Adetosoye	Director of Community & Children's Services
Jacque Campbell	Community & Children's Services
Jacqueline Whitmore	Community & Children's Services
Liane Coopey	Community & Children's Services
Katherine Bowen	Community & Children's Services

1. **APOLOGIES**

Apologies were received from the Deputy Chairman the Revd. Dr Martin Dudley, Alderman David Graves, Deputy Billy Dove, Deputy the Revd. Stephen Haines, Deputy Henry Jones, Gareth Moore, and Elizabeth Rogula.

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 20th November 2014 be approved as a correct record.

Matters Arising

Remembering Yesterday, Celebrating Today

Members noted that staff collections during poppy week were approximately £2,000, and the Chairman asked for a formal note to be sent to staff thanking them for their efforts.

Horace Jones House

Members noted that the handover date had been moved to the end of January 2015 owing to minor issues that were still being addressed. A revised Members' visit had been scheduled for 13th February, and the official opening was still planned for 25th March.

Asset Management Strategy

Members noted that the changes to the Section 106 formula would impact the planned housing developments. The Director of Community & Children's Services advised that the prioritisation list would be reviewed, particularly with regard to unit cost.

4. **CITY OF LONDON ALMSHOUSES UPDATE**

The Sub Committee received a report of the Director of Community & Children's Services regarding the City of London Almshouses in Lambeth. In response to a Member's question, officers confirmed that the level of arrears was not unusual. The Chairman advised that a review was being undertaken to ensure Members were receiving all the appropriate information previously presented to the City of London Almshouses Trustees Sub Committee.

RESOLVED – That the report be noted.

5. **REVIEW OF CITY OF LONDON ALMSHOUSES ELIGIBILITY CRITERIA**

The Sub Committee considered a report of the Director of Community & Children's Services regarding a review of the City of London Almshouses Eligibility Criteria.

Members discussed the proposed changes, and requested that the wording be amended to allow for Trustee discretion regarding exceptional circumstances and that reference to the State Retirement Age be removed as they duplicated the age requirement.

Members agreed that:

- All applicants to the waiting list must:
 - i. Be aged 66 years old or over;
 - ii. Be living in Greater London OR have worked in the City for a period of 5 years or the 12 months prior to the application OR have a child or sibling living in the City of London or the London Borough of Lambeth.
- Members further agreed that Trustees should retain the ability to waive the criteria in exceptional circumstances.

These changes are to take immediate effect.

RESOLVED – That the proposed changes in eligibility criteria for applications to the City of London Almshouses waiting list be approved and implemented, subject to there being no questions raised by the Charity Commission.

6. **NEW HOUSING SERVICE ANTI-SOCIAL BEHAVIOUR (ASB) POLICY**

The Sub Committee considered a report of the Director of Community & Children's Services regarding the new Anti-social behaviour (ASB) Policy, developed specifically for the Housing Service. Detailed procedural guides would be developed in line with this policy and brought to this Sub Committee for approval. Members noted that the "Community Remedy" would be included

in the list of ASB remedies and actions and a clear policy would be developed for it, though no details were currently available.

Members requested amendments to clarify wording, and requested that provision be included for noise, currently classed as “nuisance”, to be re-classified as ASB should it become persistent. Officers advised that, if approved in principle by Members, the draft policy will be taken to the Housing User Board (HUB) for feedback.

RESOLVED – That the draft ASB Policy be approved in principle.

7. WELFARE BENEFITS UPDATE & FINANCIAL INCLUSION PROGRAMME

The Sub Committee received a report of the Director of Community & Children’s Services providing the latest information about the impact of welfare reforms to date, and outlined the work to help residents cope with the introduction of Universal Credit in March 2015.

Members noted that the principal risk from a financial perspective was the expected rise in rent arrears. Officers advised that increased rental arrears would result in more evictions, from City housing, privately rented homes, and from other housing providers, which would impact on the City’s Homelessness Service and could impact on the levels of crime and anti-social behaviour.

Members noted that a Financial Inclusion Programme had been developed with a number of projects designed to assist residents, including: intensive money management support and training, Local Welfare Assistance and small grants, and collaboration with external organisations (i.e. London Capital Credit Union and the National Illegal Moneylending Team).

Members thanked staff for their work to support residents and, at a Member’s suggestion, officers undertook to liaise with the Chamberlain’s Department regarding the possibility of creating charitable monies for loans for vulnerable tenants. Officers also undertook to investigate as to whether charitable monies could be made available from external sources.

RESOLVED – That:

- 1) Officers investigate the option of loans for vulnerable residents;
- 2) Officers investigate external charitable organisations;
- 3) The information article be circulated to Members for inclusion in ward newsletters; and
- 4) The report be noted.

8. CITY OF LONDON ALMSHOUSES REVENUE BUDGETS 2014/15 AND 2015/16

The Sub Committee received a report of the Chamberlain regarding the City of London Almshouses revenue budgets for 2015/16. Members noted that the 2015/16 budget indicated a surplus of £81,000, a reduction of £3,000 compared with the latest budget for 2014/15, owing to an increase in staffing costs. Members also noted that quotes for improving lighting and repairing the roads were £54,000, which had been incorporated into the budget for 2015/16.

RESOLVED – That the 2015/16 revenue budget be approved.

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

There were no questions.

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

There was no other business.

11. **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	Paragraph
12	3
13-14	-

12. **NON-PUBLIC MINUTES**

RESOLVED – That the non-public minutes of the meeting held on 20th November 2014 be approved as a correct record.

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 AND WHICH THE SUB COMMITTEE AGREE SHOULD BE CONSIDERED WHILST THE PUBLIC ARE EXCLUDED**

There was no other business.

The meeting ended at 2.33 pm

Chairman

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