

HOUSING MANAGEMENT AND ALMSHOUSES SUB (COMMUNITY AND CHILDREN'S SERVICES) COMMITTEE

Monday, 25 April 2016

Minutes of the meeting of the Housing Management and Almshouses Sub (Community and Children's Services) Committee held at the Guildhall EC2 at 1.45 pm

Present

Members:

Virginia Rounding (Chairman)	Deputy the Revd Stephen Haines
Ann Holmes (Deputy Chairman)	Deputy Henry Jones
Randall Anderson	Deputy Catherine McGuinness
John Fletcher	Gareth Moore

Officers:

Philippa Sewell	- Town Clerk's Department
Mark Jarvis	- Chamberlain's Department
Chris Keesing	- Chamberlain's Department
Ade Adetosoye	- Director of Community & Children's Services
Jacquie Campbell	- Community & Children's Services Department
Wendy Giaccaglia	- Community & Children's Services Department
Robert Jacks	- Community & Children's Services Department
Paul Jackson	- Community & Children's Services Department
Anne Mason	- Community & Children's Services Department
Paul Murtagh	- Community & Children's Services Department

1. APOLOGIES

Apologies were received from the Revd Dr Martin Dudley, Dhruv Patel, Deputy Elizabeth Rogula, and Mark Wheatley.

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

Mr Gareth Moore declared an interest in housing matters, as a tenant of Golden Lane Estate, and Deputy Henry Jones declared an interest in matters relating to the Middlesex Street Estate, as he was a residential and business lease holder.

3. MINUTES

RESOLVED – That the public minutes and non-public summary of the meeting held on 18 January 2016 be approved as a correct record.

Matters Arising

Members noted that the work on Great Arthur House was progressing well, and officers were impressed with the contractors so far. With regard to the comparison data requested for the Satisfaction Survey, Members noted this would be coming to a future meeting.

4. **CITY OF LONDON ALMSHOUSES UPDATE**

The Sub Committee received a report of the Director of Community & Children's Services which provided an update on the City of London Almshouses. Members noted that officers and residents were continuing to work with Southwark Mediation Centre and, during non-public session later in the meeting, queried the rent arrears.

RESOLVED – That the report be noted.

5. **HOUSING ESTATES - ALLOCATED MEMBERS' REPORT**

The Sub Committee received a report of the Director of Community & Children's Services which provided an update on events and activities on the City of London Corporation's social housing estates. Members congratulated the three estates that won grants from the Groundwork and Tesco's grant-giving initiative "Bags of Help", and praised the skills exchange held for residents at Isleden House.

RESOLVED – That the report be noted.

6. **HOUSING UPDATE**

The Sub Committee received a report of the Director of Community & Children's Services providing the six-monthly update on Housing Service performance. Members congratulated officers on the performance on responsive repairs, rent collection, and benefit claims, which had exceeded targets. Members discussed gas servicing, the Corporation's policy objective to deliver 3700 new homes over the next 10 years, and the impact the introduction of Universal Credit would have on rent collection and arrears.

Members queried the suspension of the waiting list for sheltered housing, and officers undertook to provide further detail at the next meeting. Members noted that priority was being given to residents displaced from Mais House, but agreed this was not a reason to suspend the waiting list altogether. Members also noted the incidents of anti-social behaviour, and requested Police figures regarding crime on City estates.

RESOLVED – That further information regarding the sheltered housing waiting list and Police figures regarding crime on City estates be provided at a future meeting; and the report be noted.

7. **DECANT POLICY - SHELTERED HOUSING REVIEW PART 2**

The Sub Committee considered a report of the Director of Community & Children's Services proposing the adoption of a Decant Policy, and an initial budget for the decant of residents of Mais House. Members considered the policy and the report, receiving clarification that all Mais House residents would be eligible to receive the Home Loss payment. Members sought, and were given, assurance that no residents would be financially disadvantaged in the longer term. Officers also stated that any further measures needed would be brought back to Members for approval at a later date.

RESOLVED – That the decant policy be approved, and an initial budget of £450,000 be created for home loss and disturbance payments for residents of Mais House over the life of the decant programme.

8. TACKLING SOCIAL HOUSING TENANCY FRAUD

The Sub Committee received a joint report of the Director of Community & Children's Services and Chamberlain which provided information of how the City of London Corporation was investigating and tackling Social Housing Tenancy Fraud. It also provided an analysis of the cases investigated by the Anti-Fraud & Investigation Team during the 2015/16 financial year.

Members noted that two fraud preventative measures had been introduced, and 15 illegally sub-let CoL social housing properties had been recovered. In response to Members' questions, officers advised that the Corporation supported the victim of the illegal sub-let, providing them with advice and information about organisations that could help them (e.g. Citizens Advice Bureaux).

RESOLVED – That the report be noted.

9. RIGHT TO BUY SOCIAL MOBILITY FUND (CITY HOME PURCHASE GRANTS)

The Sub Committee received a report of the Director of Community & Children's Services regarding the City of London's City Home Purchase Grant scheme. This scheme used funds from the Government's Right to Buy Social Mobility Fund to offer Right to Buy eligible tenants up to £30k to purchase a home on the open market. Members noted that there had been a lower level of take-up than was anticipated, but a total of five grants had been agreed and, for the successful applicants, it had been a life-changing experience.

RESOLVED – That the report be noted.

10. CCTV INSTALLATION IN CITY HOUSING ESTATES

The Sub Committee received a report of the Director of Community & Children's Services regarding the Corporation's approach to installing CCTV systems in City Housing Estates.

RESOLVED – That the report be noted.

11. CITY OF LONDON ALMSHOUSES REFURBISHMENT PROGRAMME

The Sub Committee considered a report of the Director of Community & Children's Services regarding the refurbishment required on the City of London Almshouses in Brixton. Members discussed the report, and agreed that the two-year timescale was preferable to ensure the least amount of disruption for residents.

RESOLVED – That:

- a) a two-year refurbishment programme for the City of London Almshouses be approved in principle, at an estimated cost of £898,000; and
- b) the Assistant Director, Barbican & Property be requested to commence the procurement and Gateway processes with a view to appointing a single contractor to deliver the programme.

12. WATER SYSTEM SAFETY WORKS AT RESIDENTIAL HOUSING ESTATES

The Sub Committee considered a report of the Director of Community & Children's Services regarding water safety works.

RESOLVED – That

- a) Option 2, to complete a planned programme of works using the results of the risk assessments to prioritise the works, be approved;
- b) the estimated budget of £562,000 for HRA Housing Estates and £900,000 for Barbican Estate be noted; and
- c) the additional budget now requested to reach Gateway 5 (£25,000 for HRA Housing Estates and £40,000 for Barbican Estate) be approved.

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

There was no other business.

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	Paragraph
16 & 17	3
18 & 19	-

16. NON-PUBLIC MINUTES

RESOLVED – That the non-public minutes of the meeting held on 18 January 2016 be approved as a correct record.

17. DRON HOUSE COMMUNITY CENTRE CONVERSION

The Sub Committee considered a report of the Director of Community & Children's Services.

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

There were no questions.

19. 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 closed at 2.51 pm

Chairman

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