

**HOUSING MANAGEMENT AND ALMSHOUSES SUB (COMMUNITY AND
CHILDREN'S SERVICES) COMMITTEE**
Monday, 3 July 2017

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

Present

Members:

Randall Anderson (Chairman)
Mary Durcan
John Fletcher (Deputy Chairman)
Marianne Fredericks
Alderman David Graves
Barbara Newman
Dhruv Patel
Susan Pearson
Deputy Elizabeth Rogula
Deputy John Tomlinson
Deputy Henry Jones

Officers:

Alistair MacLellan	-	Town Clerk's Department
Mark Jarvis	-	Chamberlain's Department
Andrew Carter	-	Director of Community and Children's Services
Jacquie Campbell	-	Assistant Director of Housing and Neighbourhoods
Paul Murtagh	-	Assistant Director of Barbican and Property Services
Bayo Igoh	-	Head of Estates
Amy Carter	-	Projects and Improvements Manager
Paul Jackson	-	Service Review Consultant
Jacqueline Whitmore	-	Sheltered Housing Manager
Wendy Giaccaglia	-	Area Manager, Out of City Estates
Liam Gillespie	-	Area Manager, City and Fringe

1. APOLOGIES

The meeting commenced at 2.05pm.

There were no apologies. The Town Clerk noted that Marianne Fredericks would be arriving late.

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

Susan Pearson declared an interest in housing matters, as a leaseholder in 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 16 May 2017 be approved as a correct record, subject to Jacqueline Whitmore (Sheltered Housing Manager) being listed as in attendance.

Matters Arising

Housing Estates - Allocated Members

Members agreed that Mary Durcan, Barbara Newman and Henry Jones be designated as Allocated Members to the Middlesex Street Estate.

4. **PARKGUARD PRESENTATION**

Members received a presentation from Parkguard Ltd and the following points were made.

- There was a disproportionate perception of anti-social behaviour (ASB) on the Middlesex Street Estate. Parkguard had identified the fact that ASB was occurring on the periphery of the estate and was therefore documenting the time and location of ASB and liaising with local police to build an intelligence picture from which planned actions would take place. Parkguard continued to provide community reassurance by providing security guards on the estate at times of high footfall.
- Parkguard's partnership working with police had increased – of 130 recent patrols conducted by Parkguard, 109 of those had been in partnership with a police officer. Patrols had identified an increase in paraphernalia in Mansell Street. In response to a question, the Parkguard representative replied that paraphernalia depended on the local context – often the paraphernalia related to Class A drugs.
- In response to a question from a Member, the Parkguard representative replied that their activities had produced more work for the local police due to increased reporting, but that work was underpinned by a high quality of information and intelligence that allowed the police to undertake successful operations.
- In response to a question from a Member, the Assistant Director of Housing and Neighbourhoods replied that the Parkguard contract did not cover the Barbican Estate and therefore Barbican residents would need to raise ASB issues with the Barbican Estate Office. The Assistant Director of Barbican and Property Services added that there were no plans to install CCTV in the Barbican Estate.

- Members thanked Parkguard Ltd for their work across the City's estates.

5. **MAIS HOUSE DECANT PROGRAMME - UPDATE**

Members received an update report of the Director of Community and Children's Services regarding the Mais House Decant Programme and the following points were made.

- The Sheltered Housing Manager noted that a further 5 moves had taken place since the report was published. The London Borough of Lewisham had been particularly helpful and had allowed the City to register Mais House residents on their housing database. Furthermore a local charity had come forward with a disabled flat for a current Mais House resident.
- The Sheltered Housing Manager concluded by noting a BBQ would be held on 12 August, with former residents also invited, and Members of the Sub Committee were invited also.
- In response to a question from a Member, the Sheltered Housing Manager replied that the profile of Mais House residents left was generally those of between 70-80 years of age who wished to stay in the area due to local links with family and/or carers.

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6. **HOUSING UPDATE**

Members received an update report of the Director of Community and Children's Services on housing matters and the following points were made.

- The Head of Estates noted that a high level of ASB was being reported across City estates at present, featuring enviro-crime in particular. Whilst each case was swiftly dealt with, Officers were reviewing reporting practices and seeking to identify the underlying causes for the increase.
- Gas servicing checks had been carried out by Carillion and 98.34% of City estate properties currently held CP12 gas safety certificates. This was below target but an improvement on 2015/16.
- A Member noted that the time period of the report and of the Estate Management section in particular was October 2016-March 2017, which made the report contents rather dated given it was now July 2017. The Head of Estates noted that monthly figures were available and could be provided to Members.
- In response to a comment from a Member regarding the length of time it took to re-let a City property, the Assistant Director of Housing and Neighbourhoods replied that the level of checks undertaken prior to the let of social housing was very intensive, which delayed the process. Moreover the City often took the opportunity to renovate vacant properties prior to them being relet,

Marianne Fredericks arrived at this point of the meeting.

- In response to a comment from a Member, the Assistant Director of Housing and Neighbourhoods agreed to provide a monthly dashboard covering applications to the City's housing register.

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7. HOUSING AND NEIGHBOURHOODS PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT - TRAINING PROGRAMME UPDATE

Members received an update report of the Director of Community and Children's Services regarding the Housing and Neighbourhoods Professional Development Training Programme. The Projects and Improvement Manager noted that Project Argos listed in the appendix related to anti-terrorism training.

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8. FINANCIAL SUPPORT FOR LEASEHOLDERS

Members received a report of the Director of Community and Children's Services regarding financial support for leaseholders and the following points were made.

- The Head of Estates noted that Members should be mindful of legal obligations including the Housing Revenue Account (HRA).
- A Member noted that he felt the City of London Corporation should offer as much financial support as possible in line with statutory considerations. He would welcome a breakdown of the estimated costs.
- In response to some observations from a Member, the Head of Estates agreed to model what financial support would look like if the loan limit was increased, an early repayment option was implemented, and the loan repayment period was extended beyond 10 years.
- A Member suggested that any loans should be offered interest free.
- In response to a question from a Member, the Director of Community and Children's Services replied that the 'buy back' option was standard practice across all local authorities.
- In response to a question from a Member, the Director of Community and Children's Services confirmed that loans would not be offered to persons who owned the property in question as a second home.

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

Shops in Middlesex Street

In response to a question from a Member, the Director of Community and Children's Services agreed to provide an update on this issue outside of the meeting.

Community and Children's Services Risk Register – Housing

In response to a question from a Member, the Director of Community and Children's Services agreed that the housing element of the Community and Children's Services Department Risk Register could be submitted to this Sub Committee prior to its submission the Community and Children's Services Committee.

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

Fire Safety in the City's Residential Blocks

Members considered a late report of the Director of Community and Children's Services on Fire Safety in the City's Residential Blocks and the following points were made.

- A Member commented that she had read the Golden Lane Fire Risk Assessment (FRA) and that some identified risks that had required action had still not been dealt with. In response, the Director of Community and Children's Services noted that the FRA had not identified any high risks and instead had only identified some medium risks. Works to address those risks was being undertaken.
- The Assistant Director of Housing and Neighbourhoods noted that estate managers had put a lot of effort into encouraging residents to be mindful of removing objects such as outdoor furniture or bulky items that risked cluttering stairwells and corridors.
- In response to a comment from a Member, the Assistant Director of Housing and Neighbourhoods agreed to provide dates and milestones for the fire safety measures outlined within the report.
- In response to a comment from a Member, the Assistant Director for Barbican and Property Services noted that his staff were reviewing whether alarms that alerted the London Fire Brigade directly should be installed across the City's estates.
- In response to a comment from a Member, the Director of Community and Children's Services confirmed that the City had the resources it needed to ensure fire safety. That said, demand for inspections and materials was high at present due to national demand and therefore high rise blocks were being prioritised first.
- In response to a comment from a Member, the Director of Community and Children's Services said that a feasibility study would be conducted before a recommendation was put to Members on whether sprinklers

should be retrofitted across the City estates. The feasibility report would be submitted to Members in late 2017.

- In response to a question from a Member, the Director of Community and Children's Services confirmed that the City was compliant in terms of leaseholder subletting.
- In response to a comment from a Member over the need to ensure fire doors were as resistant as possible, the Director of Community and Children's Services replied that paper would be submitted to the Chairman and Deputy Chairman of the Grand Committee under urgency, and would balance the need for fire resistance doors with the safety of vulnerable residents when they were using the doors.
- In response to a question from a Member, the Director of Community and Children's Services confirmed that the advice to residents in the event of a fire was to stay put until the London Fire Brigade arrived.
- In response to a comment from a Member over the level of rubbish in the hallways of the Barbican Estate and the fire hazard this presented, the Assistant Director for Barbican and Property Services replied that this rubbish was collected daily.

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Golden Lane Estate Residents' Association (GLERA) Letter

Members considered a tabled letter from GLERA regarding fire safety on the estate and the following points were made.

- The Director of Community and Children's Services noted that following recent testing on Great Arthur House, a 300mm strip of combustible material had been removed. No combustible material remained on the City's social housing stock.
- A Member requested that the Sub Committee have sight of the 26 June Q&A document as soon as possible.

Frequency of Meetings

In response to a comment, the Chairman agreed that the Sub Committee review the frequency of its meetings at its September 2017 meeting.

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.

12. **GATEWAY 7 REPORT DRON HOUSE COMMUNITY CENTRE CONVERSION**

Members considered a Gateway 7 Report on the Dron House Community Centre Conversion.

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

There were no non-public 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 4.00 pm

Chairman

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