

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

Minutes of the meeting of the Housing Management and Almshouses Sub
(Community and Children's Services) Committee held at Guildhall on
Monday, 27 November 2017 at 2.00 pm

Present

Members:

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

Officers:

Jacquie Campbell	- Assistant Director, Housing and Neighbourhoods, Community & Children's Services
Paul Murtagh	- Assistant Director, Barbican and Property Services, Community & Children's Services
Mark Jarvis	Chamberlains
Amy Carter	- Community and Children's Services
Wendy Giaccaglia	- Community and Children's Services
Jacqueline Whitmore	- Sheltered Housing Manager
Julie Mayer	- Town Clerk's

1. APOLOGIES

There were no apologies.

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 26th September 2017 be approved as a correct record.

4. TERMS OF REFERENCE AND FREQUENCY OF MEETINGS

Members considered the Sub Committees Terms of Reference and recommended the following changes to the Community and Children's Services Committee:

- The Membership of the Sub Committee be increased, from 8 – 10 Members, to give all allocated Members the opportunity to be Members of the Housing Management and Almshouses Sub Committee.
- The restriction of ex-officio membership be lifted from the Chairman and Deputy Chairman.
- The restriction on residents and tenants serving as Chairman or Deputy Chairman be lifted, noting that the City of London Corporation was excluded from this part of the Housing Legislation. Members reminded that the restriction had been lifted for a former Deputy Chairman of the Community and Children's Services Committee.
- The Sub Committee's Terms of Reference state that the Housing Management and Almshouses Sub Committee should meet at least 4 times a year. The Town Clerk agreed to insert an additional date for 2018, taking the current number of meetings from 5 to 6.

5. HOUSING ESTATES - ALLOCATED MEMBERS REPORT

Members received the Allocated Members report. In response to a question, Members noted that the Spitalfields flats did not fall within the Housing Revenue Account but were managed from Middlesex Street and therefore the Allocated Member could represent these tenants.

RESOLVED, that – the report be noted.

6. PROPERTY AND HOUSING SERVICES RISK REGISTER UPDATE

Members received a report of the Director of Community and Children's Services in respect of the Property and Housing Services Risk Register. Members were asked to note a couple of errors in the report:

- Fire Risk Assessments - the risk should be down
- Lone Working – no change to the risk

In respect of lone workers, Members noted that there had been some issues with mobile apps, due to a lack of signal and they might be too visible in the event of threat. The 'Skyguard' personal alarms would, therefore, be rolled out to a further 100 lone workers. Members noted that these devices could be activated from a staff ID badge and would connect to contact centre, which would be able to listen into an incident and provide the Police with a GPS location. Given the large number of these units, the contract might need to be tendered but the risk was being actively managed and had enabled managers to be aware of more lone workers, who might not previously have considered

themselves as such. Members asked for the devices to be sourced as soon as possible.

RESOLVED, that – the report be noted.

7. **FIRE SAFETY UPDATE**

Members received a report of the Director of Community and Children's Services, which provided an update on progress made in relation to Fire Safety matters since the last update reports in July and September 2017. During the discussion, the following points were noted:

- The Fire Brigade had been consulted on the Type 3 Risk Assessment findings from Great Arthur House and interim measures were in place. A temporary alarm, a 'waking watch' and an evacuation plan had been introduced, pending the installation of a hard-wired alarm by the end of January 2018. Waking Watch guards, provided and managed by one of the City of London Corporation's approved security companies, are required to scan in on each floor as they complete their patrol of the building.
- Remedial works required at Great Arthur House will include fire-stopping measures to the spy holes and parcel cupboards to front entrance screens.
- Surveys for the new round of Fire Risk Assessments on all Social Housing blocks would be completed next week.
- Officers tabled the latest newsletter on fire safety. A Member was concerned about the use of candles and asked that, particularly over the forthcoming festive season, advice be offered about using containers above the candle or suggesting rechargeable tea lights.
- A Member asked for officers to check that no fire doors had been painted shut during redecorations.
- The Assistant Director was very pleased to advise that the Chamberlain had agreed funding for intensive visits to all tenanted properties and a pilot for Leasehold properties on Golden Lane Estate. This would provide an opportunity to gain a vast range of intelligence on our residents and to provide additional support to households needing it. Officers advised that the resourcing for this project would include referrals and follow-up work.
- Fire Risk Assessments for all HRA properties had been due for completion by the end of November. There had been some slippage but surveys were almost complete and the first draft reports were due in the next two weeks. Members accepted that it was preferable to publish an action plan alongside the risk assessment reports but any immediate issues would be addressed. The report and action plan would form part of the report to both the Community and Children's Service and Housing

Management Almshouses sub committees in February/March 2018. Members were reminded that the current Fire Risk Assessments were still valid and were not due for review until August 2018.

The Chairman of the Grand Committee commended the Department's measured approach and had found that, generally, residents were content with this. Finally, Members noted that the Community and Children's Services Committee would receive a full report on sprinklers, doors and fire alarms at their March Meeting and the Housing and Management Almshouses Sub would receive this report at their March meeting.

RESOLVED, that – the report be noted.

8. FIRE PROTOCOL

Members received a report of the Director of Community and Children's Services which sought approval of a revised Fire Protocol for communal areas in residential blocks. During the discussion the following points were noted.

Members noted that protocol in respect of private balconies aimed to mirror the communal areas; i.e. chairs were allowed if not flammable and officers sought to optimise residents' safety without being too punitive. Members accepted that too much storage on balconies was unsightly, as well as a fire risk, given the behaviour of some smokers who might flick cigarette ends off balconies.

RESOLVED, that – the protocol be endorsed for immediate adoption and implementation, subject to officers giving more clarity to protocol in respect of private balconies.

9. ESTATE SATISFACTION SURVEY DATA REPORT

Members received a report of the Director of Community and Children's Services which summarised the results of the 2017 Satisfaction Survey of Residents of the City's Social Housing Estates. During the discussion on this item, the following points were noted:

- The survey was sent to all residents by post and email, if known, and last year's email response had been higher. The survey did not need to be done annually; officers preferred to do so, but the additional marketing required to ensure a good response could be expensive. The introduction of a controversial question had triggered a higher response in previous years.
- Officers had been disappointed at some of the results and some were difficult to explain.
- There had been more general dissatisfaction nationally this year following the General Election and the Grenfell Tower tragedy.
- The large number of major works might have swayed opinion.
- The Assistant Director had recently attended a meeting of housing professionals from other London boroughs who had experienced similar survey results.

- The low scores in areas which fell within the control of the Department would be raised with the residents' Housing User Board, to gain a better understanding. Service plans would be updated where necessary.
- The responsive repairs contract would soon be re-tendered but, given its high value, the procurement process could take 9 months.
- A Member suggested that a key performance indicator should be repairs completed on first visits.
- The additional information gathered during tenant visits, under item 7 on the agenda, might help to understand some of the results.
- Members asked if the 2016 results for the estates could be circulated and asked if the next report could show 3 years' worth of results.

RESOLVED, that – the report and survey results be noted.

10. CITY OF LONDON ALMSHOUSES REVENUE AND CAPITAL BUDGETS 2017/18 AND 2018/19

Members received a report of the Chamberlain and the Director of Community and Children's Services in respect of the Almshouses' Revenue and Capital Budgets. Members noted having a reserves policy for Almshouses was good practice in the Charities Sector.

RESOLVED, that – the 2018/19 Revenue Report be approved as reflecting the Committee's objectives.

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

There were no questions.

12. ANY OTHER BUSINESS THAT THE CHAIRMAN CONSIDERS URGENT

There was no other business.

13. 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
14-19

Paragraphs
1,2 and 3

14. NON-PUBLIC MINUTES

RESOLVED – That the non-public minutes of the meeting held on 26 September be approved as a correct record.

15. GREAT ARTHUR HOUSE PROGRESS UPDATE

Members received a report of the Director of Community and Children's Services in respect of the refurbishments works at Great Arthur House on the Golden Lane Estate. Members noted that this report would be redacted to

remove information excluded under paragraph 3, as set out above, and a public version would be published on the City of London Corporation's web site.

Members noted that the structural issues had resulted in problems with refitting residents' curtains and blinds. Assistance had been given wherever possible but it was pointed out that responsibility for curtains and blinds was always down to the resident. The Assistant Director advised that 'warped' window cills would be replaced with a hardwood outer cill with an MDF insert. Members noted that final contract costs were under review by the City Surveyor and the report before them did not represent the final position. The completion date for August 2018 was expected but this might be earlier if all the flats did not require the later proposed modifications.

RESOLVED, that – the progress of the works, difficulties encountered and actions taken to resolve them be noted.

16. MAIS HOUSE DECANT PROGRAMME UPDATE

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

RESOLVED, that – the report be noted.

17. PERMISSION TO WITHDRAW ALMSHOUSES LICENCE

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

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

There were no non-public questions.

19. ANY OTHER BUSINESS THAT THE CHAIRMAN CONSIDERS URGENT AND WHICH THE SUB COMMITTEE AGREE SHOULD BE CONSIDERED WHILST THE PUBLIC ARE EXCLUDED

The Assistant Director, Housing and Neighbourhoods reported on one item of urgent business whilst the public were excluded.

The meeting ended at 4 pm

Chairman

Contact Officer: Julie Mayer: 020 7 332 1426
julie.mayer@cityoflondon.gov.uk