

COMMUNITY & CHILDREN'S SERVICES COMMITTEE

Friday, 6 November 2020

Minutes of the meeting streamed to
<https://youtu.be/unoqlkzxT2w> at 11.00 am

Present

Members:

Randall Anderson (Chairman)	Alderman David Graves
Ruby Sayed (Deputy Chairman)	The Revd Stephen Haines
George Abrahams	Graeme Harrower
Munsur Ali	Benjamin Murphy
Matthew Bell	Dhruv Patel
Peter Bennett	Susan Pearson
Mary Durcan	Henrika Priest
Helen Fentimen	Jason Pritchard
John Fletcher	James de Sausmarez
Marianne Fredericks	

For item 5 - City Advice Centre

Elizabeth Archer
Helen Evans

Officers:

Andrew Carter	- Director of Community and Children's Services
Chris Lovitt	- Deputy Director of Public Health, City and Hackney
Gerald Mehrstens	- Community and Children's Services
Paul Murtagh	- Community and Children's Services
Jason Hayes	- Community and Children's Services
Theresa Shortland	- Community and Children's Services
Chris Pelham	- Community and Children's Services
Sophie Courtwright	- Community and Children's Services
Simon Cribbens	- Community and Children's Services
Ellie Ward	- Community and Children's Services
James Illsley	- Community and Children's Services
Ian Jarman	- Community and Children's Services
Greg knight	- Community and Children's Services
Wil Norman	- Community and Children's Services
Nicholas Welland	- City Surveyors
Paul Friend	- City Surveyors
Ola Obadara	- City Surveyors
Mark Jarvis	- Chamberlains
Chandni Tanna	- Communications
Julie Mayer	- Town Clerks

1. APOLOGIES

Apologies were received from Catherine McGuinness, Caroline Haines and Natasha Lloyd Owen.

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 28th September 2020 be approved.

4. **OUTSTANDING ACTIONS TRACKER (TO FOLLOW)**

The Committee received its actions tracker and noted the following:

- A request to avoid jargon wherever possible.
- A report on Internet Access would be presented to the December Committee and include sign posting to charities.
- A survey in respect of the forthcoming Sports Strategy would be sent to businesses shortly. A Member had asked if this could include residents.
- Members asked for the position on the Ralph Perring Centre to be reviewed, so that it could come back into use as soon as possible. Officers advised that this was dependent on which tier we might be in after Lockdown 2.
- All households would shortly receive a leaflet in respect of accessing on-line services and signposting to age UK, which had been amended following the closure of the Barbican Library. Members were asked to advise officers of anything that should be included

5. **PRESENTATION FROM CITY ADVICE**

The Committee received a presentation from the City Advice Centre and during the discussion and questions, the following points were noted:

- The use of 'community champions', who shared their experiences with friends and neighbours, thereby promoting the Centre as a safe and trusted space. Members were encouraged to advise residents in need to come forward.
- A lack of access to devices was more significant than ever and there would be a big campaign over Christmas and the New Year.
- Tower Hamlets has administrators in place for a number of mutual aid groups. The City of the London Corporation's digital support communication was soon to be released and the Chairman asked if this could align with Tower Hamlets' communications. Officers agreed to liaise and there was a further request for the marketing tool kit to be shared.

In concluding, the Chairman and officers thanked the Advice Centre for their insightful presentation and their excellent work in the community.

6. **COMMUNITY CENTRE GOVERNANCE**

The Committee considered a report of the Director, Community and Children's Services in respect of the creation of an Advisory Board for the new Portsoken Community Centre and the governance frameworks across City of London Community Centres. Members were reminded that this report had been deferred from the previous meeting.

RESOLVED, That - the terms or reference and membership of Advisory Boards (or other related structure) be agreed on a case by case basis. *NB. Elected Members could be members, if agreed as appropriate to that centre, thereby allowing for local variation. Should Member positions be included, the Committee will make the Member appointment.*

7. **CREDIBLE OFFER POLICY**

The Committee considered a report of the Director of Community and Children's Services which introduced the City of London's draft Credible Offer Policy for rough sleepers.

In respect of those with 'No Recourse to Public Funds (NRPF)', officers advised that the City of London Corporation did not have the authority to ask anyone to leave the United Kingdom. Members noted that Outreach Teams would be tasked with fully assessing eligibility and offering pathways out of homelessness. The officer explained that, in some cases, this might include a safe reconnection within or outside of the United Kingdom, provided that it presented a workable solution for the homeless client. The Chairman of the Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Sub Committee asked if the minutes of the last Sub Committee Meeting could be circulated to all Members of the Grand Committee, when this matters was discussed, and the Grand Committee would receive a further report at the December Committee.

RESOLVED, that – the Policy be implemented.

8. **COMMISSIONING UPDATE**

The Committee received a report which provided a summary of current activity, successes, issues and priorities for the Department's Commissioning Team. It was noted that the information from consultation findings had been particularly helpful in shaping services for young people.

RESOLVED, That – the report be noted.

9. **INTEGRATED CARE IN THE CITY OF LONDON - UPDATE**

The Committee received a report of the Director of Community and Children's services which updated Members on some of the recent developments in integrated care (health and social care) locally and some of the wider changes in governance and planning structures for these services.

Members noted that a vote on the merger and formation of the North East London CCG had taken place last month. This had been thoroughly scrutinised in terms of the risk of any potential loss of City focus and been discussed at the Health and Social Care Scrutiny Committee earlier this week. Members also

noted that there would also be a new Integrated Commissioning Partnership Board, but the current ICB would be a legal entity until the law changed. The Chairman advised that the new Board would control the bulk of the CCG budget and, for the first time, elected Members for both the City and Hackney would have an input.

RESOLVED, That – the report be noted.

10. CHILDCARE SUFFICIENCY ASSESSMENT (CSA)

The Committee received a report of the Director of Community and Children's Services in respect of the CSA. Members noted that officers had engaged with providers and parents about their concerns in the event of a second lockdown and, therefore, the report was particularly relevant. Members were also pleased to note that the Department of Education had continued to provide the Early Education Grant.

RESOLVED, That – the report be noted.

11. CONCRETE REPAIRS TO CULLUM WELCH HOUSE - GATEWAY 6 - OUTCOME REPORT

The Committee considered a report of the Director of Community and Children's Services which sought to close the project to repair the reinforced concrete elements of Cullum Welch House.

RESOLVED, that:

1. The content of this report and lessons learnt be noted.
2. The project be closed.

12. RESETTING OF DEPARTMENTAL BUDGETS - 2020/21

The Committee received a report of the Chamberlain in respect of the recommended budget adjustments which, subject to the agreement of the Court of Common Council in December, would be reflected in their detailed Revised Estimates for 2020/21 and Proposed Budget Estimates for 2021/22.

RESOLVED, that – an increase of £184,000 for the Director of Community & Children's Services budget be noted.

13. LESSONS LEARNT FROM THE DEPARTMENTAL RESPONSE TO THE COVID-19 PANDEMIC

The Committee received a report and presentation of the Director of Community and Children's Services which reflected the experience and lessons learnt by the Department in its response to the COVID-19 pandemic.

During the discussion and questions the following points were noted:

- Further to the Committee agreeing to the transition arrangements for the Food Bank last month, the Director had visited the food bank and been very impressed.

- An imaginative and pragmatic approach to mental health, with the Dragon Café providing a virtual resource through the library service. The City Well-being Centre had also gone on-line during the pandemic.
- Improved support for carers.
- ‘business healthy’ had included the hidden workforce; i.e. - delivery drivers and cleaners, who might not have the same access to services.
- A lead officer within the Public Health Team allocated to bereavement counselling.
- Adult skills and learning offers focussed on building skills to help those facing possible redundancy, as well as connecting those residents who might be feeling isolated.
- Staff were commended for their support to vulnerable children in respect of the provision of free school meals.
- Support has been provided for those working from home and those providing front line services, who had been required to come into the office.
- Members were thanked for supporting officers and officers (Keyworkers), NHS staff and volunteers for their hard work in extremely challenging circumstances.

14. RESOLUTION IN RESPECT OF CONSULTATION ON THE COVID-19 PANDEMIC

The Committee received a series of appendices in response to a Resolution passed at the last Committee, which had asked for the City’s elected representatives, residents’ associations, Square Mile food bank and volunteer Covid support hubs be asked, by the Department of Community and Children’s Services, for their views on the Department’s response to the Covid crisis, and that their input be published in a report brought to this meeting of the Committee.

Members noted the table in the appendix, which reflected the views of Members, and the Director agreed to circulate an amended version, providing names against the various comments. It was suggested by a Member that this additional information was relevant as the views of those Members, who had not been physically present in the City during the lockdown, might have less weight than those who had.

The Director advised that a submission on behalf of unpaid carers would be addressed as part of a response planned for January. The Director stressed that the report on this agenda had been a response to a Members’ motion and, as such, Members had defined the groups that were to be consulted and the Director had not felt it appropriate to expand or contract this.

There was some discussion about sectors of the BAME community, whereby some cultures were resistant to police involvement in domestic abuse matters. The Director confirmed that his officers were very sensitive to the needs of this group and that the work of the Community Safety Team now fell within his area of responsibility. The Police were similarly aware and worked closely with the Adult and Children Safeguarding Boards (Partnership).

Following the Food Bank Transition agreed by the Committee last month, the Department would continue to work with volunteers, ensuring they were not being over-burdened. NHS volunteers were also being included and due diligence being taken in respect of Safeguarding matters. It was noted that there had been a couple of issues in respect of access to premises but they had since been addressed.

There had been 20 positive cases in the first wave but this now stood at 75. Members noted that a lot of work was underway at a London level about the higher proportion of cases in the BAME community. The Director of Public Health for the City and Hackney was personally involved in this work. There was some discussion about taking a holistic approach to BAME communities; i.e. – in terms of living conditions and low incomes make these groups more vulnerable to Covid. Whilst agreeing with this viewpoint, the Chairman emphasised that such matters were 'usual business' for officers and the Members of this Committee.

Whilst it was possible to drill down into particular community groups, the small numbers in the City would make it easy to identify individuals, and the data would need to be redacted before it could enter the public domain. However, the Deputy Director of Public Health could confidentially share this information with Ward Members, on request. Members noted that Portsoken had a test centre across its border with Tower Hamlets, in addition to the test Centre at Guildhall Yard. Additionally, all statutory sectors were undertaking risk assessments in terms of BAME staff.

A view was expressed about a perception of the City of London Corporation focussing more on businesses than residents. There was some discussion about a perceived disconnect between the services we are providing and how they were being received. The work of the Rough Sleeping Sub Committee was quoted as an example of forward planning, to ensure that mechanisms were in place for a quick response once funding became available.

Members then discussed a proposal for a Working Party, focussed on the response to the Covid Crisis, which would continue to engage with communities and service users. The Director asked Members to be mindful that the outcome of the consultation, as set out in this report, was a snapshot at this stage and had not been intended to frame a larger piece of work. Furthermore, the Terms of Reference of such a Working Party would need to be very precise so as to avoid duplication and cutting across work streams already in place.

The Chairman suggested that, whilst there was clearly an appetite amongst Members for a Working Party, it might be premature to specify membership at this stage. It was therefore suggested that it be agreed in principle, given that Working Parties are less formal and the detail could be worked in later. It was suggested that an outline structure be proposed, followed up with an enquiry as to availability and willingness to serve.

It was moved by Graeme Harrower, seconded by Marianne Fredericks and RESOLVED, that :

A working party be set up to assist the Department of Community and Children's Services to respond with positive actions to the ongoing Covid crisis; to meet by virtual means every two weeks, from the week beginning 9th November 2020, until this Committee decides otherwise, to produce a note of actions and outcomes of its meetings for consideration by this Committee at each of its meetings, and to consist of:

- the Chair of Community and Children's Services Committee
- the Chair of the Housing Sub-Committee
- the Director of Community and Children's Services,
- another officer appointed by the Director,
- a representative of the Golden Lane Estate Residents' Association,
- a representative of the Middlesex Street Estate Residents' Association,
- a representative of the Mansell Street Estate Residents' Association,
- a representative of the Square Mile Food Bank,
- Councillor Sue Pearson,
- Councillor Munsur Ali; and
- any other person(s) whom the working party invites to join it.

15. DECISIONS TAKEN UNDER DELEGATED AUTHORITY OR URGENCY POWERS SINCE THE LAST MEETING OF THE COMMITTEE

Members received a report of the Town Clerk which reported on the following action taken, under urgency, since the last meeting of the Committee:

Pan-London Commissioning Support – action taken:

The Town Clerk, in consultation with the Chairmen and Deputy Chairmen of the Policy and Resources Committee, Health and Wellbeing Board and the Community and Children's Services Committee, agreed that the City of London Corporation be named as the lead commissioner for pan-London drug and alcohol services set out in bids to Public Health England and, if bids are successful, to undertake that role.

RESOLVED, that – the report be noted.

16. QUESTIONS ON MATTERS RELATING TO THE WORK OF THE COMMITTEE

In response to a question about rent rebates for HRA Commercial tenants, the Chairman had agreed to admit an item of urgent business which appeared next on the agenda. The Member reserved the right to ask their question, which had sought clarity in respect of the criteria for which a business could receive a

full or partial rent rebate, and the reporting and decision-making processes supporting it. The Member also enquired as to whether businesses with a strong cash balance should be expected to pay, regardless of how badly their turnover had suffered, and what would happen to those business that might not survive? In respect of the final point, Members noted that this would be revisited at the December Committee, once there was more clarity.

17. ANY OTHER BUSINESS THAT THE CHAIRMAN CONSIDERS URGENT

The Chairman agreed to admit the following item of urgent business:

Department of Community and Children's Services Commercial Tenants and Covid 19 – Proposal for revision to Additional Support in the September Quarter.

The Committee considered a joint report of the Director of Community and Children's Services and the City Surveyor, which sought approval to proposed amendments to the process and package of rental assistance to HRA commercial tenants, which had been approved at the last committee, given the worsening pandemic and its impact on tenant's trading conditions, including the recently imposed Government National Lockdown until 2nd December 2020.

RESOLVED, that:

- a) The deferment of the full quarter's rent be approved (due from 29th September 2020 to 24th December 2020) for all HRA commercial tenants until 24th March 2021, payable thereafter in 12 equal monthly payments, excepting only those tenants that have already paid or wish to pay the September rent.
- b) Deferment also of the 12 month repayment plan, which all HRA commercial tenants were due to pay from September 2020, be approved for the full quarter's rent deferral from 25th March 2020 to 24th June 2020, until 24th March 2021, payable thereafter in 12 equal monthly payments, excepting only those tenants that have already paid or wish to pay this rent.
- c) It be noted that the above offer be 'automatic' and take effect immediately for all HRA commercial tenants, excepting only those tenants that have already paid or wish to pay the September rent.
- d) It be noted that the 'case by case analysis', whilst substantially in progress, be suspended for this quarter's rental assistance

18. EXCLUSION OF THE PUBLIC

RESOLVED - That under Section 100A(4) of the Local Government Act 1972, the public be excluded from the meeting for the following items of business on the grounds that they involve the likely disclosure of exempt information as defined in Paragraph 3 of Part I of Schedule 12A of the Local Government Act.

Para no
20-28

Item no
3

At 12.55 and 13.25 Members agreed to waive Standing Order 40 in order to complete the business on the agenda.

19. **NON-PUBLIC MINUTES**

RESOLVED, that – the public minutes of the meeting held on 28th September 2020 be approved.

20. **WAIVER REPORT FOR YOUTH SERVICES AT GOLDEN LANE**

The Committee considered and approved a report of the Director of Community and Children’s Services.

21. **GOLDEN LANE SPORT AND FITNESS CENTRE MANAGEMENT- LEISURE SERVICES 2022**

The Committee considered and approved a report of the Director of Community and Children’s Services.

21. **SEMI-INDEPENDENT / SUPPORTED ACCOMMODATION PLACEMENTS (16-25YRS) PROCUREMENT STRATEGY REPORT**

The Committee considered and approved a report of the Director of Community and Children’s Services.

23. **GREAT ARTHUR HOUSE NEW FLATS PROJECTS- GATEWAY 5 - AUTHORITY TO START WORK**

The Committee considered and approved a report of the Director of Community and Children’s Services.

24. **HOLLOWAY ESTATE, ISLINGTON ARTS FACTORY (IAF)**

The Committee considered and approved a report of the Director of Community and Children’s Services.

25. **YORK WAY ESTATE PROVISION OF SOCIAL HOUSING**

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

26. **PROGRESS REPORT OF THE PROVISION OF ADDITIONAL PRIMARY SCHOOL PLACES AND SOCIAL HOUSING ON THE FORMER RICHARD CLODESLEY SCHOOL SITE**

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

27. **QUESTIONS ON MATTERS RELATING TO THE WORK OF THE COMMITTEE**

There was one question whilst the Public were excluded.

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

The Chairman agreed to admit an item of urgent business whilst the public were excluded.

The meeting ended at 14.00 hrs.

Chairman

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