



## Community & Children's Services Committee

**Date:** FRIDAY, 6 NOVEMBER 2020  
**Time:** 11.00 am  
**Venue:** VIRTUAL MEETING STREAMED LIVE TO YOU TUBE  
<https://youtu.be/unoqlkzxT2w>

**Members:**

Randall Anderson (Chairman)	Natasha Maria Cabrera Lloyd-Owen
Ruby Sayed (Deputy Chairman)	Alderman Bronek Masojada
George Abrahams	Deputy Catherine McGuinness
Munsur Ali	Benjamin Murphy
Matthew Bell	Deputy Joyce Nash
Peter Bennett	Dhruv Patel
Mary Durcan	Susan Pearson
Helen Fentimen	William Pimlott
John Fletcher	Henrika Priest
Marianne Fredericks	Jason Pritchard
Alderman David Graves	James de Sausmarez
Caroline Haines	Deputy Philip Woodhouse
The Revd Stephen Haines	
Graeme Harrower	
Alderman Alastair King	

**Co-opted Members:** Laura Jørgensen and Matt Piper

**Enquiries:** [julie.mayer@cityoflondon.gov.uk](mailto:julie.mayer@cityoflondon.gov.uk)

### Accessing the virtual public meeting

This meeting will be a virtual meeting and therefore will not take place in a physical location following regulations made under Section 78 of the Coronavirus Act 2020.

A recording of the public meeting will be available via the above link following the end of the public meeting for up to one municipal year. Please note: Online meeting recordings do not constitute the formal minutes of the meeting; minutes are written and are available on the City of London Corporation's website. Recordings may be edited, at the discretion of the proper officer, to remove any inappropriate material. Members of the public can observe this virtual public meeting at the below link:

**John Barradell**  
**Town Clerk and Chief Executive**

# AGENDA

## Part 1 - Public Reports

1. **APOLOGIES**
2. **MEMBERS' DECLARATIONS UNDER THE CODE OF CONDUCT IN RESPECT OF ITEMS ON THE AGENDA**
3. **MINUTES**  
To agree the public minutes and non-public summary of the meeting on 28<sup>th</sup> September 2020.  
**For Decision**  
(Pages 1 - 10)
4. **OUTSTANDING ACTIONS TRACKER (TO FOLLOW)**  
The Committee is asked to note the outstanding actions tracker.  
**For Information**
5. **PRESENTATION FROM CITY ADVICE**  
**For Information**
6. **COMMUNITY CENTRE GOVERNANCE**  
Report of the Director of Community and Children's Services.  
**For Decision**  
(Pages 11 - 14)
7. **CREDIBLE OFFER POLICY**  
Report of the Director of Community and Children's Services.  
**For Decision**  
(Pages 15 - 32)
8. **COMMISSIONING UPDATE**  
Report of the Director of Community and Children's Services.  
**For Information**  
(Pages 33 - 44)
9. **INTEGRATED CARE IN THE CITY OF LONDON - UPDATE**  
Report of the Director of Community and Children's Services.  
**For Information**  
(Pages 45 - 50)
10. **CHILDCARE SUFFICIENCY ASSESSMENT**  
Report of the Director of Community and Children's Services.  
**For Information**  
(Pages 51 - 82)

11. **CONCRETE REPAIRS TO CULLUM WELCH HOUSE - GATEWAY 6 - OUTCOME REPORT**  
Report of the Director of Community and Children's Services.  
**For Decision**  
(Pages 83 - 96)
12. **RESETTING OF DEPARTMENTAL BUDGETS - 2020/21**  
Report of the Chamberlain.  
**For Information**  
(Pages 97 - 108)
13. **LESSONS LEARNT FROM THE DEPARTMENTAL RESPONSE TO THE COVID-19 PANDEMIC**  
Report of the Director of Community and Children's Services.  
**For Information**  
(Pages 109 - 130)
14. **RESOLUTION IN RESPECT OF CONSULTATION ON THE COVID-19 PANDEMIC**  
Members are asked to note the response to the Resolution from the last meeting of the Committee on 28<sup>th</sup> September 2020.  
**For Information**  
(Pages 131 - 150)
15. **DECISIONS TAKEN UNDER DELEGATED AUTHORITY OR URGENCY POWERS SINCE THE LAST MEETING OF THE COMMITTEE**  
Report of the Town Clerk.  
**For Information**  
(Pages 151 - 152)
16. **QUESTIONS ON MATTERS RELATING TO THE WORK OF THE COMMITTEE**
17. **ANY OTHER BUSINESS THAT THE CHAIRMAN CONSIDERS URGENT**
18. **EXCLUSION OF THE PUBLIC**  
MOTION - 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.

**For Decision**

## **Part 2 - Non-Public Reports**

19. **NON-PUBLIC MINUTES**  
To agree the non-public minutes of the previous Committee meeting.

**For Decision**  
(Pages 153 - 156)

20. **WAIVER REPORT FOR YOUTH SERVICES AT GOLDEN LANE**  
Report of the Director of Community and Children's Services.  
**For Decision**  
(Pages 157 - 162)
21. **GOLDEN LANE SPORT AND FITNESS CENTRE MANAGEMENT- LEISURE SERVICES 2022**  
Report of the Director of Community and Children's Services.  
**For Decision**  
(Pages 163 - 170)
22. **SEMI-INDEPENDENT / SUPPORTED ACCOMMODATION PLACEMENTS (16-25YRS) PROCUREMENT STRATEGY REPORT**  
Joint report of the Chamberlain and Director of Community and Children's Services.  
**For Decision**  
(Pages 171 - 182)
23. **GREAT ARTHUR HOUSE NEW FLATS PROJECTS- GATEWAY 5 - AUTHORITY TO START WORK**  
Report of the Director of Community and Children's Services.  
**For Decision**  
(Pages 183 - 230)
24. **HOLLOWAY ESTATE, ISLINGTON ARTS FACTORY (IAF)**  
Report of the Director of Community and Children's Services.  
**For Decision**  
(Pages 231 - 240)
25. **YORK WAY ESTATE PROVISION OF SOCIAL HOUSING**  
Report of the Director of Community and Children's Services.  
**For Information**  
(Pages 241 - 316)
26. **PROGRESS REPORT OF THE PROVISION OF ADDITIONAL PRIMARY SCHOOL PLACES AND SOCIAL HOUSING ON THE FORMER RICHARD CLOUDESLEY SCHOOL SITE**  
Report of the Director of Community and Children's Services.  
**For Information**  
(Pages 317 - 322)
27. **QUESTIONS ON MATTERS RELATING TO THE WORK OF THE COMMITTEE**
28. **ANY OTHER BUSINESS THAT THE CHAIRMAN CONSIDERS URGENT AND WHICH THE COMMITTEE AGREE SHOULD BE CONSIDERED WHILST THE PUBLIC ARE EXCLUDED**

## COMMUNITY & CHILDREN'S SERVICES COMMITTEE

Monday, 28 September 2020

Minutes of the meeting streamed to You Tube -  
<https://youtu.be/K5XTaJPXmxQ> at 11.00 am

### Present

#### Members:

Randall Anderson (Chairman)  
Ruby Sayed (Deputy Chairman)  
George Abrahams  
Munsur Ali  
Matthew Bell  
Peter Bennett  
Mary Durcan  
Helen Fentimen  
Marianne Fredericks  
Alderman David Graves  
Caroline Haines  
Graeme Harrower  
Laura Jørgensen (Co-optee)

Alderman Alastair King  
Natasha Maria Cabrera Lloyd-Owen  
Deputy Catherine McGuinness  
Benjamin Murphy  
Deputy Joyce Nash  
Dhruv Patel  
Susan Pearson  
William Pimlott  
Matt Piper (Co-optee)

### In Attendance

#### Officers:

Andrew Carter  
Dr Sandra Husbands  
Chris Lovitt

Dr Adi Cooper  
Raynor Griffiths  
Nicholas Welland  
Steven Chandler  
Richard Chamberlain  
Mark Jarvis  
Carol Boswarthack  
Gerald Mehrrens  
Paul Murtagh  
Jason Hayes  
Theresa Shortland  
Chris Pelham  
Chandni Tanna  
Julie Mayer  
Ellen Wentworth  
Simi Shah

- Director of Community and Children's Services
- Director of Public Health, City and Hackney
- Deputy Director of Public Health, City and Hackney
- City and Hackney, Adults Safeguarding Board
- City and Hackney, Adults Safeguarding Board
- City Surveyor's Department
- City Surveyor's Department
- City Surveyor's Department
- Chamberlain's Department
- Community & Children's Services
- Community & Children's Services
- Community & Children's Services
- Community & Children's Services
- Community & Children's Services
- Community & Children's Services
- Town Clerk's, Communications Department
- Town Clerk's, Committee Services
- Chamberlain's, IT Support
- Town Clerk's, Innovation and Growth

1. **APOLOGIES**

Apologies were received from John Fletcher, Alderman Bronek Masojada, Henrika Priest, Reverend Stephen Haines, James de Sausmarez and Jason Pritchard.

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

There were no declarations.

3. **MINUTES**

RESOLVED, that – the minutes of the meeting held on 24 July 2020 be approved, noting that Ruby Sayed (Deputy Chairman) had been in attendance.

**Matters arising**

1. A Member asked about a forthcoming report, due at the Committee in November, which would set out lessons learned re: the Department's Covid responses.

A Member asked the Director about including residents' views as part of the November report.

The Director questioned the timing and resources to undertake a full consultation now and suggested a wider consultation at a later stage.

A Member strongly expressed their desire for resident consultation but with an initial understanding of the Director's position re: resources to undertake an effective consultation. The Member also expressed reservations re: levels of understanding of the Civil Contingency Act.

A Member proposed a Motion.

A Member proposed that the responses would be made public and it was agreed with the Director that officers would simply collate the responses.

The Director suggested that the letter to residents' groups should be officer neutral. The Member proposing the Motion agreed to draft this, and would send it to the Chairman, Deputy Chairman and those Committee Members who spoke on the Motion, copied to the Director and Committee Clerk, within the next 24 hours.

It was proposed by Graeme Harrower, seconded by Sue Pearson and RESOLVED, That:

*'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 the next meeting of this Committee on 6 November 2020’.*

2. In respect of resident engagement more generally, there was a further point made in that, during the course of the year, the City of London Corporation usually holds two City Wide Resident Meetings. It was proposed by Marianne Fredericks, Seconded by Natasha Lloyd Owen and RESOLVED, that:

*‘The Policy and Resources Committee be asked to organise a Virtual City-Wide Residents’ meeting, as soon as possible’. NB:*  
Subsequently a resident meeting was scheduled, before the resolution was forwarded.

3. The Town Clerk agreed to include a reference to the amendment to the Terms of Reference in respect of the Lead Member for young people, which had been agreed as follows:

*The nominated Lead Member for young people is charged with championing universal needs of young people living, studying or working in the City. The Lead Member will support cross Corporation working and have involvement in relevant services for young people, such as;*

*1. Universal youth provision in the square mile*

*2. City Youth Forum*

*3. Apprenticeship, work experience, volunteering opportunities and Culture Mile learning, within the Terms of Reference of the Community and Children’s Services Committee.*

4. In respect of a forthcoming report on the Carers Strategy, the Director advised this was an annual report, presented to the Committee early in the new Calendar year. However, it might be possible to present it earlier this year, and the Director would advise Members when this might be. The Director confirmed that consultation with service users was part of the contact and commissioner requirements.

#### 4. **OUTSTANDING ACTIONS**

In response to further questions about communal electricity charges the Assistant Director agreed to reinvestigate and report back to the next committee.

#### 5. **CITY AND HACKNEY SAFEGUARDING ADULTS BOARD STRATEGY 2020-25 AND ANNUAL REPORT 2019/20**

The Committee received a report of the Independent Chair of the City and Hackney Safeguarding Adults Board. The report outlined the Board’s new Strategy for 2020/25 and the annual report for 2019/20. The report also

highlighted the actions that the Board had taken in response to the Covid-19 outbreak.

RESOLVED, that – the report be noted.

**6. UPDATE ON COVID-19**

The Committee received a verbal update from the Director of Public Health and during the discussion and questions, the following points were noted:

- a) Whilst infections were rising across London, it had affected the City to a lesser extent; i.e. 11.5 cases per 100,000 in the past week. To add context to this, Hackney was currently at 27 but Bolton was at 200.
- b) Details of all positive tests were sent to the NHS to ensure those affected were self-isolating and to identify any close contacts. The Director and her team had been working to contact those not contacted by the national test and trace effort..
- c) The Director and her new Deputy Director of Public Health were working with the City Surveyor to identify potential sites in the City for walk in test centres. There was a number of viable options, with 3 strong possibilities. A further meeting was due later today, with an expectation of the test centre being ready within the next 2 weeks.
- d) A Task Force was now in place to support each borough and sub region in reducing infections. More impact was being made by working together across North East London, with NHS partners. City numbers were still relatively low, due to its small population and the reduced number of office workers.
- e) There was some unspent budget from Test, Track and Trace but, due to the lower numbers in the City, the numbers trained would be scaled up incrementally. The training did not take long but a recruitment exercise might be required.
- f) The Chair of the City of London Corporation's Policy and Resources Committee, also a Member of this Committee, stressed the importance of balancing the impact on the economy with the City Corporation's Public Health role. It was therefore essential that the guidance was followed, whether or not Members agreed with the approach. However, the Chair of Policy was in regular contact with City Hall in seeking an evidence-based approach and ensuring consistency in any enforcement action taken.
- g) Over the past week, the whole of London has been escalated to an area of national concern and it was now easier to get tests. However, it remained to be seen as to whether turnaround times would decrease.
- h) The Deputy Director of Public Health had met with all Heads of Schools, to discuss the impact on teachers and pupils and these issues were not unique to the City of London Corporation.



- i) Whilst the Director of Public Health was able to highlight issues, the role is limited in terms of implementing change. Members were, therefore, asked for their support in lobbying the Head of Test, Track and Trace and the Health Secretary. The Deputy Director offered to help draft a letter.

## **7. RECOVERY AND RESILIENCE**

The Committee received a report of the Director of Community and Children's services, which set out the Department's approach to the next phase of the Covid-19 Pandemic.

During the discussion, the following points were noted:

- a) The shielded cohort of 200 had been very well supported during the first lockdown and would be readily identified in the event of a second lockdown, with measures in place to reach out to others. If a national or local team spoke to someone needing extra support, they would be signed up via existing pathways. Likewise, 'befriending' was being enabled via the wellbeing element of Test, Track and Trace.
- b) The eviction ban on housing had ended but, most tenants would be entitled to 6 months' notice.
- c) The generic Covid support email address had been used a lot more at the start of the first lockdown but had since dropped off and the newsletter take up had been low. Furthermore, many of the elements they covered had since been integrated into Test, Track and Trace. Any requirements in respect of those residents 'Not in Education, Employment or Training' (NEETS) and with Special Educational Needs and Disability (SEND) were covered by statutory requirements.
- d) The Chairman asked if 'food insecurity' could be included on the dashboard and agreed to communicate with officers, outside of the meeting, as to how this might best be measured.

RESOLVED, that – the report be noted.

## **8. DELIVERING FOOD BANK SUPPORT IN THE CITY**

The Committee considered a report of the Director of Community and Children's Services in respect of options for longer term delivery of a foodbank in the City. The Director and Members thanked and congratulated all the food bank volunteers for their excellent service to the community, which extended beyond food and into support with mental health, domestic abuse, homelessness and benefit take-up, for example. It was recognised that some residents might find the volunteers at food banks more approachable than a statutory organisation.

Members asked that Liz King and Jo Bradman – Square Mile Foodbank be publicly recognised for their service to the local community.

It was suggested that the Department write to all volunteers, possibly providing some kind of commemoration. The Chairman asked for an update to the next meeting on how this could be taken forward.

RESOLVED, that:

1. The delivery of foodbank support in the City of London transition to the First Love Foundation, with the service being available to all City residents, assessed as needing help from the First Love Foundation. *NB. It be noted that residents of Golden Lane can also choose to seek help from the St Luke's Food Connections service.*
  2. Work be undertaken to ensure awareness among referring partners; i.e. - housing, social services, City Advice, GP services and the Jobcentre. *NB All existing clients will be offered referral to the new service for an assessment of their support needs.*
9. **DECENT HOMES AT DRON HOUSE, GOLDEN LANE, SOUTHWARK, SYDENHAM, WINDSOR AND YORK WAY ESTATES - GATEWAY 6 - OUTCOME REPORT**

The Committee received an Outcome (Gateway 6) report of the Director of Community and Children's Services in respect of the above project. The Director advised that every effort is made to ensure that residents can remain in their homes and retain access to their facilities during the works.

RESOLVED, that:

1. The content of the report and the lessons learnt be noted.
  2. The project be closed.
10. **CITY OF LONDON CORPORATION COMBINED RELIEF OF POVERTY CHARITY (NO 1073660) - ADMINISTRATION AND MANAGEMENT**
- The Committee considered a report of the Chief Grants Officer and Director of the City Bridge Trust which presented various matters intended to support the better administration and management of the charity. Specifically, decisions were sought on the Charity's reserves policy and funding strategy.

Members noted that authorisations in the sum of £10,000 and below would be delegated to the Director and Senior Leadership Team, in accordance with the scheme of delegations. There was some discussion about child poverty generally, noting how this affected life chances. The Director advised that a project was underway with the Children's Partnership, seeking to update their strategy. Members would receive a report on this early in the new year. It was also noted that the subsequent approval of the report on today's agenda would increase grant provision in the near future.

RESOLVED, that:

1. The revised reserves policy at Appendix B to the report be approved.

2. The revised and more strategic approach to funding and charitable activities for the charity, including the proposed expenditure of up to £300,000 of income funds over 2020/21 to 2025/26 (subject to ongoing review), as set out in the report, be approved.
3. Authority be delegated to the Director of Community and Children's Services, in consultation with the Chairman and Deputy Chairman, to develop and set the framework for implementation of the charity's new funding strategy.

**11. STRONGER COMMUNITIES PROGRAMME**

The Committee considered a report of the Director of Community and Children's Services in respect of a new Stronger Communities process, which would offer both small and main grants on a rolling basis from 1 October 2020. This would allow for the fund to respond to emerging needs in the community served by the fund.

RESOLVED, That :

1. The new Stronger Communities process be approved.
2. The revision to the criteria for the Stronger Communities Programme at Appendix 1, be noted.
3. The recent grants awarded from the Stronger Communities Fund at Appendix 2, be noted.

**12. CHANGE OF NAME OF THE SIR JOHN CASS FOUNDATION PRIMARY SCHOOL**

The Committee considered a report of the Director of Community and Children's Services which updated Members on the change of name of the Sir John Cass's Foundation Primary School to the Aldgate School. Members noted that the Instrument of Governance (approved by this Committee in August 2019) would need to be updated to reflect the change of name but would remain otherwise unchanged.

The Chairman, also a Member of the Tackling Racism Taskforce (TRT), confirmed that the TRT would be happy to receive this report and notice of its agreement, for information. Members also noted that the Governing Body had produced a report setting out a wider response to the issues and it was suggested that this be shared with the Education Board and the TRT. I HAVE CONTACTED THE CLERKS - Julie

RESOLVED, that – the draft Instrument of Governance (IoG), as varied, be agreed.

**13. SPECIAL EDUCATIONAL NEEDS AND DISABILITY (SEND) STRATEGY 2020-24**

The Committee received a report of the Director of Community and Children's Services in respect of the SEND Strategy for 2020-24.

RESOLVED, that – the report be noted.

**14. COMMUNITY CENTRE GOVERNANCE**

This report was deferred to the next meeting.

*At 12.45 and 1.10 pm Members agreed to extend standing orders in order to conclude the business on the agenda.*

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

There were no questions

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

1. Members received an update on the City of London Corporation's Climate Strategy, which had been widely circulated to other committees ahead of its endorsement by the Policy and Resources Committee on 24 September 2020. It would be presented to the Court of Common Council for formal adoption on 9<sup>th</sup> October 2020.
2. Members noted the outcome of a successful bid to the MHCLG for cost recovery for the City's street population during the lockdown and this would be the subject of a report to the Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Sub Committee the following week. Members also noted that additional funding was being bid for drug and alcohol services which might need an urgent decision.

**17. 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 of business on the grounds that they involve the likely disclosure of exempt information as defined in Part I of Schedule 12A of the Local Government Act as follows:-

Item	Paragraph
19	3
20	2,3
21,22	3
23	-
24	2.3

**18. NON-PUBLIC MINUTES**

RESOLVED, that the non-public minutes of the meeting held on 24<sup>th</sup> July 202 be approved.

**Matters arising**

Planning approval had been granted for the Sydenham Hill development.

**19. RENEWAL OF FLAT ROOF COVERINGS (VARIOUS HOUSING BLOCKS OF FLATS) - GATEWAY 1-4**

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

**20. RIGHTS TO LIGHT COMPENSATION**

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

21. **CONTRACT VARIATION: E-SERVICES FOR PAN LONDON SEXUAL HEALTH TRANSFORMATION PROGRAMME**  
The Committee considered and approved a report of the Director of Community and Children's Services.
22. **BRIDGEMASTERS' HOUSE PHASE 1 - GATEWAY 6 - OUTCOME REPORT**  
The Committee considered and approved a report of the City Surveyor.
23. **QUESTIONS ON MATTERS RELATING TO THE WORK OF THE COMMITTEE**  
There were no questions.
24. **ANY OTHER BUSINESS THAT THE CHAIRMAN CONSIDERS URGENT AND WHICH THE COMMITTEE AGREE SHOULD BE CONSIDERED WHILST THE PUBLIC ARE EXCLUDED**  
The Committee considered and approved a report of the Director of Community and Children's Services.

**The meeting ended at 1.30 pm**

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Chairman

**Contact Officer: Julie Mayer tel. no. 020 7332 1410  
julie.mayer@cityoflondon.gov.uk**

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<b>Committee:</b>	<b>Dated:</b>
Community and Children's Services	06/11/2020
<b>Subject:</b>	<b>Public</b>
Community Centre Governance	
<b>Which outcomes in the City Corporation's Corporate Plan does this proposal aim to impact directly?</b>	<b>3,4</b>
<b>Does this proposal require extra revenue and/or capital spending?</b>	<b>N</b>
<b>If so, how much?</b>	
<b>What is the source of Funding?</b>	
<b>Has this Funding Source been agreed with the Chamberlain's Department?</b>	<b>n/a</b>
<b>Report of:</b> Andrew Carter – Director, Department of Community and Children's Services	<b>For Decision</b>
<b>Report author:</b> Simon Cribbens - Assistant Director, Commissioning and Partnerships	

## Summary

This report seeks Members' recommendations in relation to the creation of an Advisory Board for the new Portsoken Community Centre and the governance frameworks across City of London Community Centres.

## Recommendations

Members are asked to:

- Recommend an option for the appointment to community centre Advisory Boards
- If it is recommended that the Advisory Boards includes Members, propose the number of Members that should sit on the Advisory Board and how they are appointed.

## Main Report

### Background

1. A new Portsoken Community Centre adjoining the Mansell Street estate is scheduled for completion in March 2021. This will replace the City Corporation's use of the existing Portsoken Health and Community Centre (the Green Box) and add to community facilities the City Corporation has within the Square Mile on the Golden Lane estate and as part of the Artizan Street Library.
2. The vision for the new community centre is to establish a thriving and financially sustainable facility serving and driven by people living and working in the community. It aims to be accessible for all sections of the community, and responsive to meeting a variety of interests, needs and wants from different

sections of the community. It also aims to be accountable to the community, with residents involved in and making decisions relating to the new centre (and that this role grows over time).

3. To secure these aims it is proposed that an “Advisory Board” is established.

### **Current Position**

4. Members of this Committee decided that the City Corporation take initial responsibility for the management of the Portsoken Community Centre to ensure the risks of the immediate period ahead are properly addressed and the provision has a good opportunity to bed in.
5. To support that operation, an Advisory Board will be established to develop operational policies and support other elements such as the recruitment and community reach.
6. The approach echoes a similar structure set up to support the newly refurbished Golden Lane Community Centre (GLCC) when it reopened.
7. Members of the Portsoken Ward have proposed that the Board be made up of residents of Mansell Street and Middlesex Street estates, officers, a local business representative and two elected Members appointed by the Alderman. Officers have also suggested a representative of the hotel that the community centre sits within.
8. A flexible approach to membership is prudent given the differing key stakeholders. A representative of the Adult Skills service sits on the GLCC Board for instance as they are an anchor occupant. Housing are also represented as that centre is also a Housing Revenue Account asset.
9. The Golden Lane Advisory Board does not include elected Members. It was considered at the time of its establishment that there may be a conflict between Member’s committee role of scrutiny and decision making on future operation, with the responsibilities of the Advisory Board.
10. However, Members are asked to consider whether elected representatives should join the new Portsoken Community Centre Advisory Board, and if so, the process for appointing them.

### **Options**

11. Options are set out below:
12. **Option 1:** The terms of reference and membership of Advisory Boards (or other related structure) are agreed on a case by case basis. Elected Members could be members if that is agreed as appropriate to that centre. This allows for local variation, but may be seen as inconsistent



13. **Option 2:** The Advisory Board (or other related structure) of all community centres should include an elected Member or Members to further represent local views and interests.
14. **Option 3:** The Advisory Boards of City Corporation community centres do not include elected Members. This would provide for consistency and clear separation between governance and delivery.
15. Where options 1 or 2 are favoured, Members are asked to consider whether the number of Members should be agreed and set consistently across such Boards, or whether it is immaterial.
16. If Members are to sit on these Boards, Members are asked to propose how they are appointed.

## **Corporate & Strategic Implications**

### *Strategic implications*

17. The new Portsoken Community Centre will deliver to the aims of the Corporate Plan and the following outcomes:
- Communities are cohesive and have the facilities they need.
  - People have equal opportunities to enrich their lives and reach their full potential.
  - People enjoy good health and wellbeing.
  - We inspire enterprise, excellence, creativity and collaboration.
  - We are digitally and physically well-connected and responsive.

## **Conclusion**

18. The establishment of an Advisory Board for the new Portsoken Community Centre will help secure its vision to be a thriving and financially sustainable facility serving and driven by people living and working in the community.

## **Appendices**

- None

## **Background Papers**

- Community and Children's Services 19 June 2020: New Portsoken Community Centre – Business Planning

## **Simon Cribbens**

Assistant Director – Commissioning and Partnerships  
Community and Children's Services  
[simon.cribbens@cityoflondon.gov.uk](mailto:simon.cribbens@cityoflondon.gov.uk)

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<b>Committee:</b>	<b>Dated:</b>
Department of Community and Children's Services	06/11/2020
<b>Subject:</b> Credible Offer Policy	<b>Public</b>
<b>Which outcomes in the City Corporation's Corporate Plan does this proposal aim to impact directly?</b>	1,2,3
<b>Does this proposal require extra revenue and/or capital spending?</b>	No
<b>If so, how much?</b>	N/A
<b>What is the source of Funding?</b>	N/A
<b>Has this Funding Source been agreed with the Chamberlain's Department?</b>	N/A
<b>Report of:</b> Andrew Carter, Director of Community and Children's Services	<b>For Decision</b>
<b>Report author:</b> Will Norman, Head of Homelessness Prevention and Rough Sleeping, Department of Community and Children's Services	

## Summary

This report introduces the City of London's draft Credible Offer Policy for rough sleepers. The policy is designed to ensure that an equitable, effective and transparent approach is taken in the delivery of service offers to rough sleepers. The policy will be used to guide the work of our commissioned services, including the City of London Outreach team and Assessment Service.

The report establishes the need for a Credible Offer Policy, describes the process of review and sets out some key features within the policy.

## Recommendation

Members are asked to agree the implementation of the policy.

## Main Report

### Background

1. It is common practice among outreach teams and assessment services across London to make offers of support and assistance designed to end a period of rough sleeping. Local authorities that commission rough sleeping services will almost certainly expect the work of their commissioned providers to focus on solving an individual's homelessness, rather than any actions that could sustain it.

2. Single Service Offers were introduced to London's rough sleeping sector at the time No Second Night Out (NSNO) was commissioned by the Greater London Authority (GLA). These offers are arrived at after a period of assessment by trained assessment and referral staff.
3. The concept of a single offer was designed to ensure that clients temporarily accommodated in basic environments such as NSNO assessment hubs did not become stuck, therefore slowing the progression of casework for others and reducing the availability of NSNO to other outreach teams.
4. The service making the offer is usually invested in the offer being taken up; therefore, it is usually in the interest of the service to make an offer agreeable to the rough sleeper.
5. While the concept of service offers has been widely adopted for many years, the interpretation and delivery by local authorities and commissioned providers has varied.
6. The City of London expects its commissioned services to work toward ending an individual's rough sleeping. Despite this, we have a disproportionately large number of street-attached rough sleepers with lengthy histories of homelessness.
7. This characteristic is borne out through GLA data available for 2018/19 where 62% of all rough sleepers in Greater London were new to rough sleeping that year. In the City for the same period, this figure was just 15%.
8. Clear and viable service offers are essential to new rough sleepers, and rough sleepers who are already known to services. New or 'flow' rough sleepers should be aware of their options as soon as possible to minimise the risk that more complex behaviours, such drug and alcohol misuse, take hold. For longer-term rough sleepers, it may be more about challenging unwise decisions or addressing unmet needs.
9. Our Pop-up Hubs (and, more recently, our City of London Assessment Hub) have added a crucial element to our 'off the street' offer. These assessment settings are open to anyone found rough sleeping in the Square Mile and provide a safe and dignified space for our assessment staff and Outreach team to arrive at service offers.
10. In April we launched our COVID-19 contingency accommodation at the Youth Hostel Association (YHA) site at St Paul's. In line with the Governments 'Everybody In' call to local authorities, this service is available to anyone rough sleeping in the City, regardless of their eligibility, recourse to public funds, or connection to the City of London.
11. Currently the YHA is accommodating 35 guests, and we estimate that it could accommodate as many as 105 guests over the remaining eight months of the COVID-19 Recovery Plan. While we have not yet witnessed the increase in 'flow' rough sleeping numbers that many other Central London authorities have seen, we should expect numbers to rise as the Square Mile returns to normal.
12. The City's approach to making service offers is broadly in line with that of other local authorities and the GLA. However, it is inevitable that inconsistencies creep in to practice, and our commissioned services sometimes lack clarity about the nature of the offer they can make.
13. The Credible Offer Policy is designed to offer a reference point to City of London officers and commissioned providers to ensure that best practice is always applied. This is applicable to our COVID-19 Recovery Plan and all future work with rough sleepers carried out by our commissioned assessment and outreach services.

## Current Position

14. A consultant with particular expertise in homelessness and rough sleeping sector commissioning and strategy has been engaged to assist us with our COVID-19 planning and Growth Programme work streams.
15. Included in this work package was the development of a Credible Offer Policy, which can be found at Appendix 1.
16. Key features of this policy include a definition of what constitutes a Credible Offer, and an explanation of how the policy should be operationalised.

17. The Policy indicates that a Credible Offer should:

- provide access to accommodation (hostel room, shared or self-contained housing, supported or independent) that meets the housing and support needs of the individual for at least the next six months
- provide access to accommodation that is affordable
- provide access to accommodation that is safe and sustainable, given the individual's support needs and circumstances
- provide access to accommodation in an area where the individual has, or can develop, social capital
- be discussed in detail with the individual rough sleeper so that the limitations, advantages and disadvantages of the offer are understood
- include all necessary support to take up the offer of accommodation (for example, travel costs, moving costs, being accompanied)
- where relevant and/or required by the accommodation provider, include an identified longer-term move-on option.

18. To ensure that a degree of objectivity was incorporated into the policy's design, we took the step of engaging Homeless Link to review the draft document and make recommendations. This can be found at Appendix 2.

19. A summary of the Homeless Link findings:

*'The City's draft Credible Offer Policy provides a comprehensive approach for all rough sleepers, which is aligned with relevant national and local legal requirements and strategic aims around rough sleeping and supported with adequate resources. Discussions with comparators indicate the City's approach is in line with practice in these areas.'*

20. Homeless Link made six recommendations, and all have been addressed in the final draft attached to this report (Appendix 1). A further point establishing the difference between a 'credible offer' and an 'initial offer' as part of a 'route off the street' as also been included.

21. A quick reference guide to this policy will be drafted at a later stage as a companion document.

## **Corporate & Strategic Implications**

There are no financial or strategic implications directly associated with the implementation of this policy.

## **Conclusion**

22. Our commissioned services successfully apply a rapid assessment and referral approach to rough sleepers; however, the current COVID-19 crisis has forced us to reassess how clear, equitable and efficient this process is.
23. Our Growth Programme and, in particular, the new Assessment Service will benefit from a clear decision-making platform to ensure consistency and good practice.
24. The development of a Credible Offer Policy has benefitted from external review to ensure that the guidance therein is aligned with best practice elsewhere.

## **Appendices**

- Appendix 1 – City of London Credible Offer Policy
- Appendix 2 – Review of City of London Rough Sleeping: Credible Offer Policy (Homeless Link)

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**DEPARTMENT OF COMMUNITY AND CHILDREN'S SERVICES.**

**ROUGH SLEEPING: CREDIBLE OFFERS POLICY**

## 1. Introduction

The City of London's Homelessness Strategy 2019-23<sup>1</sup> sets out, amongst other things, how the City will work to end rough sleeping in the Square Mile in support of both the Mayor of London and the Government's strategic intention to do the same.

Our strategy states clearly that *"all those who are homeless on the streets of the City of London will be given an offer that will end their homelessness"* so that *"no-one has to live on the streets of the Square Mile."*

Rough sleeping statistics show that the majority of those who sleep rough in the City of London have a primary local connection to another area - whether in London, the UK or overseas. However, rather than using local connection rules to refuse to provide support to rough sleepers bedded down in the City, we feel it is our responsibility, as set out in the strategy, to make an offer of accommodation so that the individual can be supported off the streets as rapidly as possible. The scarcity of affordable move on accommodation (whether temporary or permanent) in the Square Mile means that often the offer that will be made will usually be for accommodation outside of the City but we wish to ensure the offer is as credible as possible so as to maximise the chances of each individual rough sleeper sustaining a life away from the streets.

This policy sets out what we in the City of London feel constitutes a "credible offer" of accommodation when we are supporting a rough sleeper to find a route off the streets. It also explains how the City of London outreach team will manage, and document, credible offers so that there is clarity on all sides and what happens in the unlikely event that an individual rough sleeper is unable or unwilling to take up such an offer.

This policy applies to those sleeping rough in the City, or rough sleepers who have been temporarily accommodated, to whom the City does not owe a duty under homelessness legislation. Where a statutory duty is owed, a different approach will be taken as governed by the law and the working practices of our Housing Options team. Details [here](#).

The policy has been independently reviewed by Homeless Link prior to its adoption and will be reviewed internally every six months.

## 2. What constitutes a "credible offer"?

Many local authorities have outreach teams that operate a "single service offer" policy, though this is not always written down. This means that a rough sleeper will be offered a single route away from the streets which they are expected, and encouraged, to take up. Usually, the individual is denied further assistance if the identified "single service offer" is refused as a means of encouraging take up.

Often this "single service offer" is an offer of accommodation considered suitable to the individual's needs (though perhaps not always in their preferred location). Sometimes it is an offer of supported reconnection to a home area with suitable accommodation identified and available to that specific individual. But, sometimes, the "single service offer" is an offer of reconnection to a home area without accommodation being identified and without support being provided.

The "single service offer" is usually recorded on CHAIN so that any outreach service or day centre working with the individual understands what has been offered and can reinforce

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<sup>1</sup> <https://www.cityoflondon.gov.uk/assets/Services-DCCS/homelessness-strategy-2019-23.pdf>



the message that it remains the only route off the streets offered to the individual unless their circumstances change significantly.

In the City, our 24/7 assessment centre will offer an immediate “route off the streets” for all rough sleepers (unless the No Second Night Out service is appropriate and available). The assessment centre will provide a safe space in the City within which a rough sleeper can have their immediate needs met (physical and mental health, substance use, benefits) and work with staff to determine a credible accommodation offer, which may include supported reconnection to another area.

The City wishes to do better than to make a “single service offer” and, to that end, this policy ensures that rough sleepers bedded down in the Square Mile receive at least one “credible offer” of accommodation and support which, if accepted would make it unnecessary for them to sleep on the streets. This is a separate process to the initial ‘route off the street’ offer routinely made to rough sleepers. We recognise that, despite our best efforts, this offer is not always accepted, and work should continue to develop a credible offer, while the client remains rough sleeping if necessary.

We define a credible offer as one that:

- Provides access to accommodation (hostel room, shared or self-contained housing, supported or independent) that meets the housing and support needs of the individual for at least the next six months
- Provides access to accommodation that is affordable
- Provides access to accommodation that is safe and sustainable given the individual's support needs and circumstances
- Provides access to accommodation in an area where the individual has, or can develop, social capital
- Has been discussed in detail with the individual rough sleeper so that the limitations, advantages and disadvantages of the offer are understood
- Includes all necessary support to take up the offer of accommodation (eg: travel costs, moving costs, being accompanied)
- Where relevant and/or required by the accommodation provider, includes an identified longer term move on option.

Local connection rules, and the general scarcity of accommodation, means that local authorities often restrict access to accommodation pathways to those with a local connection and this means that the chances of being able to access suitable accommodation increase if an approach is made to a home area. For rough sleepers in the City of London, the majority of whom have a local connection outside of the City, the best available accommodation might be in another area but reconnection to an area outside of the City must always be underpinned by a detailed move on plan which guarantees that the individual will get the support they need to take up the credible offer of accommodation secured for them in that area and be properly linked in to local support services so they can sustain that accommodation.

The City does not consider that ticket-only reconnection – where rough sleepers are encouraged to board a bus, train or plane to another area without accommodation waiting for them – represents a credible offer. This is not only unfair to the individual but likely to be counterproductive as, without a credible offer of accommodation in that area, the rough sleeper may return to rough sleeping, in the City or elsewhere. We will only offer ticket-only reconnections where it is the explicitly stated intent of the individual that this is all they require.

In normal circumstances, a credible offer would also be one which the individual rough sleeper was completely supportive of. However, given the reality of the scarcity of affordable accommodation in the City, and in London in general, and the gatekeeping policies adopted by many local authorities, we recognise it will not always be possible to offer accommodation of a type or in an area which is the individual rough sleeper's absolute preference.

The City will continue to work to increase the availability, and variety, of accommodation which can be offered to rough sleepers who are bedded down in the City so as to better meet needs and offer more choice in determining a credible offer for each rough sleeper. This includes developing more supported accommodation, increasing the availability and variety of private rented sector accommodation, developing relationships with housing providers outside of London and outside of the UK, maximising use of the Clearing House and using Housing First as an option where appropriate. Under some circumstances, offer recipients may be asked to consider accommodation offers beyond Greater London.

### **3. The operation of this policy**

It is the role of the outreach team (and/or the assessment centre staff) to work with individual rough sleepers to determine a credible offer of accommodation that will support the individual to exit rough sleeping and which is based on their needs, circumstances and preferences (where possible). It is also the role of these staff to ensure that the route into accommodation is expedited as far as possible, fully planned and that all necessary support is made available to the individual to take up the offer.

Service offers should be delivered tactfully and sensitively. Upon receipt of an offer the following timescales should apply:

- A 3-day 'reflection period'. The aim is to allow service users time to disclose additional issues which may affect take-up of their offer, such as: sexuality or history of trafficking
- A further 4 days to prepare to move on – making necessary links with friends/family, statutory and/or voluntary services.

The City will provide sufficient funds to service providers to enable provision of suitable support around moving off the streets. This may include, but is not limited to, travel costs, moving costs, clothing, essential items for the home, rent deposits, and/or worker time to accompany an individual to their accommodation. Experience from service providers suggests that accompanying an individual rough sleeper to their accommodation rather than just making travel arrangements makes it more likely the move will be successful.

A credible offer of accommodation in the UK can ordinarily only be made to rough sleepers who have recourse to public funds (unless, as is rarely the case, they can self-finance their accommodation through wages or other income). Staff will work to ascertain if there is any underlying entitlement to public funds through, for example, achieving settled status under the EU scheme or working with advice/legal services and/or the Home Office to regularise immigration status. If this is not possible – rendering credible offers of accommodation impossible – the outreach team and assessment centre staff will work with the individual rough sleeper to achieve a planned and supported return to a home country. Ordinarily, this will involve securing accommodation and/or support in-country and we will work with ethical reconnections providers to ensure this can be achieved. Consideration will also be given to temporarily accommodating rough sleepers while immigration status is confirmed. In this case reasonable timescales should apply.

Translation services will be offered as necessary to enable non-English speakers to fully understand their credible offer and consideration will be given to the wording and structure of offers to guarantee clarity and avoid confusion and ambiguity.

Working in a psychologically informed way, staff will seek to develop and secure agreement of, and engagement with, the credible offer of accommodation. Credible offers – once determined – will be documented, with a copy being provided to the individual rough sleeper. The reasons why the offer[s] is/are felt to be credible will be included and the right of review. It will also be entered on CHAIN.

Where an individual indicates they are not happy with their offer, it will be discussed with them and they will be given the opportunity to have the offer reviewed by either the Outreach Manager (or their delegate if they are not available) or the Assessment Centre manager (or their delegate if they are not available). On the rare occasions that the managers (and/or delegates) are not available, a member of the rough sleeping team in the City will review the offer.

The outcome of the review will either be that the offer[s] is/are considered credible taking into account all the circumstances (ie: the availability of accommodation, the individual's circumstances and support needs, the support available, the strength of their connection to the area where the accommodation has been secured, etc.) or it/they will be withdrawn and another credible offer developed as quickly as possible which addresses whatever deficit or limitation that caused the first offer[s] to be withdrawn.

If, after review, the offer[s] is/are deemed credible and suitable, all steps will be taken to persuade the individual rough sleeper of the benefits of the accommodation secured and of the limitations of what else might be available. This will include making it clear that other boroughs take a similar, and in some cases, much harsher approach so moving to another area to sleep rough will not generate better opportunities.

If the individual continues to refuse to engage with, or accept, the credible offer[s] of accommodation that has/have been made, the following action may be taken:

- For current rough sleepers, outreach workers will be expected to maintain contact, continue to highlight the benefits of the credible offer[s] and look for other opportunities to persuade the individual to accept a route off the street using a personalised and psychologically informed approach so as to prevent entrenchment.
- For those accommodated in emergency accommodation funded by the City (assessment centre, B&B, hotels, hostels, etc), staff will continue to highlight the benefits of the credible offer[s] while making it clear that failure to engage with the move will lead to their current accommodation being withdrawn.
- For those accommodated in temporary accommodation (assessment centre, B&B, hotels, short stay hostels) who still refuse to engage after staff have made it clear that their current accommodation will be withdrawn, four weeks' notice will be served. The credible offer[s] will be re-iterated during the notice period and all steps taken to avoid a return to the streets once the notice period expires.
- For those returning to the streets after having refused one or more credible offers of accommodation, outreach workers will be expected to maintain contact, continue to highlight the benefits of the credible offer[s] but, crucially, keep looking for other opportunities to persuade the individual to accept a route off the street using a personalised and psychologically informed approach so as to prevent entrenchment
- Any enforcement actions directed by the City of London will be linked to demonstrable anti-social behaviour and not the refusal of a credible service offer.

A minority of rough sleepers already have accommodation they can return to (eg: a house they own in Romania, a family in Doncaster who would welcome them home, a council flat in Bexley that they could return to with some support) so, after checking that the accommodation is safe, suitable and still available, individuals in this situation would not be offered further accommodation. Given the scarcity of accommodation in London and the restricted options available to the City, their credible offer would be a supported return to the accommodation they already have available and the credible offers policy, as set out above, would apply.

#### **4. Summary**

Making credible offers of accommodation to a rough sleeper, on the streets or in emergency accommodation, is the best way of securing a sustainable route off the streets and delivering on the City's strategic objective that no-one needs to sleep rough on the streets of the Square Mile.

An offer of accommodation, unreasonably refused, would usually see a local authority discharge their duty to a homeless person under intentionality rules. This credible offer policy seeks to reflect the existing legislation and practice around statutory homelessness in that respect but goes further in ensuring that, where doubts exist about the credibility or suitability of an accommodation offer, a second offer is made.

The policy also goes further than most local authorities in ensuring that all rough sleepers in the City who have recourse to public funds – whether they have a local connection or not – are offered some form of accommodation and all necessary support to take up that accommodation. Where rough sleepers have no recourse, every effort will be made to regularise their status so that they can claim public funds and be made a credible offer. Where this is not possible, ethical, supported reconnection will be offered.

The City does not wish to adopt policies that are significantly different to those of other local authorities in London because there is a danger that, in doing so, we may create a perverse incentive for people to choose to bed down in the Square Mile. However, we will not support ticket-only reconnection practices and we will only consider reconnection a credible offer if accommodation is available in the area where a rough sleeper is being reconnected to. We consider this to be best practice.

## **REVIEW OF CITY OF LONDON ROUGH SLEEPING: CREDIBLE OFFERS POLICY**

### **1.0 Overview**

The City of London's Credible Offers policy for rough sleepers aims to provide an immediate post COVID-19 response and a longer-term framework for outreach and resettlement staff working in the City, including management and recording arrangements for credible service offers.

Homeless Link is a recognised expert on sector good practice – working with homelessness organisations across England to develop new approaches and improve current practice to supporting people out of homelessness.

Homeless Link has been asked to review the City's draft Credible Offers policy, to provide an independent perspective and ensure it offers a fair and equitable approach for people sleeping rough in the City. The work has involved two elements:

- Review of the draft policy
- Discussions with commissioners in comparator London boroughs and GLA, to understand their current approach to credible accommodation offers for rough sleepers and to highlight good practice which might be applicable to the City's policy.

### **2.0 Policy review**

The Credible Offers policy has been reviewed using the following agreed criteria:

- Does the policy support relevant national and local legal requirements and strategic aims around rough sleeping?
- Does the policy cover credible offers for all cohorts of rough sleepers in the City, ie: people with support needs, UK and non-UK nationals and people with NRPF (No Recourse to Public Funds)?
- Is there is a clear process for making credible offers, including any right of appeal?
- Is the policy feasible in terms of meeting the accommodation and support needs of rough sleepers in the City and providing the resources which are likely to be needed to achieve this?

#### **2.1 Does the Credible Offers policy support relevant national and local legal requirements and strategic aims around rough sleeping?**

The following are relevant to the Credible Offers policy:

- The Rough Sleeping Strategy (MHCLG, 2018)
- Mayor of London's Rough Sleeping Commissioning Framework (GLA, 2018)
- City of London Homelessness Strategy, 2019-23
- City of London Temporary Allocation Policy (2019)
- Homelessness Reduction Act (HRA).

The draft Credible Offers policy supports national and local strategy objectives through its promotion of a rapid housing response. This provides a route away from homelessness for people sleeping rough in the City, helps to prevent repeat homelessness and provides a rapid and sustained resolution to this when homelessness takes place.

The draft policy's comprehensive criteria about what constitutes a credible offer – including safety, affordability and with access to support to meet service users' individual needs – makes it more likely that rough sleepers will take up move-on offers and sustain this accommodation in the longer-term. This approach also supports the London Mayor's commissioning priorities around preventing repeat and entrenched homelessness. In addition, the City's draft policy supports the Mayor's Commissioning Framework's cross-cutting priority around tackling rough sleeping amongst non-UK nationals.

The draft policy is consistent with the overall aims of the Homelessness Reduction Act and provides a comparable level and type of support to that given to single homeless people who make a homelessness presentation under this legislation:

- Both the HRA and draft Credible Offers policy ensure all applicants receive a comprehensive assessment of their housing and support needs; this includes people who lack a local connection to the City of London
- Both ensure that accommodation offers are accessible to the individual for at least six months and take account of their individual accommodation and support needs
- Neither the HRA nor the Credible Offers policy undertake to make a further accommodation offer to individuals who are found via assessment to have existing safe, suitable and available accommodation elsewhere.

The offer made to rough sleepers and single homeless people in the City potentially differ in two respects:

- **Local connection requirements.** The draft Credible Offers policy sets out an intention to ensure that all rough sleepers in the City with recourse to public funds are offered accommodation and necessary support to take up that accommodation, regardless of their local connection.

*Comment.* As it is difficult to ascertain the local authority area of origin for many people sleeping rough in the City, this can be viewed as a pragmatic solution and also one which is likely to reduce levels of rough sleeping, especially entrenched rough sleeping, in the City.

- **Second accommodation offer.** The draft Credible Offers policy allows for rough sleepers to receive a second accommodation offer in certain circumstances.



*Comment.* In practice the approaches taken by the HRA and the Credible Offers policy are similar, as both seek to ensure that final accommodation offers fulfil suitability criteria. Both the Credible Offers and HRA involve a single 'live' offer being available at any point in time.

The draft Credible Offers policy is consistent with the approach set out in the City of London Temporary Accommodation Allocation Policy:

- Both apply a similar range of criteria for suitable accommodation offers, ie: availability, affordability, including space standards and Health & Safety considerations
- Both allow the City to search for and make accommodation offers outside the City boundaries, where suitable accommodation is not available locally and/or there is a need to widen the pool of affordable housing
- Both for accommodation offers within the private rented sector
- Both contain similar commitments to housing individuals close to public transport, shops and other facilities.

Other criteria contained in the City's TA Allocation Policy, such as the need for access to childcare and workplaces, are less likely to be applicable to the City's rough sleeping cohort. It is therefore justifiable to exclude them from the Credible Offers policy.

## **2.2 Does the Credible Offers policy cover all cohorts of rough sleepers in the City?**

The draft policy is applicable to all rough sleepers who have been temporarily accommodated by the City and are not owed a duty under homelessness legislation. It is clear that credible offers are not made in the UK to rough sleepers with NRPF (these individuals are offered supported reconnection to their home country).

The draft policy commits to providing accommodation which meets the housing and support needs of individuals and which is 'safe and sustainable' for them. It is assumed this includes access to relevant support services – especially mental health and substance misuse. These are highlighted in the City of London Homelessness Strategy as being common underlying causes of rough sleeping and homelessness.

## **2.3 Is there is a clear process for making credible offers, including any right of appeal?**

The draft policy sets out criteria for what constitutes a credible offer, including: meeting an individual's accommodation and support needs, affordability, safety and proximity to existing social networks and developing a move-on plan, where this is required by the accommodation provider. The draft policy explicitly excludes unsupported ('ticket-only') reconnections from credible offers.

It is clear which staff are involved in developing credible offers (outreach and/or assessment centre staff) and how rough sleepers are involved in the process. The draft policy makes clear that credible offers are a mutually agreed decision between staff and service users (rather than meeting a legal definition of suitability). Discussions/decisions are recorded and service users are given copies.

The draft policy does not specifically state if non-UK rough sleepers have the right to be accommodated temporarily by the City whilst their immigration status is being investigated and what happens to people who are unwilling to engage with the reconnection process.

The draft policy sets out the right for service users to review their credible offers, how this process works and that this review may lead to an alternative credible offer.

It is clear what happens if service users subsequently refuse this final offer.

*Comment.* The draft policy states outreach workers should 'keep looking for other opportunities' for rough sleepers. It is assumed that this involves re-stating the previous/existing offer to service users, rather than making a further credible offer and that this has not been stated in the policy because this might discourage take-up of the existing credible offer.

## **2.4 Is the draft policy feasible in terms of meeting the accommodation and support needs of City rough sleepers and the resources which are likely to be available to achieve this?**

Policy implementation is supported by the provision of a 24/7 assessment centre (which acts as a base for carrying out needs assessments). There is a stated commitment to increase the availability and affordability of accommodation, including: supported accommodation, PRS, Clearing House and Housing First. Policy implementation is also supported by commitments around providing adequate funding for support, travel costs, home items and rent deposits. Access to floating support services are not explicitly mentioned, but are assumed to be part of this package.

The recognition that it is not possible to meet all City of London rough sleepers' preferences in relation to accommodation type and area is realistic given housing market pressures across London.

*Comments:*

- The draft policy does not specifically mention ensuring sufficient outreach capacity for rapid initial engagement and assessment and maintaining an assertive and consistent approach to reinforcing credible offers.
- The draft policy does not mention the possibility of enforcement action at any point. This might be especially relevant if individual rough sleepers are involved in begging and other behaviours that cause nuisance and/or which may sustain them on the streets. This could be argued to have a wider impact on rough sleepers' mental and physical health and wider community needs.

## **3.0 Discussions with comparator boroughs**

Short discussions were held with commissioners in: Hackney, Lambeth and Westminster and also the GLA's Rough Sleeping, Housing and Land team. Discussions focused on the following key areas:

- The extent and scope of the approaches used
- The process for making credible offers
- Practice around reconnections
- Steps taken when service users refuse credible offers.

### **3.1 Scope of policy and approaches used**



All comparators utilise a system of credible offers for rough sleepers in their area. However, the City is currently alone in having written a comprehensive policy setting out its approach. It has therefore not been possible to provide copies for this review.

GLA is currently developing a move-on policy for rough sleepers accommodated in hotels procured during the COVID-19 outbreak. This applies to the five service providers involved in supporting residents (St Mungo's, Look Ahead Care and Support, DePaul, SHP and Thames Reach), but not other service providers or boroughs. It is understood the final policy will cover all rough sleeper cohorts. However, work to date has focused on the approach for 'complex' groups: non-UK nationals and residents in 'shielding' groups.

### **3.2 Approach to making credible offers**

The City's draft policy is consistent with comparators in seeking to provide a person-centred, psychologically and trauma-informed approach for assessing rough sleepers' support needs and developing a move-on offer and in seeking multi-agency input into this process, where possible. These elements are commonly understood to improve the quality of move-on offers, rough sleepers' commitment to the process, their preparedness and likelihood of sustaining a tenancy in the longer-term.

Hackney, Lambeth and GLA follow a similar approach to the City in having a credible offer process which relates to all accommodation residents. Westminster's approach differs in that it makes single service offers to people in its assessment centre, but not automatically to hostel residents. The rationale for this is that all hostel residents have significant needs and require a more nuanced approach to achieve move on.

The City follows a similar approach to comparators in that move-on offers are commonly made into shared or self-contained PRS accommodation – with other options, such as supported housing and Clearing House tenancies being reserved for more vulnerable or complex rough sleepers. Similarly, both the City and comparators expect service users to consider out of area moves – most likely in an outer London borough. Hackney goes further by including out of London areas within its move-on offer. In line with the City, all comparators give service users clear messages about the above as early as possible in their stay, to better manage expectations.

The City's policy goes further than comparators in setting out comprehensive criteria for what constitutes a credible offer, including affordability and social capital considerations. This is a useful addition, which is likely to provide greater clarity for both service users and staff involved.

Unlike the City, comparators do not offer a formal right of review of credible offers and the possibility of a second offer. GLA has agreed in principle that service users within complex groups will be allowed a 'reflection period' after receiving their credible offer. This sets up the possibility of a second offer in certain cases.

The GLA policy is also expected to contain a timeframe for service users to consider their credible offer. This includes:

- The 3-day 'reflection period'. The aim is to allow service users time to disclose additional issues which may affect take-up of their offer, such as: sexuality or history of trafficking
- A further 4 days to prepare to move on – making necessary links with friends/family, statutory and/or voluntary services.

The GLA policy is also expected to state the offer of translation services to support rough sleepers whose first language is not English to understand their credible offer.

Following review, Westminster has simplified the language used in move-on letters given to service users and increased pictorial representations. This is considered to have increased vulnerable service users' understanding of the process and take-up of offers

### **3.3 Local connection and reconnections work**

The City's policy is consistent with comparators: all offer reconnection to a home area for rough sleepers who lack a local connection to the presenting borough. Non-UK nationals with additional support needs are commonly offered voluntary reconnection via specialist services, including Routes Home (run by St Mungo's). Where possible, access is provided to supported, rather than 'ticket only' reconnection services, to increase the chances of success and reduce repeat homelessness.

The City's policy goes further than comparators in stating explicitly that non-supported reconnection does not constitute a credible offer and in guaranteeing service users a detailed move-on plan containing details of the support they can expect to receive in the area they are reconnected to.

### **3.4 Refusing credible offers and appeals**

The City's policy takes a similar approach to comparators in in using eviction from accommodation as a last resort for service users who have refused a credible offer.

Discussions indicate that, in practice, eviction is much more likely with residents who have low support needs and that more flexibility is applied in enforcing credible service offers with residents who are considered more vulnerable. However, this is not set out in written policies.

Some comparators do not have a fully-developed approach around responsibilities for outreach and other staff around working with service users who have refused credible service offers and returned to rough sleeping. The City's setting out of such expectations in its policy is a good practice measure which is likely to reduce the length of time people spend on the streets during these periods.

## **4.0 Summary and recommendations**

The City's draft Credible Offers policy provides a comprehensive approach for all rough sleepers which is aligned with relevant national and local legal requirements and strategic aims around rough sleeping and supported with adequate resources. Discussions with comparators indicate the City's approach is in line with practice in these areas.

To further strengthen its approach, the City may wish to consider the following for inclusion in its final Credible Offers policy:

- Clarify if rough sleepers have the right to be accommodated temporarily by the City whilst their immigration status is being investigated
- Clarify if enforcement action will ever be considered to increase take-up of credible offers by service users involved in begging and behaviours that cause nuisance and/or which may sustain them on the streets
- Include an expectation that service users also consider moves to out of London areas

- Following the GLA example, set out a timeframe for service users and staff around considering credible offers and preparing for move on
- Explicitly state that translation services will be offered as necessary to enable non-English speakers to fully understand their credible offer
- Review the language and style of credible offer letters given to service users to increase clarity and accessibility.

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<b>Committee</b>	<b>Dated:</b>
Community and Children's Services	6/11/2020
<b>Subject:</b> Commissioning Update	<b>Public</b>
<b>Which outcomes in the City Corporation's Corporate Plan does this proposal aim to impact directly?</b>	1, 2, 3, 4
<b>Does this proposal require extra revenue and/or capital spending?</b>	N
<b>If so, how much?</b>	N/A
<b>What is the source of funding?</b>	N/A
<b>Has this funding source been agreed with the Chamberlain's Department?</b>	N/A
<b>Report of:</b> Andrew Carter, Director of Community and Children's Services	<b>For Information</b>
<b>Report author:</b> Greg Knight, Interim Senior Commissioning Manager, Commissioning and Partnerships	

## Summary

This report provides Members with a summary of current activity, successes, issues and priorities for the Department of Community and Children's Services (DCCS) Commissioning team.

## Recommendation

Members are asked to:

- Note the contents of the report

## Main Report

### Background

1. The DCCS Commissioning team leads on the key activities and procurements for most contracts within the department. The team manages all elements of the commissioning cycle, including the analysis, planning, implementing and reviewing of services.
2. The team is responsible for the completion and management of sourcing plans, commissioning timelines and maintaining the services contracts register. The team proactively manage contract performance against key performance indicators in order to deliver the service area aims. In doing so, it seeks to secure both effective services and cost efficiency for the City Corporation and those who use and receive its services.
3. There is a Service Level Agreement between the Commissioning team and City Procurement: the Commissioning team leads on procurement activity under £100,000; City Procurement leads on tenders above this threshold, within the DCCS Category Board governance process.

## **Commissioned Services highlights**

4. This section provides a summary of the current activity, successes, issues and priorities for the DCCS.

### Advocacy Service

5. The advocacy service, which supports children and young people in the City by helping them take part in decisions that affect their lives, is currently being recommissioned. A new contract will be in place by March 2021. The recommissioning process has enabled a review of needs. The current service levels show how we will add value, as we will be uplifting the current contract to reach a wider number of young people. It will provide highly qualified, trained advocates and a well-organised service offer.

### Children's and Young People's Placements

6. As part of the recommissioning of placements, a detailed review into the available options has been completed. This process has resulted in the recommendation that the City joins the Commissioning Alliance Care Place System framework, which includes a set of Dynamic Purchasing Vehicles across fostering, residential care homes and special educational needs. Joining the alliance has several benefits, such as allowing us to access a wider placement market, improving our benchmarking, achieving value for money, allowing greater access to quality assurance and contract monitoring, as well as building partnerships. Long-term savings are anticipated as we will have a tighter grip on the market and will be able to see what other local authorities are paying, and allow for greater negotiation with providers. The Procurement Strategy Report, which will be presented to committee in December, sets out the recommendations in more detail.

### Youth Services

7. The City's Youth Services are currently operating virtually during the COVID-19 outreach programme, and will be providing activities throughout October half term. The services are currently being recommissioned as a new universal service, which will deliver universally accessible activities City wide to all children and young people aged between 8–12 and 13–19 years (or 25 years if the young person has special educational needs or disability, or is a care leaver). The new universal service is scheduled to begin in April 2021. The service specification has been designed to best meet the needs and outcomes for the City's children and young people. Consultation was completed with children, young people, parents, carers, guardians, elected members, partners and organisations (see Appendix 1). The findings of the consultation will be communicated to the market through the procurement process, and the requirements will be embedded with the evaluation criteria.

### Golden Lane Sport and Fitness Centre

8. Golden Lane Sport and Fitness Centre has been shut since March 2020 due to COVID-19. The Government announced that indoor gyms, swimming pools and sports facilities will be allowed to reopen from 25 July 2020. Officers have been in contract renegotiations, in consultation with the Chairman of Community and Children's Services Committee, with Fusion to reopen the centre in 26 October 2020. A separate report titled *Golden Lane Sport and Fitness Centre–Leisure Services 2022* has been provided for the DCCS Committee's consideration.

#### Rough Sleeping Outreach Service

9. At the time of writing this report, Thames Reach Housing Association are successfully mobilising the delivery of the new Rough Sleeping Outreach Service, which began on 1 November 2020. The service is structured to deliver two aims: ensuring that new rough sleepers are rapidly located and responded to with an offer of emergency accommodation; and ensuring that no one is left living on the streets without a clear and assertive plan to bring their rough sleeping to an end. The recommissioning process has secured an increased level of service provision for 8% under the allocated budget, and has successfully maximised the utility of partnership grant funding.

#### Substance Misuse Service

10. The new substance misuse service, City and Hackney Recovery Centre, delivered by Turning Point, Mind and Antidote will support City residents and those sleeping rough in the City who are in need of treatment. The service, which began on 1 October 2020, follows a neighbourhood model by providing support to people within their locality, with the aim of increasing access to treatment. Through close working relationships with Thames Reach Housing Association and co-location with established services, the service aims to have a tangible impact on the delivery of the City's Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Strategy 2019–2023. The model will build on the successful partnerships seen at Square Mile Health, delivered by WDP, which saw two drug-using rough sleepers engaged through Operation Luscombe and supported to abstain from use throughout this year. The 'stop smoking' service contract, which cost £379,791 per annum, was left to expire in October while the future demand was assessed among City workers, who make up approximately 90% of the people accessing the service. Savings will be delivered through service recommissioning.

#### Homelessness and Rough Sleeping – future projects

11. Commissioning work is being completed to deliver the aspirations of the Homelessness and Rough Sleeping service to achieve the strategic aim of preventing or minimising homelessness. Where homelessness does occur, its impact should be minimised, and the resolution should be rapid and sustainable. This includes developing the provision of a permanent high-support hostel and permanent assessment centre in the City. Additionally, a framework is in the early stages of being developed to widen access to the

Private Rented Sector, supporting those needing to move on from temporary accommodation.

### City Advice Service

12. The City Advice Service, provided by Toynbee Hall since 2015, offers advice to all residents (in the City and on out-of-City estates), workers, and students and was due to be recommissioned during 2020. The new contract was due to start at the end of October 2020. However, as a result of market feedback that the COVID-19 lockdown would have prevented an adequate assessment of need, and was a risk to effective mobilisation of services, the current contract has been extended for a year until October 2021. Re-commissioning activity has commenced, and current and potential providers of the future service have been invited to comment on different and flexibility of contract models, considering that the City worker population is in flux, categories and tiers of advice services and measurement of outcomes. There are a number of potential options for the new contract being considered which, along with feedback from the soft market testing, will be shared with Members at the next Committee Meeting. Toynbee Hall is presenting an overview of the current service, including the service changes, as a result of COVID-19, to Members at today's committee meeting.

### Healthwatch

13. Section 130 of the Health and Social Care Act 2012 requires each local authority to have a local Healthwatch. The Healthwatch service must be run by an independent social enterprise and work with communities to influence commissioners to design and provide better health and social care services. Healthwatch City of London has been operational for just over a year, and has made great progress in improving communications with stakeholders, consulting with health and social care users. Their first Annual General Meeting was held virtually on Friday 16 October.

### Time Credits

14. A new two-year contract (with the potential for an extension of one year) was signed in January 2020 with Tempo Time Credits (a new name for Spice Time Credits) to promote volunteering and wellbeing within the City of London. Savings of £20,000 were achieved by taking part in developing and then calling off from a national framework led by the Yorkshire Purchasing Organisation (YPO). Tempo responded quickly to the COVID-19 shutdown by providing online community resources and training, and offering a time credit recognition package for informal voluntary groups created during the early stages of the lockdown. They will also be moving to a digital time credit platform during the latter part of this year to enable virtual time credits, which will make it easier to gift time credits and monitor usage.



## City Wellbeing Centre

15. The City Wellbeing Centre has opened, as is currently providing a virtual service due to COVID-19. The City contribution to this new and innovative service is related to the refurbishment and provision of a building, with no actual revenue cost to the City. The Centre and support teams are accessible for City residents and workers; those in a position to self-fund will enable the provision of therapy for those on lower incomes. This tried and tested approach helps to ensure provider Tavistock Relationships' financial sustainability, while safeguarding its continued commitment to offering therapy to all. The Wellbeing Centre offers help for individuals and couples experiencing a wide range of difficulties, such as depression, anxiety, relationship issues, and those relating to family and work life, sexual problems, self-esteem issues and life transitions such as retirement or living with illness. Tavistock Relationships have developed a range of innovative approaches for individuals, couples and groups. The ambition of the Wellbeing Centre is to provide greater access to therapeutic mental health services that are not easily available through the NHS.

## **Corporate & Strategic Implications**

16. The Commissioning team's sourcing plans and work plan is centred around the delivery of the Corporate Plan and Departmental Business Plan objectives, most notably the aim to 'Contribute to a flourishing society'.

## **Financial implications**

17. The Commissioning team's work will continue to focus on delivering value for money and savings within the department's budget in the financial year 2020/21, where possible.

## **Equalities implications**

18. Equalities considerations are included throughout the commissioning and management of services. Providers are required to report on the service key performance indicators, take up of services to assess the take up and the use of services from target groups.

## **Conclusion**

19. The department's commissioning team continues to develop a strategic approach to commissioning and effective partnership working. It is also managing a wide range of contracts and robustly tackling poor performance. The team remains committed to securing more integrated, effective and efficient service delivery.

## **Appendices**

- **Appendix 1: City of London Youth Service consultation findings**

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# City of London

Consultation Findings

I Know I Can Ltd  
September 2020



# Consultation Findings – City of London

This Consultation Report summarises the key findings from Surveys and Consultation Conversations that were created to target several key stakeholder groups within the City of London. These stakeholders were identified as follows:

- Children and Young People
- Parents, Carers and Guardians
- Statutory and Non-Statutory Partners and Organisations
- Lead Member for Young People
- The City Youth Forum
- The Children in Care Council
- Local Residents

Amongst all the Stakeholders there was an acknowledgement and agreement of the benefit and added value of Youth and Play Services, particularly when they are able to engage with a variety of Children and Young People. The consensus was that Youth and Play Services are necessary within the City of London (CoL) to not only keep Children and Young People engaged but to also support them as they learn and develop.

## General overview

There was a recognition of the value that various Youth and Play Service provisions add when functioning in an effective manner. This included, but was not limited to, providing an environment for young people to learn and enhance informal skills; build self-confidence; and generally, enjoy engagement with Peers outside of formal education settings. Football, for example, was the most frequently referred to activity in which Children and Young People were able to engage in positively. There was also an acknowledgement that the Youth and Play Service was able to meet Children and Young People's needs and expose them to an array of opportunities that would have otherwise not been available.

The report has been split according to a summation of Stakeholder Findings using the following categories:

- Part 1 – Children and Young People
- Part 2 – Parents and Guardians
- Part 3 – Elected Member, Statutory and Non-Statutory Partners and Organisations

The report will also address the effect that COVID-19 has had on various stakeholders from their perspective in relation to Youth and Play Services.

## Part 1 – Children and Young People

Children and Young People within the borough were asked to identify what worked well within the borough and what could be improved, with specific reference to Youth and Play Services.

Amongst the respondents, 25% were aged between 8 -12 and 75% were aged between 13 – 19.

Regarding the current Provision, the results highlighted the following:

- 67% said they knew how to get their voices heard and 32% wanted to help volunteer
- 17% noted that they were unaware of what provisions were available to them; to which 50% of all young people said social media should be used to further engage their Peers.

Figure 1 below summarises the most commonly used words when Children and Young People were asked about the best ways in which City of London could further engage with them:



**Figure 1**

Amongst the needs identified, Children and Young People requested that they would like access to more activities including visits to parks and more green spaces. This was coupled with a recognition of After School Provisions should always provide food. After School Provisions being able to provide food also served as a solution to counter the financial difficulties some experienced. They highlighted that an increased awareness and access to certain opportunities including the Arts, Culture, Sports and Apprenticeships would be essential, particularly in terms of increasing inclusivity of certain groups such as Girls, SEND and Leaving Care. Equal to this was a call to utilise and explore the network of opportunities that were geographically available. This was in specific reference to CoL being able to facilitate access to Apprenticeships, Work Experience and Employment opportunities within the City.

## Part 2 – Parents, Carers and Guardians

Parents and Guardians of Children and Young People in the City acknowledged the manner in which the Youth Services were able to engage positively when performing at an optimum level.

100% of Parents, Carers and Guardians said they wanted to be further involved in the changes happening for the Children and Young People and their community. As such, they were able to recommend the following ways in which engagement could be increased. That in which prominently featured were as follows:

- Youth Clubs, fun activities, Events, Festivals
- Engagements and outdoor activities that exposes Children and Young People to life outside of the City
- Local engagement; increasing Barbican's remit to accept local children onto their programmes subsidising the financial cost associated with some of their programmes
- Outdoor activities during the winter and school holidays

Overall, there appeared to be an agreement that Parents, Carers and Guardians are less aware of Youth and Play Service provisions which has meant they have not been encouraging their children to participate in activities or to engage with Youth Workers. As a result, often leaving Children and Young People living in the 3 main Housing Estates complaining of being bored. Parents and Carers also fed back that they would welcome more frequent communication on what provision was available and when, and they were clear that they value consistency of Youth Workers so that they know who they are and can encourage the building of healthy relationships with their children.

## Part 3 – Elected Member, Partners and Organisations

Amongst the Lead Member for Young People, Service Providers and Partners, 50% acknowledged that there was a greater need for services to be digitalised to increase the opportunities available to Children and Young People. They highlighted that the Youth and Play Offer could integrate additional online services and content. Increasing CoLs online content and capacity was noted as one of the ways in which the Youth and Play Offer could be promoted. There was also the recognition that access to play areas and sports facilities had been closed for several months due to Covid-19 (including after lockdown) without proper communication (this was also raised by Parents/Carers and Children and Young People; highly contentious as there are no other playing areas for children in Portsoken Estate except on the road/parking areas). Further to the above, an emphasis was placed on Children and Young People benefiting from more Sports and Youth Services, afterschool and homework clubs and schemes such as Duke of Edinburgh to also give them something to look forward to and celebrate.

Equal to the above, Service Providers and Partners also addressed the greater need for communication between agencies; specifically making reference to improving communication and internal support services between CoL internal departments and commissioned Providers. Several Partners fed back that they were not aware if the young people they worked with were also being supported through other Service provisions. An increased method of communication amongst agencies was noted as a sustainable avenue to share methods of best practice whilst providing an insight into what various Children/Young People had available to them/were utilising as a result.

Service Providers/Partners were able to identify tangible means in which barriers that Children and Young People faced could be reduced, of which included the following:

- Increase opportunities for engagement within the borough between the ages of 10 and 14
- Increase provisions by having a purpose-Built Centre providing Training to improve Young People's ability to apply and attain jobs
- Subsidised travel to benefit those who encounter long bus journeys to/from education, employment and/or training. Additional funding support would also enable those who require college equipment to be able to attain the necessary equipment thus increasing opportunities to become more employable for potential jobs

Those who engaged in the Consultation who formed part of the Senior Leadership Teams within the City, emphasised the importance of increasing diversity amongst the facilitation of various opportunities. This was coupled with a need to further promote an array of opportunities across the City in which the Guildhall School of Music and Drama was mentioned as they offer opportunities. This was seen as another effective approach to address the financial barriers that often prevent Children and Young People engaging in certain activities. Additionally, utilising and building on forums that were presently in existence such as the City Youth Forum was an equally tangible resolution to increase the manner in which Children and Young People could have their voices heard, actively engage within the community and build rapport with Elected Members/Councillors.

## Covid-19

The survey asked various stakeholders about the manner in which COVID-19 has affected their engagements to enable CoL to be able to identify what could be put in place to support Children and Young People post-COVID-19/ if there are future lockdowns.

The greatest manner in which participants identified as having been affected by COVID-19 was the cancellation and postponing of plans, particularly for Children and Young People. Equally, the closing of social provisions such as the football cage and other sports related activities were highlighted as having an effect on activities that promoted Health and Wellbeing. Activities such as football, being the most frequently referenced activity that was prohibited due to COVID-19 and access to cycling were amongst those in which Children and Young People mentioned.

Of the Children and Young People that completed the survey, 100% were in Education, Employment and/or Training. This is of significance because another major issue that was highlighted as a result of COVID-19 was not being able to attend school, coupled with the closing of all Youth and Play Services and provisions, appearing equally problematic to many.

57% of Parents, Carers and Guardians were concerned for their children during Lockdown; they specifically cited isolation, claustrophobia and no exercise as their concerns. They noted that despite the Government opening parks and sports facilities, within the borough of City of London no parks or sports facilities were re-opened during the summer. This left many Children and Young People bored at home (especially during the hot days, and those who live with no gardens and/or balconies), increasing their reliance on digital devices much to their Parents, Carers and Guardians dismay. They also highlighted that COVID-19 had resulted in a decline in social activities for their children which they had serious concerns for their children's mental health.

Figure 2 below summarises the most commonly used words when all Survey respondents were asked what measures could be put in place to support Children and Young People post-COVID.

Parents were able to provide a range of sustainable recommendations that City could put in place so as to support Children and Young People post-COVID-19. This included providing free internet, opening sports facilities like the football cage, and an increased capacity to digitalise youth services so as to increase engagement, particularly during times of great uncertainty. Whilst a variety of residents acknowledged that there was free internet available in some areas, this was countered by the fact that some residents often found the internet connection to be extremely weak thus not able to suffice for the duration in which it was required. This was another problematic area for those who heavily relied on the internet for school and college work. There was also mention of a need to provide Career and Job support as well as youth activities, and it was noted that several young people had missed Work Experience opportunities this year due to Covid-19.



**Figure 2**

In like manner, Service Providers recognised the benefit of digitalising their engagements during COVID-19 increasing their ability to run a range of online services. This was further reflected in that 50% suggested there needs to be even more online content for Children and Young People.

## SEND/Additional needs

For Service Providers/Partners who should be working with Children and Young People with disabilities (but too often are not), more Training is required to support their engagement. This was emphasised through the acknowledgment that engaging with SEND Children and Young People often required specialist support and evidence-based approaches to develop their key skills. These Children and Young People would also benefit from increased exposure to social opportunities. These Service Provides also brought to the fore that Speech and Language Therapists were an essential avenue for those within the SEN category to have their voices heard. Additional investment was stated as necessary to support alternative measures of engagement of which Art Therapy was used as a successful example. Service Providers who used holistic approaches to youth engagement highlighted the effective manner in which these methods were able to help Children/Young People with behavioural issues/or had been excluded from school.

To conclude, there is a clear consensus and recognition of the value-added benefit of having sustainable, representative and inclusive Youth and Play Service Provisions to enable, empower and encourage Children and Young People particularly in times of uncertainty. The Youth and Play Service is seen as an essential tenant in supporting the development of Children and Young People whilst ensuring that they stay active members of their community and can confidently contribute to changes. It goes without saying that COVID-19 has had an adverse effect on provisions thus stakeholders alike, yet this has provided a key learning opportunity and avenue to address areas in which additional support from existing providers and potentially more funding ought to be put in place as part of Covid-19 recovery plans/future lockdown preparations to better enable CoL young residents to better have their holistic needs met.



<b>Committees:</b>	<b>Dated:</b>
Community and Children's Services – For Information Health and Wellbeing Board – For Information	06/11/2020 20/11/2020
<b>Subject:</b>  Integrated Care in the City of London – Update	<b>Public</b>
<b>Which outcomes in the City Corporation's Corporate Plan does this proposal aim to impact directly?</b>	1,2,3,4
<b>Does this proposal require extra revenue and/or capital spending?</b>	N
<b>If so, how much?</b>	N/A
<b>What is the source of Funding?</b>	
<b>Has this Funding Source been agreed with the Chamberlain's Department?</b>	N/A
<b>Report of:</b>  Andrew Carter, Director of Community and Children's Services	<b>For Information</b>
<b>Report author:</b>  Ellie Ward, Interim Head of Strategy and Performance, Community and Children's Services	

## Summary

This report updates 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.

## Recommendation

Members are asked to:

- Note the report.

## Main Report

## Background

1. Around 75% of City of London residents are registered with the Neaman Practice – part of City and Hackney Clinical Commissioning Group (CCG) – and a further

16% of residents, in the east side of the City of London, are registered with GPs that are part of Tower Hamlets CCG. City of London adult social care services are provided to all City of London residents (where appropriate), regardless of where they are registered with a GP.

2. In recent years there has been a major policy drive towards integrated care – delivering health and social care services in a joined-up way to provide seamless services to local populations.
3. The City of London Corporation has been working closely with health services for some time, but there was a more formal focus on integrated care when the Corporation entered into integrated commissioning arrangements with City and Hackney CCG in 2017, to commission together across health, public health and social care. The London Borough of Hackney entered into the same, but separate, arrangements and there was also a move towards more integrated care, with a different model, in Tower Hamlets.
4. Since then, there have been a number of developments and changes in terms of integrated care and in governance structures around this, both locally and nationally.

## **Current Position**

### **Integrated Care Locally**

5. The City and Hackney model for integrated care is built around the neighbourhood model, which brings together health, care and voluntary sector services to provide care closer to home, at the right time, which better suits the unique needs of local communities.
6. The objectives of the neighbourhood model include:
  - preventing ill health
  - effectively managing long-term conditions
  - reducing unnecessary hospital admissions
  - supporting people to understand and have control over their own health and wellbeing.
7. There are eight ‘neighbourhoods’ across City and Hackney which incorporate GP registered populations of between 30,000 and 50,000. The Neaman Practice and our local services fall within the Shoreditch Park and City Neighbourhood.
8. There are a number of past and present developments within the neighbourhood model that are beneficial to City of London residents. These include:
  - City of London Corporation social workers being part of neighbourhood multi-disciplinary meetings, working with partners across health, care and the

voluntary sector. This means that there is shared ownership and wider input from practitioners on more complex case discussions, and a more holistic approach to addressing a range of social and health issues. A specific pathway is also being developed, at the instigation of the City Corporation, to support rough sleepers into the neighbourhood multi-disciplinary team

- a pilot to be implemented to trial a new blended model for community mental health services with mental health, primary care and voluntary sector services providing better joined-up services to support people locally with mental health conditions
- work to bring together community navigation work, (which supports residents in a joined-up way and connects them with their local communities) and to improve pathways into this support within the neighbourhoods. This builds on some of the community navigation we already have in the City of London
- empowerment and involvement of Members and local residents to help shape and develop the neighbourhoods. This is through a range of mechanisms including neighbourhood conversations and neighbourhood networks. A programme of further engagement is planned, to focus specifically on the City perspective in relation to neighbourhoods and networks (see below for details of networks).

### **Integrated Care in Tower Hamlets**

9. Integrated care in Tower Hamlets is built around a network model – each containing a number of GP practices. The two main practices that City of London residents attend are in two different networks, but this is currently managed by one network manager, which provides a good opportunity to have an overall view of the links with the City of London.
10. The key areas for the City of London Corporation in relation to the Tower Hamlets model are clear and effective pathways to Corporation social care services, and an understanding of, and links with, the voluntary sector offer for City of London residents.
11. A meeting is to be held with Tower Hamlets colleagues shortly, and a verbal update on further plans will be given at the Committee meeting.

### ***GP Surgeries***

12. In Summer 2021, a new GP surgery is due to open at Goodman's Fields. It will have two practices – the Whitechapel Health Centre and East One Health.
13. The Whitechapel Health Centre has a number of patients who are City of London residents – mainly at the Portsoken branch practice at the Green Box. Just over 100 City of London residents are registered at the branch practice, which offers limited sessions each week. Once the Goodman's Fields Surgery opens, the branch practice would cease to exist, and these registered patients would receive their primary care services through the Goodman's Fields Surgery.
14. During the COVID-19 pandemic, sessions have not been provided at the branch practice. Going forward, and for the near future, the default for GP services

nationally will be virtual/online with face-to-face appointments only when needed. Discussions have taken place between Portsoken Members and Tower Hamlets CCG about the Portsoken branch surgery in the interim period before Goodman's Field Surgery opens.

## **Changes in the Health Landscape and Infrastructure**

### *Delivery of health and care services*

15. The COVID-19 pandemic created an unprecedented change in health services, with a rapid repurposing of services, staffing and capacity.
16. The wider NHS response to COVID-19 has been developed in phases, including recent plans to restore ongoing services across primary, elective and dental care. There may be a reconfiguration of some of these services in the short to medium term to support the restoration of services.
17. Many appointments, particularly in primary care, will continue to be virtual by default (telephone or video call) for the immediate future, although face-to-face appointments are available when necessary and delivered in a COVID-secure manner.
18. The pandemic prompted further integrated work between health and social services in areas such as hospital discharge, and expedited some of the work on the neighbourhood model.

### *Planning, commissioning and governance around integrated care*

19. In 2016, Sustainability and Transformation Partnerships (STPs) were established nationally, bringing together local NHS organisations and councils to plan and deliver improvements in health and care, and more co-ordinated services. The City of London Corporation, along with City and Hackney CCG and Tower Hamlets CCG are part of the North East London STP, known as the East London Health and Care Partnership. There are currently seven CCGs and eight local authorities in the partnership.
20. The NHS Long Term Plan (2019) set out the aim that every part of England will be covered by an integrated care system by 2021, replacing STPs but building on their good work to date. It also stated that, typically, there should be a single CCG for each integrated care system area. As a result, the North East London STP will become the local integrated care system and each CCG has been working with its members to vote on whether to form a new combined single CCG.
21. The integrated care system means a move from a traditional commissioner/provider split towards a system focused on supporting frontline practitioners to deliver improved health and care outcomes for the local population.

22. Locally, across City and Hackney, there will be a move from an Integrated Commissioning Board to an Integrated Care Partnership Board with a number of subgroups. The board will be responsible for system oversight and assurance.
23. A City and Hackney Neighbourhood Health and Care Services Board will be responsible for service planning, delivery and improvement. This includes the work of a number of existing workstreams (planned care, unplanned care and children, young people, maternity and families), major programmes and COVID-19 recovery programmes.

## **Implications**

### *Strategic*

24. Integrated care and the neighbourhood and network models meet a wide range of our Departmental Business Plan priorities:
- Safe – People of all ages and all backgrounds live in safe communities, our homes are safe and well maintained and our estates are protected from harm
  - Potential – People of all ages are prepared to flourish in a rapidly changing world through exceptional education, cultural and creative learning and skills which link to the world of work
  - Independence, involvement and choice – People of all ages can live independently, play a role in their communities and exercise choice over their services
  - Health and wellbeing – People of all ages enjoy good mental and physical health and wellbeing
  - Community – People of all ages and all backgrounds feel part of, engaged with and able to shape their community.
25. These strongly reflect the Corporate Plan outcomes under ‘contributing to a flourishing economy’:
- People are safe and feel safe
  - People enjoy good health and wellbeing
  - People have equal opportunities to enrich their lives and reach their full potential
  - Communities are cohesive and have the facilities they need.

## **Conclusion**

26. The City of London Corporation has worked in an integrated way with health services for some time, but the policy drive and imperative for integrated care has increased in recent years.
27. The wider context that health and social care sits within is changing with the creation of integrated care systems across wider areas such as North East London. Local governance and planning structures for integrated care are also changing in response to this changing context.

28. The City of London Corporation is a key partner in the neighbourhood model of integrated care with City and Hackney CCG and this is also being established within the model in Tower Hamlets. There are opportunities for residents and Members to help shape the models and the service delivery within them.

## **Appendices**

- None

## **Background Papers**

- The future of health and care for the people of north east London – available on the East London Health & Care Partnership website:  
<https://www.eastlondonhcp.nhs.uk/ourplans/the-future-of-health-and-care-for-the-people-of-north-east-london.htm>

## **Ellie Ward**

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<b>Committee:</b>	<b>Dated:</b>
Community and Children's Services Committee	06/11/2020
<b>Subject:</b> Childcare Sufficiency Assessment	<b>Public</b>
<b>Which outcomes in the City Corporation's Corporate Plan does this proposal aim to impact directly?</b>	1,2,3,4
<b>Does this proposal require extra revenue and/or capital spending?</b>	<b>No</b>
<b>Report of:</b> Andrew Carter, Director of Community and Children's Services	<b>For information</b>
<b>Report author:</b> Theresa Shortland, Head of Service – Education and Early Years	

## Summary

This Childcare Sufficiency Assessment (CSA) is an analysis of the supply and demand of childcare provision in the City of London and of how well the childcare needs of local parents are being met. It measures the effectiveness of the City's childcare market by identifying any supply–demand gaps and makes recommendations as to how the City of London should plan to address them in the forthcoming planning period.

The 2020 CSA also analyses the evolving effects of the 2020 COVID-19 outbreak on the City of London's Childcare and Early Years market. All responding Early Years childcare providers and settings were asked whether, prior to COVID-19, their setting was able to meet the demand it experiences for funded childcare: all stated "yes". All continued to be able to do so during the COVID-19 outbreak.

The City of London Childcare Accessibility Scheme aims to support resident families to access early education and childcare through an early education place. The purpose of the early education place is to support the child's early development and empower parents to make positive changes to their lives through work, training or family support.

The overall assessment of the sufficiency of childcare in the City confirms that there are sufficient good-quality childcare places for children aged 0–4 years, aligned to vacant places as of summer 2020. This situation will, however, require ongoing monitoring, including the changing developments associated with COVID-19.

## Recommendation

Members are asked to: Note the report.

## **Main Report**

### **Background**

1. This CSA is an analysis of the supply and demand of childcare provision in the City of London, and of how well the childcare needs of local parents are being met. It measures the effectiveness of the City's childcare market by identifying any supply–demand gaps and makes recommendations as to how the City of London should plan to address them in the forthcoming planning period.
2. Statutory guidance for local authorities (June 2018) outlines the requirements for English local authorities aligned to their duties pursuant to section 2 of the Childcare Act 2016 and sections 6, 7, 7A, 9A, 12 and 13 of the Childcare Act 2006.
3. This 2020 City of London CSA outlines how the City is meeting its duty to secure sufficient childcare, and highlights the requirements outlined in the guidance.
4. The City of London Childcare Accessibility Scheme aims to support resident families to access early education and childcare through an early education place. The purpose of the early education place is to support the child's early development and empower parents to make positive changes to their lives through work, training or family support.
5. The 2020 CSA also analyses the evolving effects of the 2020 COVID-19 outbreak on the City of London's Childcare and Early Years market, and reports on factors including: (a) take-up and awareness of the City of London Childcare Accessibility Scheme; and (b) the awareness of the City of London Family and Young People's Information Service.
6. In terms of COVID-19, the primary aims of the research were to determine:
  - the impact of COVID-19 on the ongoing sustainability of Early Years childcare provision
  - what types of support the City of London's Early Years childcare sector would welcome in terms of an ongoing revival and recovery from the imposition of the national lockdown
  - the ongoing challenges caused by COVID-19
  - the extent to which Early Years 0–5 years childcare providers and settings had benefitted from the Government's financial support measures that were made accessible to businesses, starting from April 2020.
7. As with the 2018 City of London CSA, an approach combining qualitative and quantitative methods was undertaken to provide a robust and in-depth analysis of the emerging gaps and themes – including those aligned to COVID-19. This approach was based on the premise that each family is unique and potentially in search for formal childcare that would meet their needs, values, cultural requirements and personal circumstances.



## **Current Position – Childcare provision**

8. The childcare providers located in the City that are registered by Ofsted to care for children in the Early Years pre-school 0–5 years group are subject to the legal provisions for the regulation and inspection of provision for children. All of the Early Years childcare providers and settings situated in the City of London local area are judged 'Outstanding or Good' by Ofsted.
9. The 2020 CSA fieldwork confirmed that several City of London resident families do not use registered childcare; they continue (as with the 2018 CSA) to either provide childcare themselves, through their families, or they employ nannies with a relative high frequency, in comparison to other London Boroughs.
10. In 2020 in the City of London, eight of the Early Years childcare providers/settings have places occupied by children accessing the free 2-year-old early education entitlement and the universal 15 hours of free childcare during term time for 3- and 4-year olds.
11. The average hourly fee charged by City-based Private Voluntary and Independent Early Years childcare providers/settings was £10.13/hour – ranging from £8.73/hour to £14.00/hour.
12. Of the parents and carers who were consulted for the summer 2020 CSA: 63% stated that they were using at least one type of formal childcare – that is, a day nursery, a pre-school, a (non-City based) childminder or an out-of-school club, term-time or holiday time; 37% stated that they were only (in summer 2020) using informal childcare – that is, themselves and/or a partner where relevant, a friend/neighbour or a nanny/au-pair. The most frequent type of formal childcare being accessed by a City of London-resident parent/carer was a private, voluntary or independent sector nursery, followed by a nursery class in a state school. In terms of informal childcare, 15% of parents were receiving support through grandparents, and 10% were hiring a nanny.
13. As with the 2018 CSA, families with children and young people with special educational needs and disabilities (SEND) used a range of short breaks services to access support during the day, weekends and during the school holidays.
14. In July 2020, there were 18 City of London children and young people with an Education, Health and Care Plan (EHCP). Of these, eight were aged under 10 years, seven were aged 11–15 years and three were aged 16–19 years.

## **City of London Childcare Accessibility Scheme**

15. The City of London Childcare Accessibility Scheme aims to support resident families to access early education and childcare through an early education place. The purpose of the early education place is to support the child's early development and empower parents to make positive changes to their lives through work, training or family support.
16. The three main types that responding parents and carers stated they had searched for were:

- information about childcare availability in the summer holidays
- information about activities that children and young people with SEND can take part in
- funded childcare.

## Emerging effects of COVID-19

17. The most frequent effect of the 2020 COVID-19 outbreak highlighted by Early Years childcare providers/settings was “financial challenges” or “lost income”. Other repeated effects were: “lost opportunities to meet new customers [parents]”; and “a loss of face-to-face contact with parents and children”. There were several examples of Early Years childcare providers/settings having plans to re-energise income generation as the emergence from lockdown progressed. These included “Raising fees in September 2020”; “Maybe filming ‘show rounds’ and then having a video chat with interested parents, involving a likely key worker”; and “Making better use of social media and virtual tours to generate interest and demand”.

## Key Findings – Themes 2020

18. Theme: Type of childcare /Age of child: All parents/carers – whether they were using formal or informal childcare in summer 2020 – were invited to state whether there was any type of formal City of London-based childcare that they would like to access in the near future (which they were not accessing in summer 2020). A relatively high percentage stated “pre-school/playgroup”. These parents tended to be Barbican residents, and this therefore highlighted the relative importance of the ongoing sustainability of the Barbican Playgroup.
19. As is common with other inner-London Boroughs, the population of older school-aged children in the City of London is forecast to increase in coming years at a greater rate than the population of young (pre-school aged) children. The City of London therefore should retain a strategic awareness that demand for out-of-school childcare provision, (that is, after-school club, before-school, and holiday time provision), might become more pronounced. Indeed, when parents/carers were invited to state what types of formal childcare they intend to use in future years, the second and third most frequent types were: a holiday play scheme (20% of all responding parents and carers) and then an after-school club (18%).
20. Theme: Affordability: The second most frequent ‘barrier’ to accessing formal childcare stated by a parent who participated in the 2020 CSA was: “I could not afford the childcare that I require”. Encouragingly, 21% of the respondents stated that they do not use formal childcare as it is too expensive; this is compared to 39% who made such a statement in 2018. However, 20% of parents/carers consulted for the 2020 CSA stated that they were aware of the existence of the City of London’s Childcare Accessibility Scheme (most frequently via City of London Child and Family Centre), and half of these respondents stated that they did not qualify.
21. Theme: Sustainability: Three of the eight City of London-based Early Years childcare providers/settings outlined that they had a significant number of childcare vacancies in summer 2020. These vacant places were across all age groups 0–4 years, though tended to be highest for 3- and 4-year olds. Feedback from representatives of relevant settings was that vacant places had increased, aligned to the progression of

COVID-19. Each of the City of London-based Early Years childcare providers/settings expressed concerns, (to differing degrees), about the possibility of a second 2020 COVID-19 lockdown – possibly during winter 2020/21. Their concern was aligned to their ongoing sustainability and, in certain cases, the increase in vacant places and loss of income from fees in 2020.

22. Parents/carers were requested to state whether they had ever experienced any barriers when trying to access childcare in the City of London locality: 36% stated that they had, with the most frequent barrier being: “Concerns about COVID-19” – stated by a third of all responding parents. This percentage could indicate that certain parents – that is, customers of childcare providers – may be reluctant about returning to provisions as the 2020/21 period continues. It was evident via analysis of the 2020 CSA parents/carers survey that COVID-19 concerns were most frequently aligned to COVID spreading in “a nursery”, a term which constitutes the majority of formal childcare in the City of London.
23. Theme: Special Needs: Almost one-quarter of parents/carers consulted for the 2020 City of London CSA outlined that they had a child with special needs and/or disabilities, or they had a young child with (as yet) undiagnosed needs. It is typical within all inner-London Boroughs for the incidence of children with special needs and/or disabilities to be increasing. A repeated request made by the City of London-based Early Years childcare providers/settings was for more training, to support their staff being able to identify special and additional needs at an early age. Such training has indeed been consistently offered to them by the City of London. A skills and training audit will be undertaken in Early Years settings in Autumn 2020, and accessibility to such training will be reiterated by the City of London.
24. During the 2020 CSA, a number of young people with special needs and/or disabilities outlined that they would welcome out-of-school activities that were more aligned to the theme of ‘play’ as well as those that aligned to ‘learning’. Three repeated requests for young people with SEND were for the establishment of:
- a green space and/or garden to be responsible for and use as a meeting place
  - a SEND Arts club
  - a SEND Bike club.

### **Proposals – 2020 CSA strategic recommendations**

25. The overall assessment confirms that there are sufficient good-quality childcare places for children aged 0–4 years in the City, aligned to the incidence of vacant places, as of summer 2020. This situation will, however, require ongoing monitoring, including the changing developments associated with COVID-19.
26. The 2020 assessment has identified some challenges that should be considered, aligned to the following strategic recommendations:
- A) The City of London should consider how it can continue to demonstrate to its Early Years childcare providers/settings that it will help them to fill vacant places.
- B) The 2020 City of London CSA has highlighted a possible forthcoming sustainability concern for the locality’s private, voluntary and independent nurseries, including alignment with: (a) parental concerns about COVID-19; and (b) depleted occupancy

levels post the 2020 outbreak. The relevant City of London officers need to ensure that the risk of closures is mitigated and that the issue is monitored and viewed through a prism of a possible requirement for traditional commercial (and fundamental) business support for small enterprises.

C) Approximately one-third of parents and carers who provided feedback for the 2020 City of London CSA outlined that they had (to varying extents) concerns about COVID-19, which reached a level where they were worried about their children attending a day-care setting. The City of London may want to consider means via which it can practically help to re-energise and rejuvenate local parental demand for formal Early Years childcare provision, aligned to evidence that certain parents have 'anxieties' around their children safely returning to or starting at a setting, because of COVID-19.

D) Feedback from certain parents and carers who were consulted for the 2020 City of London CSA emphasised that there is a discernible demand for more out-of-school childcare provision for children resident in the North of the City (the Barbican and Golden Lane estates), including for children and young people with SEND. In recognition of this feedback, and the fact that the population of older children resident in the City of London is forecast to increase, the City of London should consider how it can support the establishment of a further out-of-school (childcare) resource, potentially within the Barbican locality.

E) Relevant City of London officers need to continue their work to support Early Years childcare providers/settings with their recruitment and retention of qualified staff – including alignment to the 2020 City of London CSA report finding that there were incidences of provider workforce members having COVID-19 concerns, particularly about travelling safely to work.

F) The City of London Education and Early Years Service should consider further partnership work with local stakeholders such as the Museum of London and the Barbican Centre. Young people with SEND, along with their carers, repeatedly expressed a wish for the possible establishment of: a green space and/or garden that young people with SEND could tend to, be responsible for, use as a meeting place; an Arts club; and a 'Bikes for SEND' club.

G) The City of London should retain an awareness that a number of parents and carers who responded to the consultation for the 2020 City of London CSA wanted the future option of "access to a sessional pre-school/playgroup", and so should monitor the (currently secure) availability of such sessional provision.

H) The 2020 City of London CSA has provided some positive feedback with regard to the issue of affordability, with fewer parents/carers than in 2018 stating that an inability to afford formal childcare was an issue for them. However, although the Childcare Accessibility Scheme was well received by parents/carers who were aware of its existence, (including those who were benefitting from it), a wider and increased awareness of the scheme needs to be achieved, including in the Portsoken locality.

I) The City of London should consider how it can further support its Early Years childcare providers/settings to produce virtual online tours of their building and resources, which can be appropriately accessed and viewed by prospective

parents/customers, and can display the preventative and safety measures that are being taken for COVID-19.

### **Key Data**

27. Data on Early Years Providers in the City of London (see Appendix, Table 1).
28. Approximate number of children and young people aged 0–18 years resident in the City of London in 2020 (see Appendix, Table 2).
29. Numbers of children forecast to be resident in the City of London by 2025 (see Appendix, Table 2).

### **Corporate & Strategic Implications**

30. Financial implications – In the City, Early Years providers are mostly small businesses, with one voluntary organisation and maintained provision in the Aldgate Primary School and the City of London Children’s Centre. During the lockdown, all these providers continued to receive the Department for Education’s (DfE’s) early education grant, continuing with the reopening of the sector in June 2020, and the subsequent opening of the one maintained primary school in the City – Aldgate Primary School. This grant funding has been provided by the Education and Early Years Service.
31. The loss of income from fees, usually paid by parents, is a substantial aspect of the childcare business model. The risk implications are that, if the childcare business is not sustainable in the future, this could create a situation where there is insufficient childcare in the City local area, and this would need to be addressed. The DfE also introduced a number of measures to support the Early Years sector, including loans.
32. Equalities implications – Take-up of childcare from lower-income families is essential to parents being able to work and access training. It is vital that the Childcare Accessibility Scheme supports those families where equalities implications are greatest. This includes those people protected by existing equality legislation, covering age, disability, gender reassignment, race, religion or belief, sex, sexual orientation, marriage and civil partnership, and pregnancy and maternity.

### **Conclusion**

33. The overall assessment of childcare in the City confirms that there are sufficient good-quality childcare places for children aged 0–4 years, including alignment to vacant places as of summer 2020. This situation will, however, require ongoing monitoring, including the changing developments associated with COVID-19.

### **Appendices**

- Appendix 1. – City of London: Childcare Sufficiency Assessment 2020

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**Appendix 1.**



# City of London

## Childcare Sufficiency Assessment 2020

# September 2020

Introduction

Methodology 2020 Childcare Sufficiency Assessment

1. Supply of childcare
2. Demand for Early Years and childcare
3. Childcare for children and young people with special educational needs and disabilities (SEND)
4. City of London Childcare Accessibility Scheme
5. City of London Family and Young People's Information Service
6. Emerging effects of COVID-19
7. Achievements since the 2018 Childcare Sufficiency Assessment (CSA)
8. Key findings and challenges in summer 2020
9. 2020 Childcare Sufficiency Assessment strategic recommendations

## Introduction

This Childcare Sufficiency Assessment (CSA) is an analysis of the supply and demand of childcare provision in the City of London and how well the childcare needs of local parents are being met. It measures the effectiveness of the City's childcare market by identifying any supply-demand gaps, and makes recommendations as to how the City of London should plan to address them in the forthcoming planning period. Statutory guidance for local authorities (June 2018) outlines the requirements for English local authorities aligned to their duties pursuant to section 2 of the Childcare Act 2016 and sections 6, 7, 7A, 9A, 12 and 13 of the Childcare Act 2006.

This 2020 City of London CSA outlines how the City is meeting its duty to secure sufficient childcare, and highlights the requirements outlined in the guidance.

The 2020 CSA also analyses the evolving effects of the 2020 COVID-19 outbreak on the City of London's Childcare and Early Years market, and reports on factors including: (a) take-up and awareness of the City of London Childcare Accessibility Scheme; and (b) the awareness of the City of London Family and Young People's Information Service.

In terms of the COVID-19 outbreak, the primary aims of the research were to determine:

- the impact of COVID-19 on the ongoing sustainability of Early Years childcare provision
- what types of support the City of London's Early Years childcare sector would welcome, in terms of an ongoing revival and recovery from the imposition of the national lockdown
- the ongoing challenges caused by COVID-19
- the extent to which Early Years (0–5 years) childcare providers and settings had benefitted from the Government's financial support measures that were made accessible to businesses, starting from April 2020.

## Methodology 2020 Childcare Sufficiency (CSA) Assessment

As with the 2018 City of London CSA, an approach combining qualitative and quantitative methods was undertaken to provide a robust and in-depth analysis of the emerging gaps and themes – including those aligned to COVID-19. This approach was based on the premise that each family is unique and potentially in search of formal childcare to meet their needs, values, cultural requirements and personal circumstances.

The 2020 CSA methodology was a combination of the following:

- Desktop research exercise – collating secondary sources of data, from Ofsted, Office for National Statistics and the Greater London Authority (GLA) to analyse childcare supply in the City of London
- Structured interviews with Early Years (0–5) childcare providers/settings situated in the City of London
- Quantitative and qualitative consultation with parents and carers resident in the City of London, or within its *immediate* bordering area
- Qualitative consultation with young people – including young people with special educational needs and disabilities (SEND) – who are resident within the City of London, including via the City of London Youth Forum
- Analysis of emerging gaps, trends and key issues for providers and parents/carers – and recommended mitigating actions that could be taken to address such gaps.



## 1. Supply of childcare

- 1.1 The childcare providers located in the City that are registered by Ofsted to care for children in the Early Years pre-school (0–5) years group are subject to the legal provisions for the regulation and inspection of provision for children.
- 1.2 The 2020 CSA fieldwork confirmed that several City of London resident families do not use registered childcare; they continue (as with the 2018 CSA) to either provide childcare themselves, through their families, or they employ nannies with a relative high frequency, in comparison to other London Boroughs.
- 1.3 All of the Early Years (0–5) childcare providers/settings situated in the City of London local area are judged 'Outstanding or Good' by Ofsted – See Table 1 below.

**Table 1 – Early Years Childcare accessible in the City of London in 2020**

Setting name	Ofsted	Postcode	Type	Sector	Places
<b>Private, Voluntary and Independent places</b>					
Barbican Playgroup	Outstanding Jan 2020	EC2Y 8AX	Sessional pre-school	Private	20
City Child – Bright Horizons Nursery	Good April 2018	EC2Y 8AH	Day nursery	Private	54
Hatching Dragons Nursery	Good <sup>1</sup> May 2017	EC1Y 0AA	Day nursery	Private	34
Newpark Childcare Centre	Outstanding Feb 2020	EC2Y 8DU	Day nursery	Private	26
Smithfield House Nursery	Good July 2017	EC1Y 9HA	Day nursery	Private	100
The Children's Centre Nursery Goldman Sachs	Outstanding March 2013	EC4A 2BE	Workplace nursery	Private	19
<b>School-based nursery places</b>					
The Aldgate Primary School and City Child & Family Centre	Good July 2019	EC3A 3DE	Nursery class	Maintained	46
Charterhouse Square School nursery class	Independent School Inspectorate March 2019 School met standards	EC1M 6EA	Nursery class (8.30am – 3.30pm)	Independent school	52
St Paul's Cathedral School nursery class	Independent School Inspectorate May 2017 School met standards	EC4M 9AD	Nursery class (8.30am – 3.30pm)	Independent school	20
<b>Total places in summer 2020</b>					<b>371</b>

<sup>1</sup> Prior to 2019 premises move

- 1.4 In 2020 in the City of London, eight of the Early Years childcare providers/settings have places occupied by children accessing: (a) the free 2-year-old early education entitlement; and (b) the universal 15 hours free childcare during term time for 3- and 4-year olds. All responding Early Years childcare providers/settings were asked whether, prior to the COVID-19 outbreak, their setting was able to meet the demand it experiences for funded childcare: all stated “yes, we were”. All continued to be able to do so during the COVID-19 outbreak.
- 1.5 Five of the eight responding City of London-based Early Years childcare providers/settings were providing 30-hours free childcare offer places. Four stated that they had an average of six parents/carers based in the City who were paying for additional hours on top of their 30.
- 1.6 In summer 2020, only one Early Years childcare provider/setting stated that, during the forthcoming 12 months, they envisaged that they would *increase* the number of 30-hours childcare places that they would offer – and they stated that this would be a “marginal increase”. Three Early Years childcare providers/settings stated that, three years on from the (September 2017) inception of the 30-hours childcare offer, they believed that parents/carers would still benefit from more information about the programme, most frequently aligned to the eligibility criteria.
- 1.7 In summer 2020, all relevant parents/carers of 3- and/or 4-year-olds who responded to the CSA consultation confirmed that the 30-hours childcare offer had helped them and/or a partner to remain in employment. All (100%) of such parents/carers who had accessed the 30-hours childcare offer stated that they had found it easy to organise a place, with no one stating that they had not found it easy, or that they had found it to some degree “*stressful*”.
- 1.8 In summer 2020, 18 parents eligible for free 30-hours childcare are taking up a place at the Aldgate Primary School nursery/City of London Child and Family Centre, compared to nine in 2018.
- 1.9 As of summer 2020, there were no childminders operating within the City of London, though there were a number operating in the immediate bordering borough areas, such as Tower Hamlets, Hackney, Camden and Islington.
- 1.10 The average hourly fee charged by City-based private, voluntary and independent Early Years childcare providers/settings was £10.13/hour – ranging from £8.73/hour to £14.00/hour.
- 1.11 Five of the eight responding Early Years childcare providers/settings confirmed that they had a waiting list for places in summer 2020. Two stated that waiting lists had moderately increased since the COVID-19 outbreak and the Government’s responses (that is, lockdown), came into force in spring 2020. Three settings stated that they did *not* have a waiting list in summer 2020, though they did have one before lockdown.
- 1.12 Six of the eight responding Early Years childcare providers/settings confirmed that they had vacant places in summer 2020 (five of which were private, voluntary and independent settings), with two such providers having 33 vacant places, and one reporting 36 vacant places – most frequently for 3- and 4-year-olds. The relevant responding Early Years childcare providers/settings aligned this incidence of a high number of vacant places to the COVID-19 outbreak.
- 1.13 When asked if they would still be able to provide childcare services for families in the

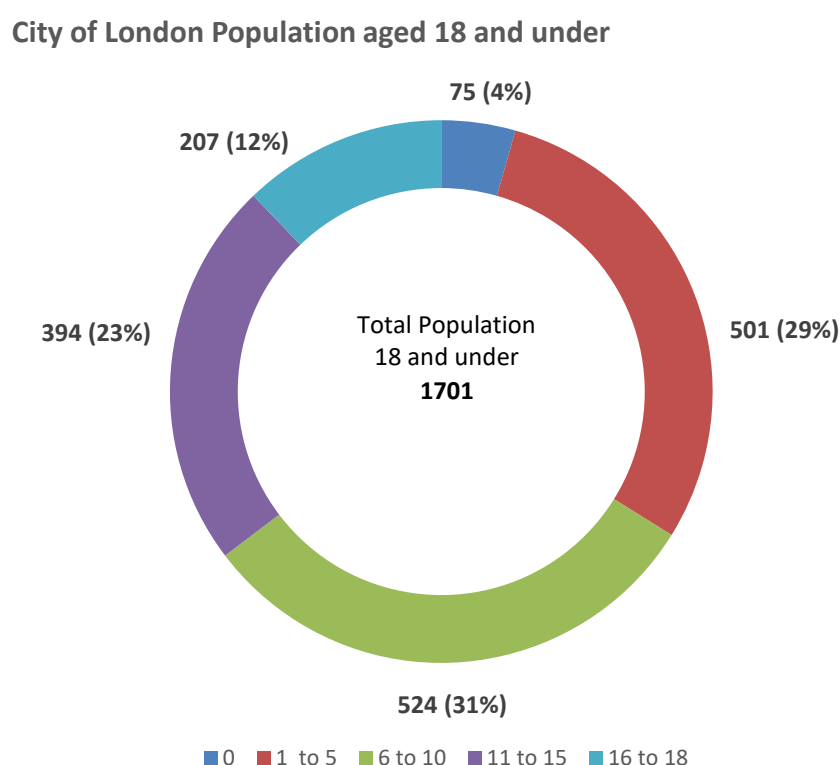
City for the next five years, all the responding Early Years childcare providers/settings confirmed that they hope to still be in business, and encouragingly none stated that they had any type of sustainability issue.

- 1.14 The Aldgate Primary School is the only *maintained* primary school in located *within* the City of London. It has an after-school club, breakfast club and holiday club, with 30 childcare places for school-aged children (5- to 11-years old) in the City. However, both Charterhouse Square School and St Paul's Cathedral School have activities for primary-aged children.

## 2. Demand for Early Years and childcare

- 2.1 The GLA's mid-year estimates for 2019 reported the City of London population at 9,721. The population has been growing, and is expected to continue to do so, with the biggest increase expected in the elderly population. Although there is relative affluence in the City of London, there are also pockets of deprivation located in the East (Portsocken locality) of the City, particularly within the environs of the Mansell Street housing estate and the Middlesex Street housing estate. The Office for National Statistics estimates that around 40% of the City of London population is from a Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic (BAME) group.
- 2.2 In terms of children and young people in the City of London, the birth rate remains fairly steady, and more than half the total young population are aged under 10. Image 1 shows the number of children estimated to be resident in the City of London as reported by the GLA: 17% of the total City of London population are aged 18 years and under. The majority of this group (64%), are aged under 10 years.

**Image 1 - Approximate number of children and young people aged 0–18 years resident in the City of London in 2020 (source: GLA 2020)**



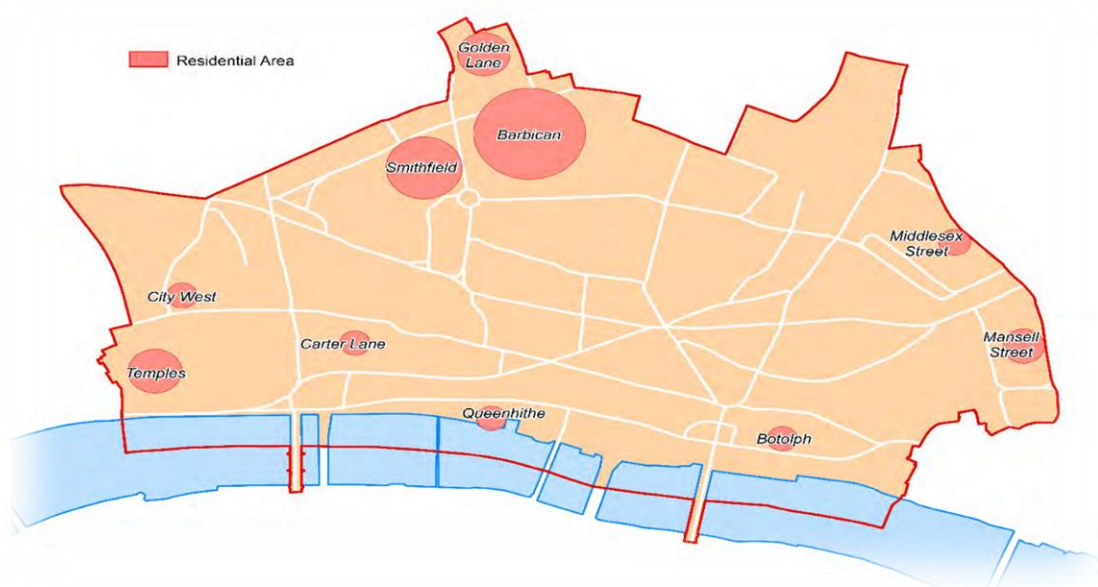
- 2.3 The main component in population change in the City of London in recent years is migration, rather than significant changes in birth or death rates. The number of new births in the City of London has stayed relatively constant in the recent years, at 50 to 52 per year. Housing-led population projections published by the GLA show that the City of London population is predicted to continue growing. Using 2018 figures as a baseline, the GLA forecast that, by 2030, the City of London population overall will have grown by around 9%. Table 2 indicates that the population of older school-aged children in the City of London is forecast to increase at a greater rate than the population of young (pre-school aged) children.

**Table 2 – Number of children forecast to be resident in the City of London by 2025 (source: GLA 2018)**

Age cohort	Resident population 2020	Resident population 2022	Number change 2020–2022	Resident population 2025	Number change 2020–2025
0–1 years	133	116	-17	113	-20
2 years	47	51	+4	49	+2
3–4 years	87	94	+7	89	+2
5–7 years	119	124	+5	130	+11
8–11 years	168	173	+5	173	+5
12–18 years	274	276	+2	288	+14
Total 0–18	828	834	+6	842	+14

- 2.4 The City of London Draft Local Plan 2036 sets out how the majority of the locality's housing is concentrated around the edge of the City in four estates (the Barbican, Golden Lane, Middlesex Street and Mansell Street).

**Image 2 – Location of main housing areas in the City of London**



- 2.5 Other residential clusters are located in Smithfield, the Temples, parts of the riverside (Queenhithe), Fleet Street (City West), Carter Lane and around Botolph Lane. The highest concentration of residential units in the City, are in the Barbican and Golden Lane estates (39%) and Smithfield (principally Bart's Square).
- 2.6 The current development at City of London Primary Academy Islington (COLPAI) will deliver 66 new housing units in 2022, and this is the only expected forthcoming

increase to residential dwellings numbers that *could* influence demand for Early Years childcare over forthcoming years. It is important to note within the context of this sufficiency assessment that, if the City's housing stock increases, the resident population does not automatically increase in proportion, as: (a) many residential units are used as second homes or for short-term letting (the 2011 Census indicated that there were 1,400 second homes in the City of London); (b) parents who have young children tend to move out of the City when the children reach school age; and (c) a number of parents send their children to independent schools.

- 2.7 Of parents and carers consulted for the summer 2020 CSA: 63% stated that they were using at least one type of formal childcare term-time or holiday time – that is, a day nursery, a pre-school, a (non-City based) childminder or an out-of-school club; 37% stated that they were (in summer 2020) only using informal childcare – that is, themselves and/or a partner (where relevant), a friend/neighbour or a nanny/au-pair. The most frequent type of formal childcare being accessed by a City of London-resident parent/carer was a private, voluntary or independent sector nursery, followed in frequency by a nursery class in a state school. In terms of informal childcare, 15% of parents were receiving support through grandparents, and 10% were hiring a nanny.
- 2.8 City of London Early Years childcare providers/settings were invited to state whether, since 2018, they had witnessed any notable (new) trends in terms of the demand for: (a) types of places that you offer; or (b) types of hours at your setting? Five stated that they had, with the most frequent (stated by three settings) being a request for earlier opening times.
- 2.9 City of London Early Years childcare providers/settings were invited to state how much higher or lower they expected demand for their places to be in summer 2022: three stated: “*higher than now, but not significantly*”, four stated: “*about the same*” and; one stated: “*I can’t say*”.
- 2.10 Some City of London resident parents/carers evidently chose not to use formal childcare because they *prefer* to look after their children themselves. This was confirmed by 20% of relevant parents/carers who responded to the summer 2020 CSA consultation.
- 2.11 Parents/carers were requested to state whether they had ever experienced any barriers when trying to access childcare: 59% stated that they had, with the three most frequent barriers being (in order of frequency): 1. I have recently had concerns about COVID-19 safety and/or transmission (27% of all responding parents/carers); 2. I could not afford the childcare that I require (21%) and; 3. I could not/cannot find a space at my chosen provider (15%). Of the responding parents/carers, 21% stated that they do not use formal childcare as it is too expensive, compared to 39% who made such a statement in 2018. Indeed, the average weekly term-time amount spent by a fee-paying parent/carer consulted for the 2020 CSA was £390.00.
- 2.12 Parents/carers generally reported that their use of formal childcare had decreased since the COVID-19 lockdown in late March 2020, in large part due to the fact that there was an increased incidence of working from home.
- 2.13 All parents/carers, whether they were using formal or informal childcare in summer 2020, were invited to state whether there was any type of formal City of London-based childcare that they would like to access in the *near future* (which they were not accessing in summer 2020). The most frequent type of formal childcare stated was a holiday play scheme (by 28% of all parents/carers), followed in frequency by a pre-

school/playgroup (23%) and then an after-school club (19%).

- 2.14 Parents/carers who were not using any formal childcare in summer 2020 were invited to state what they would be looking for if they were to consider doing so in the future. The three most frequent responses were (in order of frequency): 1. for it to be good quality; 2. for there to be reassurances about COVID-19 safety measures; and 3. for it to be located close to my home.
- 2.15 Parents/carers who were accessing formal childcare were, on average, accessing it for 30.5 hours per week. The most frequent number stated was 40 hours weekly.
- 2.16 Young people who are resident in the City of London explained to the 2020 CSA research team that they were accessing a range of out-of-school activities and clubs. These included pre-lockdown (late March 2020) City of London Child and Family Centre out-of-school play scheme and homework club. The most frequent sporting activity that they were accessing was swimming (at Golden Lane Leisure Centre).
- Two activities/clubs that young people who were consulted *repeatedly* outlined they would like to use if they were accessible to them were: (a) a City of London cycling club; and (b) an ongoing Arts club.
  - It was also observed that a number of parents/carers of children and young people with SEND advocated an increased use of local green spaces, including through the facilitation of outdoors sensory sessions. Another suggestion was a “wildlife” garden area that could be tended by the families of young people with SEND.
- 2.17 A number of young people with SEND were asked what they would like to access in terms of future out-of-school activities, or what could be termed, ‘*during childcare*’. Three *repeated* requests were for the establishment of: 1. a green space and/or garden that young people with SEND could tend to, be responsible for and use as a meeting place; 2. an Arts club, for young people with SEND; 3. a ‘Bikes for SEND’ club for young people with SEND.



### 3. Childcare for children and young people with special educational needs and disabilities (SEND)

- 3.1 As with the 2018 CSA, families with children and young people with SEND use a range of short breaks services to access support during the day, weekends and during the school holidays.  
At July 2020, there were 18 City of London children and young people with an Education, Health and Care Plan (EHCP). Of these, eight were aged under 10 years, seven were aged 11–15 years, and three were aged 16–19 years.
- 3.2 Collectively, the summer 2020 CSA demonstrates that a total of nine children with SEND were accessing a City of London-based Early Years childcare setting. Eight of these children were accessing a place at City of London Child and Family Centre, where the most frequent age was 3-years and the most common special needs type was a speech, language or communication difficulty.
- 3.3 Responding City of London-based Early Years childcare providers/settings were invited to confirm how often they were asked by a carer/parent if they could care for a child who has SEND. The most frequent response was ‘rarely’ with none saying that in the past 12 months they had had to decline to take a child with SEND due to being unable to most effectively care for their needs.
- 3.4 Of all responding parents/carers to the 2020 CSA research, 19% stated that they had at least one child in their family with SEND. The most frequent type of special needs outlined by a relevant City of London resident carer/parent was a speech, language or communication difficulty, or an autism spectrum disorder. Of the children and young people with SEND, 40% were evidently accessing a type of formal childcare, most frequently a form of out-of-school childcare for 5- to 14-year-olds.
- 3.5 A series of focused video conference interviews with six City of London resident carers of children and young people with SEND demonstrated that:
- they felt very well supported by the City of London officers and family support workers, and placed a lot of “*trust*” in their guidance and policies
  - there was a sense that the City of London welcomed *meaningful* co-production
  - there was tangible support for more interaction (to be enabled) between carers who live in the Portsoken locality of the City and their co-City of London residents/carers who live in the Northern locality of the City – in particular, the Barbican estate
  - the City of London libraries were held in high regard, especially through their efforts to facilitate stimulating arts-themed activities.



## 4. City of London Childcare Accessibility Scheme

- 4.1 The City of London Childcare Accessibility Scheme aims to support resident families to access early education and childcare through an early education place. The purpose of the early education place is to support the child's early development and empower parents to make positive changes to their lives through work, training or family support – see Image 2 below.

Image 2 - City of London's Childcare Accessibility Scheme explained

**CHILDCARE ACCESSIBILITY SCHEME**

**DO YOU QUALIFY FOR FINANCIAL SUPPORT WITH CHILDCARE COSTS UNDER THE CHILDCARE ACCESSIBILITY SCHEME (CAS)?**

Your family needs to meet one of these two criteria:

**CRITERIA ONE**  
Children with Additional Needs but not qualifying for Education Health and Care Plan (EHCP)

This section of the funding is aimed at a child who is already attending or are about to attend an early years setting or a child who has been identified by the children's centre or other professionals as potentially benefiting from an early education place.

The CAS will support the child by providing funding for an education place or additional childcare hours to ensure that they have the best start in life.

The City of London Childcare Accessibility Scheme aims to support resident families to access early education and childcare. The purpose of the early education place is to support the child's early development and empower parents to make positive changes to their lives through work, training or family support.

**CRITERIA TWO**  
Families who have a combined income of less than £55K

This funding is aimed at parents who have a joint combined income of less than £55K per annum. This fund is also open to:

- students, trainees and apprentices
- parents on maternity/paternity leave
- parents returning to work
- parent/s with more than two children needing childcare

This section of funding will provide top up funding to ensure that families receive help with paying up to a maximum of 70% of their childcare costs.

**CONTACT THE EDUCATION & EARLY YEARS TEAM:**

TELEPHONE: 020 7332 1002  
EMAIL: [EEYSservice@cityoflondon.gov.uk](mailto:EEYSservice@cityoflondon.gov.uk)

The following early years settings are currently part of the scheme. However we are willing to consider applications from other local settings.

**Coxs Child and Family Centre**  
31 James's Passage, Duke's Place  
EC3A 5SE  
020 7263 1147 | [office@coxschildfamily.org](mailto:office@coxschildfamily.org)  
[www.coxschildfamily.org/childrens-centre](http://www.coxschildfamily.org/childrens-centre)

**Watchdog Dragons Nursery**  
Innovation Hub, Shofieldbury Place, 67 Aldersgate Street, Barbican  
EC2Y 8AA  
020 3912 2950 | [enquiries@watchdog-dragons.com](mailto:enquiries@watchdog-dragons.com)  
[www.watchdog-dragons.com](http://www.watchdog-dragons.com)

**Newpark Childcare**  
1 St Giles Terrace  
EC2Y 8DJ  
020 7438 5580 | [barbican@newparkchildcare.co.uk](mailto:barbican@newparkchildcare.co.uk)  
[www.newparkchildcare.co.uk](http://www.newparkchildcare.co.uk)

**Smithfield Nursery**  
14 West Smithfield  
EC1A 1HT  
020 7236 1080 | [office@smithfieldnursery.co.uk](mailto:office@smithfieldnursery.co.uk)  
[www.smithfieldnursery.co.uk](http://www.smithfieldnursery.co.uk)

**The Nursery of St Paul's**  
Duck Street  
E1 8RN  
020 7263 0098 | [stpaul@selectivenetworks.com](mailto:stpaul@selectivenetworks.com)  
[www.selectivenetworks.com/the-nursery-of-pauls-london](http://www.selectivenetworks.com/the-nursery-of-pauls-london)

- 4.2 Approximately 15% of parents/carers who were consulted for the 2020 CSA stated that they were aware of the existence of the City of London's Childcare Accessibility Scheme (most frequently via City of London Child and Family Centre). Half of these respondents stated that they did not qualify. One of those parents stated:

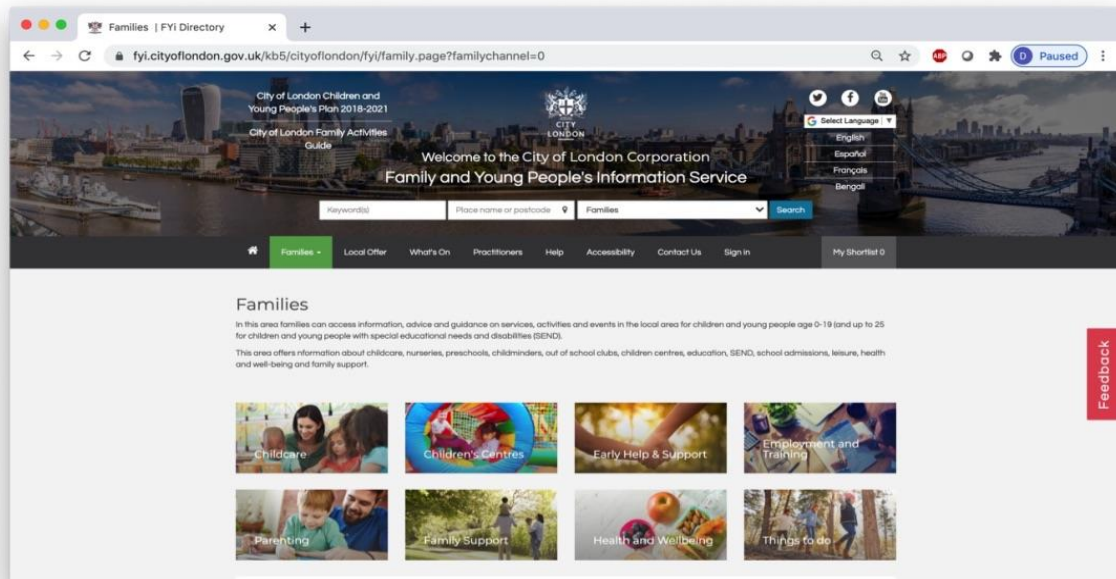
*"I went to City [of London] Child and Family Centre and was introduced to a support worker who told me about it. I have been using it since November 2019 and it has been a major help to my family."*

Relevant parents/carers had also found out about the City of London's Childcare Accessibility Scheme via *"the FYi website"* and *"my local library"*.

- 4.3 The majority of parents/carers who were not aware of the scheme requested further details about it and expressed their support for its ambitions and objectives.

## 5. City of London Family and Young People's Information Service

Image 3 – Summer 2020 home page of City of London Family and Young People's Information Service



- 5.1 Of parents/carers that were consulted for the 2020 CSA, 27% stated that they were aware of the existence of the City of London's Family and Young People's Information Service. Of those parents/carers who were aware of it, approximately half had used the service at some point, with the majority praising its navigability and design.
- 5.2 The three most frequent types of information that responding parents and carers stated they had searched for were:
1. information about childcare availability in the summer holidays
  2. information about activities that children and young people with SEND can take part in
  3. funded childcare.

## 6. Emerging effects of COVID-19

- 6.1 The most frequent effect of the 2020 COVID-19 outbreak highlighted by Early Years childcare providers/settings was (predictably) *“financial challenges”* or *“lost income”*.

Other repeated effects were: *“lost opportunities to meet new customers [parents]”* and then *“a loss of face-to-face contact with parents and children”*.

There were a number of examples of Early Years childcare providers/settings having plans to re-energise income generation as the emergence from lockdown progressed, including:

*“Raising fees in September 2020”*.

*“Maybe filming ‘show rounds’ and then having a video chat with interested parents, involving a likely key worker”*.

*“Making better use of social media and virtual tours to generate interest and demand”*.

- 6.2 Three responding Early Years childcare providers stated that members of their workforce had expressed concerns about returning to the setting, including concerns about: *“what to do if they [as a staff member] felt unwell”* and (in the case of each of the three providers) concerns about travelling on public transport with the attendant risk of catching COVID-19.

Each representative of a responding Early Years childcare provider/setting was also invited to classify how their parents/families were feeling in terms of their children coming back to the setting:

- Six stated: the majority seem to be in favour
- Two stated: it is a fairly even split between those in favour, and those with concerns.

- 6.3 Three repeated ‘most important or urgent’ types of COVID-19-related support that responding Early Years childcare providers stated that they would continue to welcome from the City of London were (in order of frequency):

1. help with advertising vacant places<sup>2</sup>
2. help with recruiting and/or replacing staff
3. maintaining the direct contact option with the City of London and the role of the COVID-19 themed video conference network meetings.

- 6.4 In terms of the Government’s financial support measures for UK businesses:

- no responding providers stated that they had accessed the Coronavirus Business Interruption Loan Scheme, mainly because of concerns about an ability to meet eventual repayments
- no providers had accessed a Coronavirus Bounce Back Loan Scheme
- six providers had accessed the Coronavirus Job Retention Scheme, and two stated that they had not. The relevant six providers each stated that the support had proved *“essential”*.

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<sup>2</sup> Scheduled to be part of a Provider’s Page on the City of London FYi in 2020.

None of the City of London-based responding Early Years childcare providers stated that their setting had taken advantage of an ability to defer payments to HMRC.

6.5 Parents and carers who were consulted in summer 2020 CSA were invited to state the extent to which they were feeling *at ease* with their children returning permanently to formal childcare provision, as the country/City emerged from lockdown and the outbreak of COVID-19:

- 50% of formal childcare users stated: “I do not have any worries or concerns – and am very happy for my children to go back”
- 10% “I am happy for my children to go back – but I do have some worry/concerns”
- 10% “I am worried and/or concerned – and will need significant reassurance”
- 15% “I am not ready to let my children go back, because I am significantly worried/concerned”
- 15% stated “Don’t know”.

6.6 Specific feedback included:

*“I suppose it is not knowing if my children will meet other children who might have contracted the infection. COVID-19 is still here... The nursery are doing as much as they can and obviously, we cannot expect any guarantees.”*

*“My concerns are: spread of infection... not being able to enter a nursery... the nursery closing at short notice.”*

*“I do have concerns about my child going to nursery, but it is really important that they go.”*

*“I think more could be done to enhance safety and signage around local schools to manage risks from increased numbers of cyclists and e-scooters that are [in my opinion] not careful or competent during pick-up and drop-off times...”*

6.7 Parents and carers were invited to state any actions/steps childcare providers/settings should (in their opinion) be taking to reassure parents/carers/children and make them feel *at ease* with going back to the setting. The three repeated responses were (in order of frequency):

1. Regular updates to parents/carers
2. Knowing that staff at day-care settings are being tested “regularly”<sup>3</sup>
3. Signage being adopted outside Early Years childcare venues and schools to remind parents and carers of good practice and personal responsibility during drop-off and pick-up times.

6.8 Interviews that took place by video conference with five parents who accessed City of London Child and Family Centre in summer 2020 demonstrated that mostly parents were happy with the childcare arrangements available to them as the COVID-19 lockdown eased, and they were planning on their children returning to the City of London Child and Family Centre or school in September. Once again, they did express some caution and nervousness in general, but wanted to ensure that their children had the opportunity to socialise and go to school for their ongoing development.

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<sup>3</sup> An eventuality that would not necessarily be within the immediate and practical ability of childcare providers, as this is not offered by the NHS, and private testing is (in summer 2020) relatively expensive to facilitate.

- 6.9 These parents were confident that the approaches being used by their childcare providers would be appropriate and meet all health and safety requirements. One parent whose child had used the City of London Child and Family Centre during the lockdown period noted that they had observed the arrangements to be of good quality and they were reassured by this.

## 7. Achievements since the 2018 Childcare Sufficiency Assessment (CSA)

The CSA should ideally catalyse positive change. The narrative below examines the extent to which the strategic recommendations that were made as an outcome of the 2018 City of London CSA have been realised. Feedback that has been received via the 2020 CSA has contributed to the analysis and explanations below.

### 7.1 2018 CSA recommendation:

The overall assessment of the sufficiency of childcare in the City of London confirms that there are sufficient childcare places for children in the Early Years, and for holiday and after-school childcare places. However, the assessment did identify some gaps in childcare provision, particularly for children with SEND.

Action taken:

In 2020, there is now a systematic and easy to navigate referral process for all Early Years childcare providers/settings to receive support if they have concerns about a child.

During 2019/20, the City of London Lead Early Years Advisor supported a number of settings and parents with successful transition to school for children with SEND.

### 7.2 2018 CSA recommendation:

City parents were satisfied with the overall quality of information that they can access regarding childcare. However, they wanted more information on childcare options in neighbouring authorities, especially for older children attending school.

Action taken:

The City of London Family and Young People's Information Service now has clear sections for 'Childcare within the City' and 'Childcare outside of the City'. There are also specific pages for after-school and holiday activities.

### 7.3 2018 CSA recommendation:

There is a need to raise the level of awareness of the varied and different forms of financial incentives available to parents using childcare. The City of London Family and Young People's Information Service should continue to promote the availability of the Local Offer to enable local families to make informed choices.

Action taken:

In 2020, the City of London Family and Young People's Information Service now has a distinct section for parents to access information regarding financial support for childcare. This includes links to external sources of information (for example, the Childcare Choice website).

The Childcare Accessibility Scheme has been reviewed and a new information leaflet is available online. This leaflet has also been shared with the Children's Centre services (including libraries), partners and Early Years settings.

7.4 2018 CSA recommendation:

To improve accessibility for local families that have children with SEND in the City of London are considering the viability of expanding the capacity for providing short-break services in the local area – and the services available in special schools out of the area. The City of London may also explore how to increase their capacity to provide out-of-school childcare for City of London resident families that have children with SEND.

Action taken:

The City of London now have a short-breaks contract in place with the London Borough of Hackney, and a wider range of such options for varying needs. This is not specifically linked to special schools, but the short-breaks providers are able to provide childcare and after-school provision to City of London resident families.

7.5 2018 CSA recommendation:

The City of London could continue to work and collaborate with the local childcare providers to support the expansion and extension of their service provision to meet the needs of local parents.

Action taken:

The City of London continues to support Early Years childcare providers/settings with their physical expansion, where possible and viable. For example, in 2019 a City of London-based private nursery was supported when that enterprise moved to larger premises. This included structured visits from City of London officers to offer support with developing the learning environment, as well as staff training.

7.6 2018 CSA recommendation:

The City of London should consider the possibility of developing childminding services to provide flexible childcare during atypical hours for working families in the future.

Action taken:

Since 2018 the City of London has received one query regarding childminding services within the locality. The 2020 CSA also demonstrates that there is not an unmet need for childminding places. However, the demand for such formal childcare provision is continually monitored, including to be aligned to the 2020 COVID-19 pandemic.

7.7 2018 CSA recommendation:

The City of London will continue to offer training events and access to Early Years activities for all local Early Years providers in the City.

Action taken:



In 2020, all City of London-based Early Years childcare providers/settings are invited to a termly providers forum where they receive up-to-date information and are able to share elements of good practice, as well as discuss any concerns they may have. These meetings were increased to twice monthly during summer 2020 as an outcome of the COVID-19 outbreak. The Lead Early Years Advisor is in regular contact with all settings. Training is delivered according to each setting's needs. This includes the new Level 3 Special Educational Needs Co-ordinator (SENCO) qualification, First Aid, Makaton language programme assessment, observation and planning training.

Safeguarding training is regularly offered through the City & Hackney Safeguarding Children Partnership.

7.8 2018 CSA recommendation:

The City of London should consider how it might support the registration of nannies who want to register on the Ofsted voluntary registration scheme.

Action taken:

A page has been created on the City of London Family and Young People's Information Service website to support and inform anyone wanting to open a childcare business and/or register with Ofsted. This includes a section for registering as a nanny.

7.9 2018 CSA recommendation:

The provision of good-quality childcare is central to the core offer of Children's Centre Services.

Action taken:

The Children's Services Manager attends each providers' forum and has ongoing contact with local Early Years childcare settings/providers. In February 2020, this officer introduced the role of the Family Outreach Worker to the City of London settings and explained how they could refer families for further structured support.

## 8. Key findings and challenges in summer 2020

### 8.1 Theme: Sustainability

Three of the eight City of London-based Early Years childcare providers/settings outlined that they had a significant number of childcare vacancies in summer 2020. These vacant places were across all age groups 0–4 years, though tended to be highest for 3- and 4-year-olds.

Representatives of relevant settings reported that the incidence of vacant places had increased, aligned to the progression of the COVID-19 outbreak.

### 8.2 Theme: Type/Age

As is common with other inner-London boroughs, the population of older school-aged children in the City of London is forecast to increase in forthcoming years, at a greater rate than the population of young (pre-school aged) children.

The City of London therefore should retain a strategic awareness that demand for out-of-school childcare provision – that is, after-school club provision, before-school provision and holiday-time provision – might become more pronounced. Indeed, when parents/carers were invited to state what types of formal childcare they intend to use in future years, the second and third most frequent types were: an out-of-school play scheme (20% of all responding parents and carers) and an after-school club (18%).

### 8.3 Theme: Sustainability

Each of the City of London-based Early Years childcare providers/settings expressed concerns (to differing degrees) about the *possibility* of a second 2020 COVID-19 lockdown – possibly during winter 2020/21. Their concern was aligned to their ongoing sustainability and (in certain cases), due to their 2020 experience of an increase in vacant places and loss of income from fees.

In the event of a second lockdown, respondents have proposed that a type of Coronavirus Job Retention Scheme would ideally need to be instigated or extended. The City of London therefore needs to retain its awareness of this concern and continue its ongoing dialogue with its settings.

### 8.4 Theme: Sustainability

Three of the eight City of London-based Early Years childcare providers/settings outlined that there had been instances of members of their workforce expressing concerns about travelling to the workplace (that is, the nursery) during the ongoing COVID-19 outbreak. This was not seen as overt retention issue; however, the City of London should have an awareness of its incidence.

### 8.5 Theme: Special needs

Almost one-quarter of parents/carers consulted for the 2020 City of London CSA outlined that they had a child with SEND, or they had a young child with (as yet) undiagnosed needs.

It is typical within all inner-London boroughs for the incidence of children with SEND to be increasing.

A repeated request made by the City of London-based Early Years childcare providers/settings was for more training to support their staff being able to identify special and additional needs at an early age. Such training has indeed been consistently offered to them by the City of London. A skills and training audit will be undertaken in Early Years settings in autumn 2020. At this time, accessibility to such training can be reiterated by the City of London.

#### 8.6 Theme: Special needs

A number of young people with SEND outlined during the 2020 CSA that they would welcome out-of-school activities that were more aligned to the theme of 'play' as well as those that are aligned to 'learning'. Three *repeated* requests were for the establishment of:

- a green space and/or garden that young people with SEND could tend to, be responsible for and use as a meeting place
- Arts club, for young people with SEND
- A 'Bikes for SEND' club.

#### 8.7 Theme: Sustainability

Parents/carers were requested to state whether they had ever experienced any barriers when trying to access childcare in the City of London locality: 36% stated that they had, with the most frequent barrier being: "*I have recently had concerns about COVID-19*" – stated by a third of all responding parents. This percentage could indicate that certain parents – that is, customers of childcare providers – may be reluctant about returning to provisions as the 2020/21 period continues.

#### 8.8 Theme: Sustainability

It was evident via analysis of the 2020 CSA parents/carers survey that COVID-19 concerns were most frequently aligned to "*a nursery*", a term that constitutes the majority of formal childcare located in the City of London.

#### 8.9 Theme: Type/Age

All parents/carers – whether they were using formal or informal childcare in summer 2020 – were invited to state whether there was any type of formal City of London-based childcare they would like to access in the *near future* (which they were not accessing in summer 2020).

A relatively high percentage stated: pre-school/playgroup.

These parents tended to be Barbican residents, and this therefore highlighted the relative importance of the ongoing sustainability of the Barbican Playgroup.

#### 8.10 Theme: Affordability

The second most frequent 'barrier' to accessing formal childcare stated by a parent who participated in the 2020 CSA was: "I could not afford the childcare that I require." Encouragingly however, 21% of the respondents stated that they do not use formal childcare as it is too expensive – this is compared to 39% who made such a

statement in 2018.

However, only 20% of parents/carers consulted for the 2020 CSA stated that they were aware of the existence of the City of London's Childcare Accessibility Scheme (most frequently via City of London Child and Family Centre), and half of these respondents stated that they did not qualify.

## 9. 2020 Childcare Sufficiency Assessment (CSA) strategic recommendations

The overall assessment of childcare in the City confirms that there is sufficient good-quality childcare places for children aged 0-4 years, including alignment with the incidence of vacant places as of summer 2020. This situation will, however, require ongoing monitoring, including with regard to the changing developments associated with the COVID-19 outbreak. Additionally, sufficiency of places for will also particularly require systematic monitoring (see recommendation D below).

The 2020 CSA has identified some challenges that should be considered, aligned to the following strategic recommendations:

- A) The City of London should consider how it can continue to demonstrate to its Early Years childcare providers/settings that it will help them to fill vacant places, including to support the private, voluntary and independent (business) sector's morale.
- B) The 2020 City of London CSA has highlighted a possible forthcoming sustainability concern for the locality's private, voluntary and independent nurseries, including alignment with: (a) parental concerns about COVID-19; and (b) depleted occupancy levels post the 2020 outbreak. The relevant City of London officers need to ensure that the risk of closures is mitigated and that the issue is monitored and viewed through a prism of a possible requirement for traditional commercial (and fundamental) business support for small enterprises.
- C) Approximately one-third of parents and carers who provided feedback for the 2020 City of London CSA outlined that they had (to varying extents) concerns about COVID-19, which reached a level where they were worried about their children attending a day-care setting. The City of London may want to consider means via which it can practically help to re-energise and rejuvenate local parental demand for formal Early Years childcare provision, aligned to evidence that certain parents have 'anxieties' around their children safely returning to or starting at a setting, because of COVID-19.
- D) Feedback from certain parents and carers who were consulted for the 2020 City of London CSA emphasised that there is a discernible demand for more out-of-school childcare provision for children resident in the North of the City (the Barbican and Golden Lane estates), including for children and young people with SEND. In recognition of this feedback, and the fact that the population of older children resident in the City of London is forecast to increase, the City of London should consider how it can support the establishment of a further out-of-school (childcare) resource, potentially within the Barbican locality.
- E) Relevant City of London officers need to continue their work to support Early Years childcare providers/settings with their recruitment and retention of qualified staff – including alignment to the 2020 City of London CSA report finding that there were incidences of provider workforce members having COVID-19 concerns, particularly about travelling safely to work.
- F) The City of London Education and Early Years Service should consider further partnership work with local stakeholders such as the Museum of London and the Barbican Centre. Young people with SEND, along with their carers, repeatedly expressed a wish for the possible establishment of: a green space and/or garden that young people with SEND could tend to, be responsible for, and use as a meeting

place; an Arts club; and a 'Bikes for SEND' club.

- G) The City of London should retain an awareness that a number of parents and carers who responded to the consultation for the 2020 City of London CSA wanted the future option of "access a sessional pre-school/playgroup", and so should monitor the (currently secure) availability of such sessional provision.
- H) The 2020 City of London CSA has provided some positive feedback with regard to the issue of affordability, with fewer parents/carers than in 2018 stating that an inability to afford formal childcare was an issue for them. However, although the Childcare Accessibility Scheme was well received by parents/carers who were aware of its existence, (including those who were benefitting from it), a wider and increased awareness of the scheme's existence still ideally needs to be achieved, including in the Portsoken locality.
- I) The City of London should consider how it can further support its Early Years childcare providers/settings to produce virtual online tours of their building and resources, which can be appropriately accessed and viewed by prospective parents/customers, and can display the preventative and safety measures that are being taken for COVID-19.

<b>Committees:</b> Corporate Projects Board <i>[for information]</i> Projects Sub <i>[for decision]</i> Community & Children's Services <i>[for decision]</i>	<b>Dates:</b> 26 August 2020 15 September 2020 6 November 2020
<b>Subject:</b> Concrete Repairs to Cullum Welch House <b>Unique Project Identifier:</b> 11760	<b>Gateway 6:</b> <b>Outcome Report</b> Regular
<b>Report of:</b> Director of Community & Children's Services <b>Report Author:</b> David Downing, Asset Programme Manager	<b>For Decision</b>
<b>PUBLIC</b>	

## Summary

<b>1. Status update</b>	<p><b>Project Description:</b> The reinforced concrete elements of Cullum Welch House had been showing signs of deterioration as seen through areas of cracking and spalling on the external facing surfaces. A project was initiated to first survey and test the structures to identify the causes and extent of this deterioration and then secondly to deliver a programme of repairs based on the recommendations from the condition survey.</p> <p>The pre-cast concrete balustrades on the north elevation of the building were deemed life expired and replaced in full. Patch repairs to the external staircases, beams and slab ends, and concrete elements (principally pre-cast planters and pot-holders) on the south elevation were also enacted to restore these areas. The works are now fully complete.</p> <p><b>RAG Status:</b> Green (Green at last report to Committee)</p> <p><b>Risk Status:</b> Low (Low at last report to Committee)</p> <p><b>Costed Risk Provision Utilised:</b> £0</p> <p><b>Final Outturn Cost:</b> £698,531</p>
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<p><b>2. Next steps and requested decisions</b></p>	<p><b>Requested Decisions:</b></p> <p><b><u>Projects Sub Committee and Housing Management &amp; Almshouses Sub Committee</u></b></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. To note the content of this report,</li> <li>2. To note the lessons learnt,</li> <li>3. To authorise closure of this project.</li> </ol>
<p><b>3. Key conclusions</b></p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Works were completed within budget but slightly outside the timescales envisaged at Gateway 5.</li> <li>2. Following the replacement of the balustrades on the north elevation and completion of the identified repairs to other areas of the building, the concrete elements of Cullum Welch House are now in good condition.</li> <li>3. The replacement balustrades were specified to have a 50 year lifespan. The units installed are under manufacturer's warranty for 60 years. The elevations where patch repairs to the concrete elements were completed should be subject to further testing in 10-15 years which is consistent with the other residential buildings on the Golden Lane Estate.</li> <li>4. The initial survey design, testing analysis and repair specification was supplied by industry leading specialist Dr John Broomfield. Dr Broomfield's technical guidance throughout the project was invaluable and critical to the successful outcome.</li> <li>5. The main works contractor, Concrete Repairs Ltd, as secured via a second procurement exercise, performed well, impressing throughout delivery of the contract with their diligence, expertise and commitment to deliver works to the satisfaction of the City's officers. Concrete Repairs Ltd are strongly recommended for future works of this nature.</li> <li>6. By contrast, an earlier contract offer to complete the works was withdrawn from ENGIE (Keepmoat Regeneration) who were unwilling to sign a contract to deliver the works at the tendered price and attempted a post-tender renegotiation to inflate the fee. The inflated risk of accepting low cost bids from similar large contract management companies should be noted for future projects.</li> </ol>



## Main Report

### Design & Delivery Review

<b>4. Design into delivery</b>	<p>The project design worked well. The comprehensive condition testing of the concrete post Gateway 2 allowed for a detailed repair specification to be drawn up and applied to a measured bill of quantities for the subsequent replacement and repair contract post Gateway 5.</p> <p>Equally, the early appointment of architects, Howse Wallis Partners ensured that the design and heritage constraints were quickly addressed with the necessary approvals in place in good time.</p> <p>The survey design, analysis of testing results and repair specification was supplied by industry leading concrete corrosion specialist Dr John Broomfield. Procuring separate testing and repair contracts did increase programme length but follows industry best practice and enabled proposed repairs to be independently verified. This also allowed for greater control of costs as a single contractor was not identifying their own repairs.</p> <p>The project was combined at earlier Gateways with what at face value seemed similar, albeit smaller scale, concrete issues at the other residential buildings of the Golden Lane Estate and Middlesex Street Estate. Although brought together to explore potential savings through economies of scale, little benefit was realised from this however as the complexity of the balustrade replacement at Cullum Welch House and the particular design issues which had to be overcome inevitably led to the separation of projects during the detailed design phase.</p>
<b>5. Options appraisal</b>	<p>The selected option to procure a contractor to deliver a programme of repairs via open tender successfully delivered the projects objectives. No changes were required during project delivery.</p>
<b>6. Procurement route</b>	<p>Works were procured via open tender advertised on the capital esourcing portal.</p> <p>Procurement Reference: itt_COL_9526</p>
<b>7. Skills base</b>	<p>The City of London project team had the required skills and experience to manage the delivery of the project.</p> <p>A multi-disciplinary design team was put in place to ensure that all technical and heritage aspects of the project were successfully</p>

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	addressed. Architectural services were provided by Howse Wallis Partners, concrete condition surveys were conducted by Structural Renovations Ltd and structural engineering expertise was provided by Watermans. An external concrete corrosion specialist, Dr John Broomfield, was also employed to define the testing requirements, analyse testing results, specify the repair methodology for identified repairs and oversee the enaction of those repairs.
<b>8. Stakeholders</b>	Stakeholder engagement was not straightforward for this project, particularly with regard to a number of challenges from Golden Lane Estate leaseholders as to whether the identified repairs should be recoverable via the service charge. With the assistance of the City Solicitor, confirmation of leaseholder obligations to contribute costs was clearly communicated.

### Variation Review

<b>9. Assessment of project against key milestones</b>	<p>The project progressed as expected throughout the concrete testing and design phases culminating in the approval of Gateway 4 in May 2017.</p> <p>Post Gateway 4 the project was subject to a significant delay that affected several key milestones. An initial procurement exercise for a main contractor appeared successful with a decision taken to award a contract to ENGIE (Keepmoat Regeneration). However, this contractor was unwilling to sign a contract to deliver the works at the tendered price and were, as a result, removed from the project by the City prior to any works or approved expenditure taking place. The extended fruitless negotiations with ENGIE, the withdrawal of the contract offer, a supplier engagement exercise to attract a better calibre of contractor, a repeat procurement and repeat Section 20 consultation process with long leaseholders caused a 12 month delay to the programme.</p> <p>The repeat procurement saw Concrete Repairs Ltd appointed as the successful works contractor. At Gateway 5 authorising this appointment, works were forecast to commence May 2019 and conclude December 2019, a period of 8 months. The actual delivery of the project took the 8 months as forecast but did not formally commence until July 2019 with a successful conclusion in March 2020.</p>
<b>10. Assessment of project against Scope</b>	There were no changes to project scope from design to delivery.

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<b>11. Risks and issues</b>	<p>As detailed above, the contractor selected from the initial procurement for a main works contractor were withdrawn from the project as were unwilling to sign a contract to deliver the works at the tendered price. It is worth clarifying that this was not a risk of a failed procurement being realised, rather that of a contractor not being able to deliver what they had offered and confirmed they could supply during the tender process.</p> <p>The project proceeded as planned with no significant risks realised during the delivery phase following the appointment of Concrete Repairs Ltd. This is largely attributable to the successful application of lessons learnt from previous projects which were incorporated into the project design and specification which greatly aided the management of the resultant works contract.</p> <p>Costed Risk Provision was not applicable to this project.</p>
<b>12. Transition to BAU</b>	<p>The repairs have a defect liability period of 12 months commencing from the date of practical completion. At the close of this period, the ongoing maintenance of these repaired sections of concrete will transfer to the general Repairs &amp; Maintenance contract.</p> <p>The replacement balustrades have a manufacturers warranty of 60 years.</p>

### Value Review

13. Budget

<i>Estimated Outturn Cost (G2)</i>	Estimated cost (excluding risk): £600,000
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The Gateway 2 projected cost was estimated in 2014 with no provision for cost inflation. The officers managing the project at this time are no longer with the City and the estimating methodology they used is not known.

	<i>At Authority to Start work (G5)</i>	<i>Final Outturn Cost</i>
<i>Fees</i>	£140,000	£96,228
<i>Staff Costs</i>	£60,000	£52,209
<i>Works Contract</i>	£619,911	£550,094
<i>Costed Risk Provision</i>	£0	£0
<b><i>Project Total</i></b>	<b>£819,911</b>	<b>£698,531</b>

	<p>A final retention payment is due to be made to the main contractor on expiry of the defects liability period in March 2021. The retention sums are included in the figures presented above.</p> <p>There is a total underspend on the approved Gateway 5 budget of £121,380. Of this sum, the £69,817 underspend on the works contract is accounted for largely by provisional sums included to cover any additional concrete repairs required to those identified in the condition survey which had arisen in the period between testing and remedial works. In event, no such additional repairs were required therefore these provisional sums were omitted from the contract.</p> <p>The remainder of the underspend is unused provision for professional fees and staff costs. The main works contractor, Concrete Repairs Ltd, performed well throughout the contract and did not require the degree of management and oversight that a less diligent operator would warrant.</p> <p>Final accounts have been subject to an independent verification check, undertaken by a suitably experienced officer within the relevant implementing department.</p>
<b>14. Investment</b>	N/A
<b>15. Assessment of project against SMART objectives</b>	<p>1. The condition of the concrete elements of the Cullum Welch House is now known, having been tested to the satisfaction of a leading concrete corrosion specialist, with appropriate future testing requirements identified and to be programmed.</p> <p>2. The life-expired pre-cast concrete balustrades have been replaced satisfying both modern safety and heritage requirements.</p> <p>3. Repairs to the other concrete elements of the building have been completed extending the useful life of the building and safeguarding residents and the wider public from the risk of falling debris.</p>
<b>16. Key benefits realised</b>	<p>The defective pre-cast reinforced concrete balustrades have been replaced in full to the satisfaction of heritage and all modern safety requirements. The replacement balustrades have a manufacturer's warranty of 60 years. A comprehensive testing programme has been carried out on other concrete elements of the building and all identified repairs have been completed. The external concrete elements of the building have been confirmed to be in good condition for their age and exposure now that repairs are complete.</p>

## **Lessons Learned and Recommendations**

<b>17. Positive reflections</b>	<p>Works were done to a high standard, satisfying the heritage constraints of the Grade II Listed building and were delivered within the approved Gateway 5 budget and close to the approved Gateway 5 programme.</p> <p>The works contractor, Concrete Repairs Ltd, performed well, impressing throughout delivery of the contract with their diligence and expertise. They were proactive in working with the City's project management team to keep costs under control, to deliver the works within the agreed budget and to complete to the high standard demanded. Concrete Repairs Ltd are strongly recommended for future works of this nature.</p> <p>The consultant employed, Dr John Broomfield, is a world leader in the field of concrete corrosion. Dr Broomfield provided specialist advice throughout the project, drafted the repair specification and provided independent oversight of the repairs. The access to industry leading knowledge and experience throughout the project was a critical factor in its successful delivery particularly in terms of responding to leaseholder challenge with expert testimony and verifying the quality of repairs undertaken.</p>
<b>18. Improvement reflections</b>	<p><b>Procurement</b> – The initial procurement exercise for this project attracted only two bids, both from contract management companies, which limited the options for the delivery of this project. The successful contractor from this procurement, ENGIE, however refused to sign the offered contract at their tendered price without a commitment from the City to increase the contract sum before they had started work. As stated above, the contract offer was withdrawn and re-advertised. Subsequent investigation revealed that ENGIE had failed to adequately survey the site when pricing the works and had submitted a low tender to win the contract without having a clear idea as to how they would carry it out despite maintaining throughout the tender clarification process that their proposed delivery method and pricing were sound. It is recommended to highlight the increased risk of accepting low cost bids from similar large contract management companies for future projects.</p> <p>The works contract was re-tendered following a supplier engagement exercise carried out by the project team. This process revealed that SME concrete repair specialists who</p>

	<p>would be ideal for this type of work were put off from bidding for local authority contracts due to the perceived tendency of those authorities to appoint the large contract management companies with whom they struggle to compete with on price. Pre-tender engagement with suitable specialist contractors is therefore recommended for future projects to ensure that the City's commitment to the most economically advantageous rather than necessarily the cheapest is forefront. The project team's supplier engagement was successful with six contractors bidding for the work at the second advertisement.</p> <p>In reaction to the set aside contract with ENGIE (and another tender competition which concluded in a similar fashion), the Housing Working Group was set up to investigate the reasoning behind the project issues and possible solutions. The results of which were presented to the DCCS Committee on 24th April 2020. The lessons learned from this report are summarised thus:</p> <p>Risk – Where the City transfers risk to the bidder, the City must ensure bidders make their assumptions explicit.</p> <p>Variation – When the cost of variations submitted by the set-aside tenderer are added to the submitted price, that price becomes comparable to that submitted by the unsuccessful bidder.</p> <p>Procurement Process – Officers should not use the procurement process as a method to recover time on a project rather than utilising the procurement tools to achieve the best outcome. Officers need to work more effectively to utilise the experience of the procurement team and be realistic about tender timeframes.</p> <p>Documentation – The report on the condition of the Reinforced Concrete Structures included in the tender was from 2014, this report should have been updated before going out to tender.</p>
<b>19. Sharing best practice</b>	<p>1. Dissemination of key information through team and project staff briefings. A standard approach to concrete repairs has been adopted by the Major Works team reflecting industry best practice.</p> <p>2. Lessons learned have been logged and recorded on departmental SharePoint.</p>

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<b>20.AOB</b>	N/A
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### **Appendices**

<b>Appendix 1</b>	Project Coversheet
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### **Contact**

<b>Report Author</b>	David Downing
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<b>Telephone Number</b>	020 7332 1645

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# Project Coversheet

## [1] Ownership & Status

**UPI:** 11760

**Core Project Name:** Concrete Repairs to Cullum Welch House

**Programme Affiliation** (if applicable): N/A

**Project Manager:** David Downing / James Illsley

**Definition of need:** The reinforced concrete elements of Cullum Welch House are showing signs of deterioration. The proposed contract will cover the full replacement of the pre-cast concrete balustrades on the north elevation of the building and patch repairs to the external staircases, beams and slab ends, and concrete elements (principally pre-cast planters and potholders) on the south elevation.

**Key measures of success:**

1. The concrete has been tested to reveal the cause and extent of the deterioration and are confirmed as safe and structurally sound.
2. The testing information informs a programme of repairs to be completed.
3. Repairs to the structure are complete and managed to minimise disruption to residents and impact on the general public and wider public realm.
4. Timelines for future testing are identified.

**Expected timeframe for the project delivery:** Project Complete

**Key Milestones:**

**Are we on track for completing the project against the expected timeframe for project delivery?** Yes

**Has this project generated public or media impact and response which the City of London has needed to manage or is managing?**

No

## [2] Finance and Costed Risk

**Headline Financial, Scope and Design Changes:**

**'Project Briefing' G1 report (as approved by Chief Officer 04/14):**

- Total Estimated Cost (excluding risk): £2,581,500 (as part of a wider programme of concrete repairs to Golden Lane and Middlesex Street Estates; a sum of £600,000 was estimated for Cullum Welch House)
- Costed Risk Against the Project: N/A
- Estimated Programme Dates: Condition survey to start Summer 2014

*Scope/Design Change and Impact: N/A*

**'Project Proposal' G2 report (as approved by PSC 05/14):**

- Total Estimated Cost (excluding risk): £2,581,500 (as part of a wider programme of concrete repairs to Golden Lane and Middlesex Street Estates; a sum of £600,000 was estimated for Cullum Welch House)
- Resources to reach next Gateway (excluding risk): £11,150
- Spend to date: £0
- Costed Risk Against the Project: N/A
- CRP Requested: N/A

- CRP Drawn Down: N/A
- Estimated Programme Dates: Condition survey to start Summer 2014

*Scope/Design Change and Impact: None*

**‘Options Appraisal and Design’ G3 report (as approved by PSC 22/07/14):**

- Total Estimated Cost (excluding risk): £2,581,500 (as part of a wider programme of concrete repairs to Golden Lane and Middlesex Street Estates; a sum of £600,000 was estimated for Cullum Welch House)
- Resources to reach next Gateway (excluding risk): £1,009,150
- Spend to date: £9,850
- Costed Risk Against the Project: N/A
- CRP Requested: N/A
- CRP Drawn Down: N/A
- Estimated Programme Dates: Concrete testing to complete February 2015

*Scope/Design Change and Impact: None*

**‘Issues Report’ post G3 (as approved by PSC 20/07/2016):**

- Total Estimated Cost (excluding risk): £1,000,000 - £2,050,000
- Resources to reach next Gateway (excluding risk): £28,000
- Spend to date: £74,005
- Costed Risk Against the Project: N/A
- CRP Requested: N/A
- CRP Drawn Down: N/A
- Estimated Programme Dates: Main works contract to start Summer 2017

*Scope/Design Change and Impact: Post Gateway 3 Issues Report approved to split Cullum Welch works off from the main Golden Lane and Middlesex Street concrete testing and repair project and run it as a stand-alone project. Estimated project cost increased to include for potential requirement to remove and replace windows to enact the required concrete repairs on the south elevation. An additional sum of £28,000 was approved to conduct further investigative work to the south elevation.*

**‘Issues Report’ post G3 (as approved by PSC 07/09/2016):**

- Total Estimated Cost (excluding risk): £1,000,000 - £2,050,000
- Resources to reach next Gateway (excluding risk): £28,000
- Spend to date: £74,005
- Costed Risk Against the Project: N/A
- CRP Requested: N/A
- CRP Drawn Down: N/A
- Estimated Programme Dates: Main works contract to start Summer 2017

*Scope/Design Change and Impact: Further information report requested by Projects Sub Committee.*

**‘Options Appraisal and Design’ G4 report (as approved by PSC 10/05/2017):**

- Total Estimated Cost (excluding risk): £1,100,000 - £1,200,000
- Resources to reach next Gateway (excluding risk): £25,000

- Spend to date: £101,104
- Costed Risk Against the Project: N/A
- CRP Requested: N/A
- CRP Drawn Down: N/A
- Estimated Programme Dates: Main works contract to start February 2018

*Scope/Design Change and Impact:* Investigative surveys revealed that preferred option to patch repair concrete elements rather than full replacement was possible on the south elevation. As a result, window removal and replacement would not be necessary. Estimated costs revised downwards accordingly.

**‘Authority to start Work’ G5 report (as approved by Chief Officer 05/04/2019):**

- Total Estimated Cost (excluding risk): £819,912
- Resources to reach next Gateway (excluding risk):
- Spend to date: £101,104
- Costed Risk Against the Project: N/A
- CRP Requested: N/A
- CRP Drawn Down: N/A
- Estimated Programme Dates: May 2019 – December 2019

*Scope/Design Change and Impact:* ENGIE (Keepmoat Regeneration) submitted a successful tender for the works contract. However, they were unwilling to keep to the tendered price and were, as a result, removed from the project by the City prior to any works or approved expenditure taking place. The works contract was subsequently re-advertised to secure the services of a replacement contractor and ensure cost surety for the City hence the extended time period between Gateways 4 and 5.

**Total anticipated on-going commitment post-delivery [£]: N/A**  
**Programme Affiliation [£]: N/A**

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<b>Committee(s):</b> Finance – For Decision Court of Common Council – For Decision  Barbican Centre Board – For Information Community & Children’s Service – For Information Culture Heritage & Libraries – For Information Epping Forest & Commons – For Information Establishment Committee – For Information Hampstead Heath, Highgate Wood & Queens - For Information Licensing – For Information Open Spaces – For Information Planning & Transportation - For Information Port Health – For Information	<b>Date(s):</b> 13 October 2020 3 December 2020  18 November 2020 6 November 2020 23 November 2020 16 November 2020 29 <sup>th</sup> October 2020  25 November 2020 14 October 2020 2 December 2020 27 <sup>th</sup> October 2020 24 <sup>th</sup> November 2020
<b>Subject:</b> Resetting of departmental Budgets 2020/21	<b>Public</b>
<b>Report of:</b> Chamberlain	<b>For Decision/Information</b>
<b>Report author:</b> Julie Smith	

## Summary

At Resource Allocation Sub Committee on 18<sup>th</sup> September 2020 Members considered and approved recommendations for budget adjustments of £15.6m , following a request at their July Committee for an in-year re-budgeting exercise to assist in repairing the damage to the City’s budgets arising from the COVID-19 pandemic. This was seen as a vital step in ensuring that we put our finances on a sustainable footing for the Medium Term.

Members of Finance Committee are asked to recommend to the Court of Common Council the budget adjustments outlined in this report totalling £15.2m to some departmental local risk budgets, (including a reduction of £400K to the original proposal to Resource Allocation Sub Committee for Open Spaces), to address the deficit in lost income due to the COVID-19 pandemic, and set realistic budgets that Chief officers can be held to this financial year (2020/21).

Members of the relevant Service Committees are asked to note the recommended budget adjustments which, subject to the agreement of the Court of Common Council in December, will be reflected in their detailed Revised Estimates 2020/21 and proposed Budget Estimates 2021/22 reports for their approval.

The mitigating steps leading up to the recommended budget adjustments include a thorough year end budget forecast exercise as at the end of July, informed by bi lateral meetings between the Chamberlain and Chief Officers, reaching a common understanding of the need for tight budgeting. This tight budgeting has resulted in

expenditure savings in local risk budgets of £21.3m, partially offsetting an income deficit of (£39.2m). This process was followed by Member lead bilaterals in September with those service areas most impacted by COVID.

The impact of COVID-19 stands at around (£28.4m) across all risks and funds of which (£17.9m) relates to Chief Officers local risk budgets. We are hopeful of recovering an estimated £13.6m from the Government's compensation for lost fees and charges of 75p in the pound net of associated expenditure reductions which will be used to offset the appropriate budget adjustments. The remaining City Fund COVID deficit would then need to be covered by scaling back the planned addition to the major projects reserve.

Further steps proposed are to maintain recruitment controls, including the use of Consultants, aligned to the roll out of the Target Operating Model (TOM) and continuing to press for further savings where possible to preserve the reserves position. Any residual COVID deficit will then be covered, in the case of City Fund, through an offsetting reduction in the Reserve.

## **Recommendation(s)**

Members of Finance Committee are asked to:

- Note the steps already taken by officers to reduce the financial impact of the COVID-19 pandemic.
- Recommend to the Court of Common the adjusted departmental budgets totalling £15.2m outlined in this report, including a reduction of £400K to the original proposal to Resource Allocation Sub Committee for Open Spaces explained at paragraph 9.
- .
- Approve proposals to continue working with departments to identify further savings where possible.
- Approve continuation of recruitment controls aligned to the TOM which may give further savings in the year.
- As Service Committee, note the increase in budget of £1,084K for the Remembrancer

Members of the following Service Committees are asked to note the recommended budget adjustments as outlined below: -

- Barbican Centre Board: Increase of £12,452K
- Community & Children's services: Increase of £184K for Director of Community & Children's Services
- Culture Heritage & Libraries Committee – Increase of £392K for Open Spaces (Monument).

- Establishment Committee: Increase of £420K for Comptroller & City Solicitor
- Licensing Committee: £156K for Markets & Consumer Protection
- Open Spaces/Epping Forest & Commons/Hampstead Heath, Highgate Wood & Queens Committees: Increase of £66K.
- Planning and Transportation: Increase of £310K for Director of Built Environment
- Port Health:
  - Increase of £301K for Markets & Consumer Protection
  - Reduction of £148K in respect of Open Spaces (City of London Cemetery) due to increase in forecast income

## **Main Report**

### **Background**

1. On 18<sup>th</sup> September 2020 Members of Resource Allocation Sub Committee considered and approved recommendations for budget adjustments totalling £15.6m following their instruction to officers at their meeting in July, to carry out a re-budgeting exercise in the Autumn to assist in repairing the unprecedented damage to the City's budgets arising from the COVID-19 pandemic. This was seen as a vital step in ensuring that we put our finances on a sustainable footing for the Medium Term.
2. The following mitigating actions have been undertaken: -
  - Restriction of carry forwards from 2019/20 to protect the reserves position;
  - Recruitment controls; requiring a business case to recruit agreed by the Town Clerk
  - A review of high value contracts with City Procurement to see where any possible savings could be achieved and on-going monitoring to ensure value for money
  - An in-depth departmental re-forecasting exercise undertaken as at the end of July, crystallising expenditure reductions to limit COVID impact;

- Collaborative bilateral meetings between the Chamberlain and Chief Officers took place resulting in a common understanding of the need for continued tight budgeting;
- Member bilaterals (Chair/Deputy Chairman of RA Sub) with some Service Committee Chairmen and Chief Officers.
- A review of the Cyclical Works Programme (CWP) with the City Surveyor as unlikely to complete a significant amount of work in year due to suspension during the lockdown period; and
- Seeking government funding where possible through compensation on lost fees and charges of 75p in the pound on City Fund income.

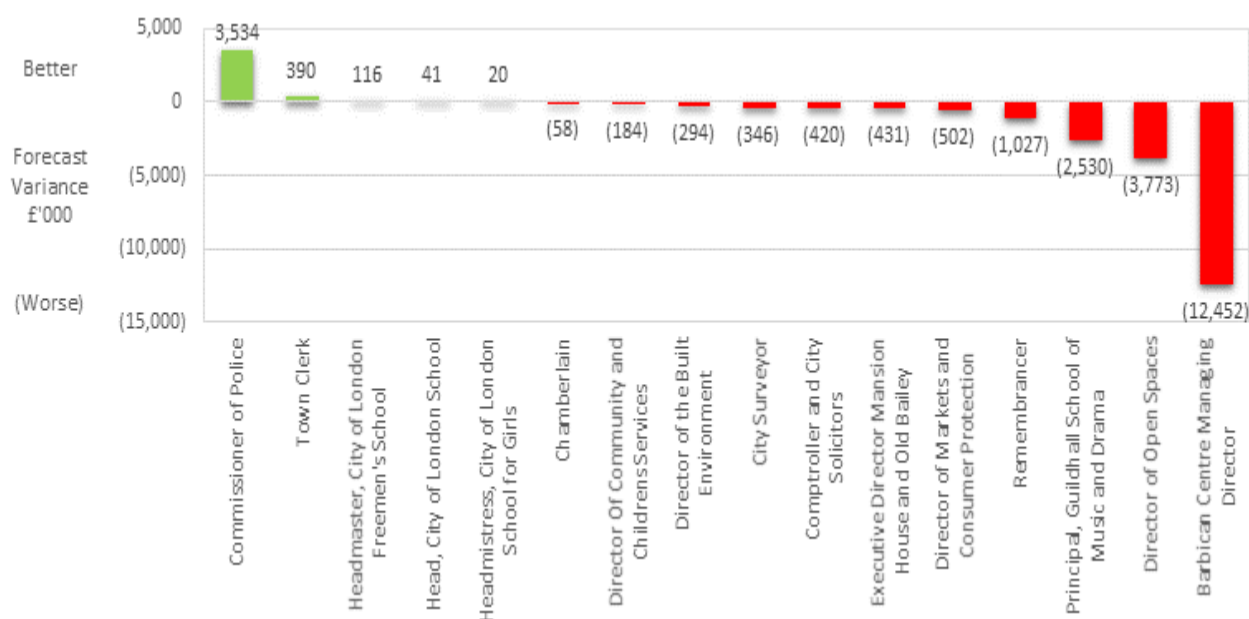
### Current Position

3. Despite the mitigating actions being taken, we face, as a result of COVID-19, a major challenge to the health of our finances. The forecast deficit at the end of July currently stood at (£28.4m) across the funds before government compensation for income lost from fees and charges. The breakdown by fund across both central and local risk is (£16.8m) City Fund, (£7.0m) City's Cash and (£4.6m) Bridge House Estates.
4. For Chief officers' cash limited budgets, a year-end forecast over spend of (£17.9m) is forecast against a budget of (£247.9m) (7.2%).
5. The table below shows the high-level year end forecast position for Chief Officer's local risk budgets by fund:

£'000	Original budget 2020/21	Latest budget 202/21 (including carry forwards)	Forecast as at end of July	Variance
City Fund (CF) (excl. Police)	(72,503)	(74,668)	(87,919)	(13,251)
City's Cash (CC)	(43,679)	(43,967)	(48,206)	(4,239)
Bridge House Estates (BHE)	(6,186)	(6,186)	(8,741)	(2,555)
Guildhall Administration (GA)	(37,938)	(38,206)	(39,611)	(1,405)
<b>Total (excluding Police)</b>	<b>(160,306)</b>	<b>(163,027)</b>	<b>(184,477)</b>	<b>(21,450)</b>
Police	(84,884)	(84,884)	(81,350)	3,534
<b>Grand Total</b>	<b>(245,190)</b>	<b>(247,911)</b>	<b>(265,827)</b>	<b>(17,916)</b>



6. The forecast position comprises a reduction in income of (£39.2m) on an income budget of £294m, partially offset by an underspend of £21.3m on budgeted expenditure of (£542.1m); demonstrating the action taken by Chief Officers to reduce expenditure to limit the impact as far as possible of reductions in income.
7. Chief Officers' variances against net local risk budgets are shown in the chart below. The detailed breakdown by Chief Officer by Fund is shown at Appendix 1.



8. The most heavily impacted is the Barbican Centre; forecasting an overall overspend of (£12.5m) at year end. This comprises a shortfall of (£22.0m) on income due to the centre being closed, and limited activity being forecast for the remainder of the financial year due to social distancing measures. Expenditure has however, been reduced by £9.6m due to activity reductions and a hold on all non-essential expenditure. **It is proposed to reset the budget envelope from (£17,389) to (£29,841)**
9. Open Spaces is forecasting an overspend of (£3.7m) broken down as follows: -
  - (£3.1m) BHE due to income shortfalls relation to Tower Bridge. It is proposed that the Tower Bridge shortfall is covered by a reduction in transfer to BHE reserves at year end.
  - (£858k) City's Cash forecast income deficit on City's Cash. Following a Senior Member lead bilateral meeting with the Director of Open Spaces and the Chamberlain, and subsequent discussion at Resource Allocation Sub Committee on 18<sup>th</sup> September it, was concluded that there was scope to reduce expenditure and increase income further at Epping Forest. **it is therefore proposed to reduce the Open Spaces budget adjustment by £400K and reset the latest approved budget from (£11,852) to (£12,310) to cover the Monument income shortfall of £392K; the balance of £66K for income shortfalls at other Open Spaces** It is recognised that there is pressure on Epping Forest budgets which we will

continue to focus on, with an understanding this might lead to a year end overspend.

- £148k City Fund forecast under spend of £148K is due to additional income from the City of London Cemetery activity. **It is proposed to rest this budget from £564k to £712k to be utilised towards the additional costs to City Fund.**
10. GSMD is forecast to be (£2.5m) worse than budget reflecting lost income from short courses, letting student accommodation and space to external providers during summer term, removing bar and catering income and reduced fees from under-18 provision. Further losses may arise depending on the number of students returning for the new academic year. In addition, GSMD will incur additional costs for space, equipment and staffing to support socially distanced onsite as well as online teaching. The City is a joint funder with the Office for Students and there is an agreement not to reduce the City's contribution to continue to secure Higher Education Statistics Agency (HESA) Funding. It is anticipated that GSMD continue to call on their reserves; the same approach as for the City's Independent Schools (see paragraph 19).
  11. Remembrancer has a forecast deficit due to loss in income of (£1.0m) due to no private event hire taking place at Guildhall since the start of the financial year. Three of the four most lucrative months in the year - May, June, September and November - will achieve nil or very nearly nil income. **It is proposed to reset the budget from £274k to (£810k) to cover the loss of income.**
  12. The Director of Markets and Consumer Protection is forecasting an overspend of (£502k), mainly on City Fund activity (£457K) due to increased costs at the Ports in preparation for Brexit and loss of income at the Animal Reception Centre. The balance on City's Cash relates to lost income from car parking charges at Billingsgate and Smithfield Markets. **It is proposed to reset City Fund budget from (£2,240k) to (£2,697k) to cover the income deficit.**
  13. Mansion House and Old Bailey forecast overspend of (£431K) includes recovery of an overspend of (£248K) from 2019/20. At the bilateral meeting with the Executive Director further expenditure savings were discussed, **therefore no budget reset is proposed at this time.**
  14. The Comptroller and City Solicitor is forecasting an external income deficit of (£420K) due to a lack of property deals. **It is proposed to reset the budget from (£845k) to (£1,265k) to cover the income shortfall.**
  15. The City Surveyor is forecasting a net overspend across the funds of (£346K), this includes a carry forward of (£320K) from 2019/20. **It is not proposed to reset the budget for 2020/21 at this time.**
  16. The Director of the Built Environment (DBE) forecast an overspend of (£310K), mainly relates to a forecast income shortfall of (£2.5m), most significantly within off-street parking, traffic management, public conveniences, drains & sewers and building control services. However, expenditure reductions of some £2.3m through

reduction in highways repairs and maintenance, early removal of Automated public conveniences and contract savings have reduced the impact considerably. **It is proposed to reset the budget from (£20,243K) to (£20,553K) to cover the net deficit.**

17. The Director of Community and Children's services is forecasting an overspend of (£184K), the largest pressure is on rough sleepers and homelessness budget due to COVID-19, at an estimated cost of (£1.4m) until 31<sup>st</sup> March 2021. The majority of the extra costs are being absorbed by a current underspend on adults/older people social care. Income levels are estimated to be around 30% once services reopen. **It is proposed to reset the Director's budget from (£12,791K) to (£12,975K) to address the shortfall.**
18. The Chamberlain is forecasting a net overspend across the funds of (£58K). This is due to various additional essential unbudgeted expenditure, including additional staff resource for essential financial modelling work. There is also income loss in Freedom ceremonies due to the COVID 19 pandemic. **It is not proposed to reset the Chamberlain's budget at this time.**
19. The Independent Schools are managing within their reserves as shown by their breakeven position. No budget resets are therefore proposed.
20. The Town Clerks overall forecast position is a net underspend of £350K. However, this includes additional P&R income of £990k expected in relation to COVID related grants to reimburse expenditure for works undertaken by the Strategic COVID Group, which is offset by income shortfalls in Cultural Heritage. **It is not proposed, therefore, to reset the Town Clerk's budgets.**
21. The Commissioner of Police is currently forecasting an underspend of £3.5m. It is proposed to continue to monitor the Police position, recognising that any underspend will be directed to repayment of the Action Fraud loan to the City Corporation.

## **Proposals**

22. It is proposed that Finance Committee Members recommend to the Court of Council that local risk budgets are reset for the following departments as summarised in the table below: -

£'000

Department	From	To	(Increase) /Reduction	Fund
Barbican Centre	(17,389)	(29,841)	(12,452)	CF
Open Spaces	(11,852)	(12,310)	(458)	CC
Open Spaces	564	712	148	CF
Remembrancer	274	(810)	(1,084)	GA
Markets & Consumer Protection	(2,240)	(2,697)	(457)	CF
Comptroller & City Solicitor	(845)	(1,265)	(420)	GA
DBE	(20,243)	(20,553)	(310)	CF
Community & Children's services	(12,791)	(12,975)	(184)	CF
Total	(64,522)	(79,739)	(15,217)	

23. Where Chief Officers local risk budgets are not recommended for adjustment, but significant efforts have been made to mitigate the position/deliver savings, it is proposed discussions take place at year end regarding handling of any overspend positions.
24. Our current estimates indicate support from the Government for lost fees and charges on City Fund income could be in the region of £13.6m. The first claim from April until end of July was submitted at the end of September. The income recovered will be used to offset the appropriate budget adjustments proposed.
25. It is also proposed to continue with the current recruitment constraint, including the use of Consultants, aligned to the rollout of the Target Operating Model to secure further savings by the end of the financial year.
26. Further savings will also continue to be explored with departments to reduce the overall impact on the reserves position.
27. The budget in the Medium-Term Financial Plan (MTFP) for the CWP in 2020/21 is £22.8m. The latest forecast estimate for works anticipated to be completed is £10.7m. A report is being prepared by the City Surveyor outlining proposals for a revised annual programme from 2021/22.

## Financial Implications

28. The overall 2020/21 City Fund starting position would have added £27.3m to reserves to contribute to the future financing of the major projects.
29. The proposed COVID adjustments to Chief Officers local risk budgets total £15.2m (£14m City Fund and £1.2m City's Cash). The £14m City Fund adjustment can be

met by scaling back the addition to the major projects reserve to £13.3m. The City Cash adjustment of £1.2m can be funded but will impact the net asset position.

## **Conclusion**

30. Despite the mitigating actions being taken, we face, as a result of COVID-19, a major challenge to the health of our finances. Proposals to reset budgets for Chief Officers most impacted by loss of local risk income will provide realistic budgets for them to be held to.

## **Appendices**

- Appendix 1 – Chief Officers local risk end of year forecast at end of July 2020 by fund

## **Background Papers**

- Briefing 2 – Financial impact of COVID 19 – Finance Committee 19 May 2020
- Resetting of Budgets 2020/21 – Resource Allocation Sub Committee 18 September 2020.

## **Julie Smith**

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Chief Officer Cash Limited Budgets by Fund					
Original Budget	Chief Officer	Full Year Forecast as at 31 July 2020			
		Latest Budget	Forecast	Variance Better / (Worse)	
		£'000	£'000	£'000	%
	<b>City Fund</b>				
(1,755)	Chamberlain	(1,755)	(1,420)	335	19%
(5,117)	City Surveyor	(5,240)	(5,109)	131	2%
(11,168)	Director of Community and Children's Services	(12,791)	(12,975)	(184)	(1%)
(2,199)	Director of Markets and Consumer Protection	(2,240)	(2,697)	(457)	(20%)
564	Director of Open Spaces	564	712	148	26%
(20,196)	Director of the Built Environment	(20,243)	(20,553)	(310)	(2%)
(402)	Executive Director Mansion House and Old Bailey	(242)	(531)	(289)	(120%)
(17,165)	Managing Director, Barbican Centre	(17,389)	(29,841)	(12,452)	(72%)
(15,065)	Town Clerk	(15,332)	(15,504)	(172)	(1%)
<b>(72,503)</b>	<b>Total City Fund (excluding Police)</b>	<b>(74,668)</b>	<b>(87,919)</b>	<b>(13,251)</b>	<b>(18%)</b>
	<b>City's Cash</b>				0%
(99)	Chamberlain	(99)	(174)	(75)	(76%)
(16,228)	City Surveyor	(16,143)	(16,972)	(829)	(5%)
(1,052)	Director of Community and Children's Services	(1,122)	(1,122)	0	0%
(1,365)	Director of Markets and Consumer Protection	(1,668)	(1,713)	(45)	(3%)
(11,822)	Director of Open Spaces	(11,852)	(12,710)	(858)	(7%)
(3,334)	Executive Director Mansion House and Old Bailey	(3,246)	(3,388)	(142)	(4%)
(1,217)	Head, City of London Boy's School	(1,217)	(1,176)	41	3%
118	Headmaster, City of London Freeman's School	118	234	116	98%
(275)	Headmistress, City of London School for Girls	(275)	(255)	20	7%
(6,799)	Principal, Guildhall School of Music and Drama	(6,799)	(9,329)	(2,530)	(37%)
(1,391)	Remembrancer	(1,391)	(1,334)	57	4%
(215)	Town Clerk	(273)	(268)	5	2%
<b>(43,679)</b>	<b>Total City's Cash</b>	<b>(43,967)</b>	<b>(48,206)</b>	<b>(4,239)</b>	<b>(10%)</b>
	<b>Bridge House Estates</b>				0%
(45)	Chamberlain	(45)	(45)	0	0%
(2,703)	City Surveyor	(2,703)	(2,690)	13	0%
(243)	Director of Open Spaces	(243)	(3,306)	(3,063)	(1,260%)
(275)	Director of the Built Environment	(275)	(259)	16	6%
(2,920)	Town Clerk	(2,920)	(2,441)	479	16%
<b>(6,186)</b>	<b>Total Bridge House Estates</b>	<b>(6,186)</b>	<b>(8,741)</b>	<b>(2,555)</b>	<b>(41%)</b>
	<b>Guildhall Administration</b>				0%
(22,165)	Chamberlain	(22,358)	(22,676)	(318)	(1%)
(8,666)	City Surveyor	(8,686)	(8,347)	339	4%
(845)	Comptroller and City Solicitor	(845)	(1,265)	(420)	(50%)
274	Remembrancer	274	(810)	(1,084)	(395%)
(6,536)	Town Clerk	(6,591)	(6,513)	78	1%
<b>(37,938)</b>	<b>Total Guildhall Administration</b>	<b>(38,206)</b>	<b>(39,611)</b>	<b>(1,405)</b>	<b>(4%)</b>
<b>(160,306)</b>	<b>Grand Total (excluding Police)</b>	<b>(163,027)</b>	<b>(184,477)</b>	<b>(21,450)</b>	<b>(13%)</b>
(84,884)	Commissioner of Police (City Fund)	(84,884)	(81,350)	3,534	4%
<b>(245,190)</b>	<b>Grand Total</b>	<b>(247,911)</b>	<b>(265,827)</b>	<b>(17,916)</b>	<b>(7%)</b>

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<b>Committee</b>	<b>Dated: 6 Nov 2020</b>
Community and Children's Services	
<b>Subject:</b> Lessons learnt from the departmental response to the COVID-19 pandemic	<b>Public</b>
<b>Which outcomes in the City Corporation's Corporate Plan does this proposal aim to impact directly?</b>	
<b>Does this proposal require extra revenue and/or capital spending?</b>	<b>N</b>
<b>If so, how much?</b>	
<b>What is the source of Funding?</b>	
<b>Has this Funding Source been agreed with the Chamberlain's Department?</b>	
<b>Report of:</b> Andrew Carter, Director of Community and Children's Services	<b>For information</b>
<b>Report author:</b> Simon Cribbens, Assistant Director – Commissioning and Partnerships	

## Summary

This report reflects on the experience and lessons learnt for the department in its response to the COVID-19 pandemic. The department has been required to deliver its statutory functions and services, while at the same time respond to the unprecedented additional demands of the pandemic. This has driven agile and creative new ways of working, many of which have secured efficiencies and will be retained. The department will have to continue to deliver to new and increasing demands as the pandemic continues, but has learnt valuable lessons from the period to date to inform that.

## Recommendation

Members are asked to:

- Note the report

## Main Report

### Background

1. Local authorities have been tasked with a range of responsibilities in response to the Coronavirus pandemic. The primary responsibility since the onset of the virus has been to work with government, health and care providers to make the public safe and prevent deaths.
2. By 17 October, 47 cases of COVID-19 had been recorded among residents of the City of London. There were four deaths among residents - all of which

occurred between 1 April and 15 May. The neighbouring authorities of Hackney and Tower Hamlets have reported 230 and 189 deaths respectively.

3. In terms of access and uptake of testing, residents of the Square Mile have consistently had above national and London averages for 7-day testing uptake - with lower than average positivity of testing.
4. The incidence of COVID-19 is calculated and published per 100,000 of the population. In the week 7 to 13 October (the last available at time of writing) the incidence rate for the City of London equated to 41 cases per 100,000 population. The incidence rate for the London Borough of Hackney for the same week was 138 cases per 100,000 population.

## **Supporting clinically vulnerable people**

### *Shielding people*

5. On 21 March the government announced that those described as “clinically extremely vulnerable” would be asked to shield. To enable this the government set out priorities to support shielding individuals with food, medicine and social care, of which local authorities would be responsible for the social care element.
6. At the point shielding was paused by government, the City had been informed of 157 shielding individuals. Direct contact was made with 149 of which 14 individuals identified a need for help: 11 wanted food shopping, three requested social welfare support and six wanted medicine collection (some had more than one need). No-one in the shielding group wanted emergency food support. Twenty-four households were not living in the City at the time. The eight uncontacted were all accounted for or identified as an erroneous record.
7. The initial period was very challenging for the department. Urgent and immediate actions were required with no indication of the scale of shielding in the Square Mile. For instance, the creation of food depot was required by government to receive emergency food for onward distribution by 27 March. This would meet needs while the government’s food distribution service was established.
8. The City established a depot at the Guildhall, weekend staffing cover was put in place and help from community volunteer networks was secured for onward distribution. The list of shielded residents was received on Saturday 28 March – and contained a single person, who had not requested help with food (officers contacted them that day to verify). Food supplies were subsequently donated to a neighbouring authority.
9. The government’s digital service provided local authorities with shielding data at the outset of the lockdown. This was never to a given timetable, and came in three different lists, each of which would be re-issued in their entirety with any additions and numerous duplicate records. Establishing and maintaining an accurate, single source was resource intensive. This was further complicated

by a period of parallel data supply when NHS shielding lists were generated and provided in addition to those from the government.

10. Until the end of May, data was distributed to the department every two to three days. We cross checked every shielded household to identify those known to social care or in receipt of Telecare in order to prioritise contact.
11. Despite clearly defined criteria from the outset, it was not until the end of May 2020 that the number of shielded individuals the department had been notified about reached 145, after which monthly additions were less than ten.
12. Reporting requirements were onerous at the outset. Daily reporting was initially required, in addition to weekly situation reporting and numerous supplementary requests for data (national, regional, sub-regional and Corporation level). The scope of reporting changed frequently requiring changes to recording templates and systems, and definitions were often ambiguous.
13. Shielding households who requested support with food received doorstep deliveries from the government service. Some recipients subsequently wanted to cancel these deliveries, and others wanted them directed to homes where they were shielding outside of the City. There was no mechanism on the government portal, or through direct contact with government, to cancel or change.
14. The government initiated a process of centrally driven telephone contact with shielded households who had not used the online portal to identify needs. Some GP services also began contacting patients. By this stage, the City had contacted (more than 90%) or accounted for every household on the shielded list and was undertaking a second round of follow up contact. The volume of contact caused some confusion and while predominantly well received, some households felt it was unnecessary.
15. Within the department there was initially some duplication of roles, responsibilities and resourcing which risked confusion. There was also an enormous willingness to help that was at times frustrated: a call out for volunteers to provide welfare telephone calls attracted over 30 staff but ultimately required only four. Enquiries relating to service responses that were received from some staff also indicated a lack of knowledge about some services and the scope of the department's delivery.
16. The initial scripts, processes and recording systems developed by the department to support this work were not enabling and were too complex and had to be replaced.
17. The response to shielding was delivered by the department at a time when it was transferring most of its operation online and continuing to deliver essential frontline services.
18. The City's community organised very quickly to offer support to shielding and other vulnerable households. This provided an immediate resource to which the

department could refer, and undoubtedly meant many needs were already being met.

19. The co-ordination and monitoring of the department's shielding response was quickly rationalised to provide clear accountabilities and responsibilities. Systems were developed and amended quickly to be fit for purpose and fit for reporting requirements.
20. The redeployment of library staff to deliver social and wellbeing support was very successful. The staff proved skilled at dealing with customers and identifying any on-going needs. This role was successfully transferred to the department's commissioned befriending service when library services resumed.
21. A COVID-19 email address and phone line were rapidly established and promoted. This was monitored daily.
22. Officers sought to contact every shielded person the City was notified of – going beyond the expectation and guidance of government. Officers worked closely with their housing colleagues, duty social workers, GPs and the police to secure contact with individuals where telephone calls had been unsuccessful. Shielded people open to adult social care were contacted (where appropriate) and monitored by their social worker.
23. Repeat contact was made with those shielding who were over 70, those known to adult social care and those who had requested help through the phoneline, email or third party.

#### *Non-shielding vulnerable*

24. A proactive plan was put in place to identify individuals who may be vulnerable and in need of support but were not listed as shielding. Officers contacted 199 individuals who were known to social care services or to housing management teams, or who receive Telecare support. Nineteen requested help: 10 wanted food shopping, eight wanted support with social contact and three wanted medicine collection (some had more than one need).
25. Individuals in receipt of domiciliary care were not contacted directly given the attendance of care staff in their home. The department extended the contracts of its domiciliary care providers to allow for additional demand or additional tasks such as shopping.
26. The department engaged with the Guinness Housing Trust who acted to contact vulnerable households on the Mansell Street estate.
27. The City does not have an established Voluntary Sector Service (a body providing co-ordination and capacity building to local voluntary sector organisations) as some other local authorities do. Many support groups in the Square Mile are informal and some were newly formed – including the Square Mile Foodbank. The department was unable to designate a lead or co-

ordinating group, and so encouraged a hyper local approach rather than City wide or Corporation led.

28. Widespread volunteering across the City's communities provided a range of support opportunities – to which many needing help were able to access quickly and directly. Family, friends, neighbours and local volunteer groups were essential in providing support to vulnerable and isolated households across the City.
29. Officers consider that we creatively balanced safeguarding concerns (risk of fraud, abuse or misuse) with pragmatism in encouraging hyper-local initiatives and good neighbourliness. The idea was to promote support at levels where people were already known to each other (lived in close proximity) or could enhance already established (trusted) groups.
30. Taking a problem-solving approach, funds where need were passported via existing providers. City assets were used to facilitate the delivery of food products where this could be done in line with health and safety (proper food handling).
31. Officers are aware of concerns re: not supporting the provision of IDs but this was done to reduce the unintended risk from scams, frauds and safeguarding concerns.
32. The reliance on volunteers for some support – particularly the delivery of the Square Mile Foodbank – risked burn out as the pandemic continued. It became apparent that a more resilient foodbank model was needed. The duration of the pandemic is also requiring support for needs that are not just about vulnerability, but the economic impact. As a result, the department is moving to a foodbank model that delivers advice, support and casework to tackle wider issues and responses to poverty.
33. The regularisation of the arrangement means that effective safeguarding policies can apply.
34. The rapidly changing nature of guidance and services led to a reliance on digital communication channels. Not all those in need of support are online, and information was mainly available in English. The use of poster, letters and information in City Matters provided some mitigation. The department updated information on pages on the Corporate Website, but some Members, local groups and individuals have often found this difficult to find.
35. Government advice on shielding has changed to reflect lessons learned and COVID secure environments:  
<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/guidance-on-shielding-and-protecting-extremely-vulnerable-persons-from-COVID-19/guidance-on-shielding-and-protecting-extremely-vulnerable-persons-from-COVID-19>. The department has put in place systems to respond and adapt under Tier 1, Tier 2 and Tier 3.

36. Following feedback, the department is specifically reviewing its support to carers (unpaid carers) in relation to shielding and non-shielding groups. With partners and commissioned providers, the department is looking to improve targeted emotional and wellbeing support alongside the generic offers. The department are looking into the feasibility of piloting a Carers Academy with Adult Education and Skills, and providing letters to access priority shopping hours should these be required.

### **Personal Protective Equipment (PPE)**

37. Ensuring a timely and adequate supply of PPE to the departments' frontline officers and commissioned providers was an immediate priority and immediate challenge.
38. During the early stages of the pandemic, national and international supply routes of PPE were severely disrupted and unable to respond to demand. As was widely reported in the media, the procurement and distribution of PPE supplies was often chaotic. This caused intense pressure on the amount of PPE the City of London Corporation was able to obtain from its usual PPE supplier.
39. The department faced challenges in ensuring frontline staff and commissioned providers – particularly domiciliary care workers – had sufficient supplies of appropriate PPE. The City of London's commissioned domiciliary care providers also experienced severe delays to their PPE supply chains during March, April and May.
40. The scarcity of supply and subsequent rationing resulted in constant requests from national and regional government and the London Local Resilience Group for stock and demand estimates.
41. Additional requests for PPE came from a range of internal and external partners. Some of these sought supplies inappropriate or unnecessary for their roles, others simply could not be met because of the priority given to care providers and other front-line roles at high risk of infection or transmission.
42. The department allocated a single point of contact to develop a system of distribution, priority and control of PPE supplies, allowing internal departments and commissioned providers to request emergency supplies of PPE, which was distributed based on priority need and in line with Public Health England guidance.
43. The single point of contact also procured additional items to ensure supplies remained available for distribution, based on demand, through pursuing donations and purchasing PPE from additional suppliers.
44. In the period to the end of September 2020, the department has distributed 14,000 individual items of PPE to internal front-line staff and commissioned providers, and has at least a three months' supply of PPE in reserve.

45. The department has now developed a greater level of supply line resilience to ensure future disruption to supplies is kept to a minimum. This includes signing up to the West London Commissioning Alliance Pan-London PPE procurement programme, which is providing PPE to local authorities whilst the government PPE procurement channels for local authorities are established.
46. The department also has access to PPE supplies from the London Local Resilience Forum, and the North East London PPE Mutual Aid Scheme, and regularly contributes to PPE monitoring reports to ensure supplies remain resilient.
47. Commissioned domiciliary care providers and other settings now have access to the Department of Health and Social Care PPE Portal, where supplies can be ordered and delivered directly.
48. The department would like to thank schools and organisations that donated PPE during the initial lockdown and first wave.

### **Adult Social Care**

49. The pandemic has provided the services with an opportunity to review and redesign discharge home arrangements including the delivery of reablement. The commissioning of additional capacity to deliver the discharge requirements, has identified clear benefits that will potentially serve and support a longer-term redesign of the Adult Social Care system. It is anticipated that this will support better outcomes for service users whilst generating better value for money principles. The department's Adult Social Care Service has received compliments from UCLH on the effectiveness and efficiency of its discharge model.
50. Adult Social Care delivery and a duty social care system have been maintained throughout and has included face to face contact where that is necessary.
51. The government has announced - in October - financial support to registered care providers to improve COVID prevention measures. The department has been given just ten days to identify providers (including those self-funded), make payment and set up monitoring arrangements to report to government.
52. Acute and street triage (s136) mental health services have not seen an increase in demand during the pandemic to date. We continue to monitor service needs in this area with partners.
53. Sufficiency within the care market continues to be monitored through the Association of Directors of Adult Social Care.
54. Care and nursing home visiting restrictions have understandably caused distress for residents and their families. Government initiatives promoting access to IT to enable virtual contact have been promoted to our providers by the department.

55. The Adult Social Care service has recently written to all carers (unpaid carers) known to them, highlighting the support that is available for carers and asking for their feedback.
56. The independent Chair of the Adult Safeguarding Board has advised that:
- *The regular meetings of the City sub-group (quarterly) and the City and Hackney Safeguarding Adult Board Executive (monthly) have been and continue to provide effective mechanisms for reporting by partners, monitoring the impact and obtaining assurances regarding responsiveness, since March 2020.*
  - *In terms of specific issues for safeguarding adults in the City, there are the ongoing challenges of safeguarding homeless people and learning from practice over the past months to inform work over the next phase. I am reassured by the appointment of a dedicated social worker to work in this area as I believe this will improve safeguarding practice, prevention of abuse and protection for this client group.*
  - *There are regional and national concerns about increases in domestic abuse (including intergenerational abuse), COVID-19 related scams, and mental health impact which relates to increasing levels of self-neglect and potentially suicide. There are also infection control and quality issues regarding care provision (not only in Care Homes) that interface with safeguarding. These areas have been, and continue to be, discussed and addressed at the meetings described above. We have continued to review the data and augmented this with a 'deep dive' into a sample of casework from a range of partners to understand better the impact of COVID-19 on risks in peoples' lives, and will continue to seek appropriate responses from partner agencies.*
57. No current concerns have arisen in relation to end of life care within the City, but we have had access to the learning from other areas to inform our planning.
58. The welfare, mental health and wellbeing of Adult Social Care staff in providing services to people in distress or acute need remains a central area of concerns and ongoing review and development.

### **Children social care, early help, early years and education**

59. Multi agency engagement in strategic and operational delivery of children's social care has improved significantly due to the whole system implementation of virtual working.
60. Whilst this new way of working will not fully replace some key meetings benefiting from face to face engagement (such as child protection conferences and supervision meetings), the ability to maintain a line of sight and grip on areas of casework has been enhanced through the use of virtual working arrangements. The service has found that some young people prefer this way of communicating.



61. Throughout the pandemic the service has been able to ensure that all children and young people known to Children Social Care have been contacted, either virtually or face to face, at greater levels of frequency than prior to the pandemic.
62. Delivery has benefitted – and the service learnt – from better triangulation of data across services areas to identify vulnerable children across Education, Early Years, Early Help and Children Social Care. This has helped the department to retain line of sight on the most vulnerable children in the City and ensure they are engaging in learning opportunities both in school and where applicable, virtually.
63. The approach ensured that all the identified vulnerable children in the City were confirmed to have access to learning both during the first wave and remains in place to address issues in the situation ahead. This system will be retained as a key information sharing tool to support improved partnership working with vulnerable children and families in the City.
64. The department has written to all care leavers offering advice and guidance re: COVID 19 and sees ongoing communication and engagement with vulnerable children and young people as key to understanding their lived experience of COVID and how we can best support them.
65. The department is cautious that the full impact of COVID on children and their families is not yet known and vigilance is needed to ensure that the right environments are maintained to allow families to seek support and potential victims to disclose.
66. A shift to digital may have worked for a number of children and families, but potential disproportionalities, impacts and unforeseen consequences are not yet fully understood and are only likely to emerge and crystallise over time. Early indicators from other parts of London are that BAME and disadvantaged children may not have benefited from a reliance on digital.
67. The department continues to work with children looked after and care leavers via the City of London Children in Care Council and the London Children in Care Council. The department has raised with the DfE concerns about the impact of COVID on the employment opportunities for care leavers. The department is looking internally within the Corporation and externally to see how we might offset any economic pressures and increase opportunities for vulnerable children and young.
68. A survey has been issued by the City and Hackney Safeguarding Partnership to assist in capturing learning and understanding during the pandemic and provide further reassurance with regard to effective safeguarding.
69. In discussion with the City and Hackney Safeguarding Partnership, Independent Scrutineer, the Director highlighted:

- *The City have not seen an increase in non-accidental injuries amongst infants, but we are alert to the patterns across London.*
  - *Thanked the Scrutineer for highlighting issues re: window falls and accidental strangulation in other boroughs and agreed to arrange for home safety advice to be shared across the City's Housing estates.*
  - *Acknowledge that the mental health and wellbeing of children and young people during lockdown / tiers remains a central concern for us and how we effectively target support. Online provision as we know is helpful but does not work for everyone and particularly the more disadvantaged (lack of private space and digital exclusion).*
  - *Advised that overall, I think the schools did really well re: pupils emotional and mental health re: the additional alertness and signposting for teachers, students and parents given the additional pressures and uncertainties re: exams this year.*
  - *Reported that crime data across the City including DV remains low and agencies have not reported an increase in DV/DA. We continue to push and challenge ourselves re: how we enable and support victims to disclose.*
  - *Stated that, I think the amount of time children and young people have had to spend online certainly has raised the potential risk of online exploitation and we will reach out to the City schools after the half term to see what more can be done to raise awareness and promote online safety. Community Safety now sits under DCCS so we should be able to join up more effectively re: radicalisation and the risks of radicalisation for teenagers. The potential for pornography based extortion is not an area I think we have a consistent handle on and would welcome your advice.*
70. The City of London Safer Schools App was launched in May 2020 to promote increased safety online and will be reviewed after the October half-term to capture and learning and future developments.
71. It is of note that Ofsted identified Aldgate School as a pilot site for an assurance visit in early September due to the positive feedback they had received regarding the work of the school during the pandemic. The school has been open throughout.
72. Our Education and Early Years Team commissioned the statutory Childcare Sufficiency Assessment (CSA) during the first wave of the pandemic. They consulted with the six Early Years Providers, the Children Centre and the schools in the City. This involved a desk top exercise; structured interviews with providers; quantitative and qualitative consultation including virtual meetings with interested stakeholder groups such as children, young people and parents with Special Educational Needs and Disabilities. This exercise resulted in over 80 responses from individuals and interested groups.

73. The team explored in detail their experiences of Covid 19 and sought provider's views about their expectations for the future, the return to their settings and the support they needed as the pandemic continues. The headline feedback was very positive about the support and communications providers had from the City early years' service.
74. The team now has more regular provider updates with the sector and reports weekly to the Department for Education on the take up of childcare in the City.
75. As a result of this exercise, the team is providing additional resources to ensure there is regular monitoring of the childcare sector, with an annual CSA, to ensure the Early Year sector is supported through post pandemic period.
76. The City of London Corporation has provided October half-term vouchers to city resident children who are eligible for free school meals and officers and members continue to explore the viability and effectiveness of ongoing support. This builds on extensive support provided during lockdown (wave 1) and impressive work by Aldgate School. The department is reviewing the impact of current approaches to child poverty to see how these could be improved.

### **Housing options and advice**

77. Approaches from households seeking advice and support because they are at risk of homelessness has increased significantly during the pandemic period – already double in the year to date than in 2019/20.
78. The service has had to meet this demand but has been unable to operate face to face interviews from Guildhall. Officers consider the move to digital and telephone delivery has enhanced their approach and allowed them to meet the increased demand for support.
79. The service aims to add virtual conferring capacity to the team's digital offer as this will enable additional benefits.
80. The additional challenges posed by lockdown have made securing solutions such as access to private rented sector tenancies very difficult. Despite this the department has increased by a third the level of successful "relief of homelessness" outcomes in which moves into permanent and suitable accommodation have been secured. This early intervention has also meant a reduction in the use of long-term temporary accommodation placements for families and vulnerable individuals.

### **Rough sleeping services**

81. The department's rough sleeping service acted urgently to secure the government's commitment to "everyone in". Direction and considerable pressure came from the relevant government department and Greater London Authority.

82. In the period to the end of September 2020, the service has accommodated double the number of people that in the same period last year. Average rough sleeping counts have fallen by 70 per cent, to 14 people.
83. The department has leased the Youth Hostel Association building on Carter Lane to provide emergency accommodation. Securing this accommodation and agreeing the lease was complex. Mobilising and co-ordinating the inputs of several departments was challenging in the face of competing priorities faced by those colleagues and led to delays. There is very little capacity in the department to secure and mobilise unplanned services, and staff worked excessive hours to achieve this.
84. Documentation requiring completion by partner departments in relation to this service has been huge, and often required professional expertise to complete. The corporate approach to risk management was also hampering when the focus needed to be on delivering the required outcome.
85. The department also mobilised additional health and support services, and has acted as the lead commissioned for a pan-London Homeless Drug and Alcohol Service.
86. The flexibility and responsiveness of the service has secured additional resources and delivery during an unprecedented time. In doing so it has saved lives among some of the most vulnerable in the City's community.
87. Members have shown pro-active leadership in for pushing for expanded and better pathways to sustainable accommodation and supporting officers at this unprecedented time.

### **Mental health and wellbeing**

88. The department has worked with partners to mitigate and prevent impacts of the pandemic on mental health and wellbeing, and ensure essential services continue for those who have a mental health diagnosis.
89. A range of initiatives have been put in place by the department directly, or through its work with partners – notably City and Hackney Clinical Commissioning Group (CCG) – to deliver support for those experience mental ill health during the pandemic.
90. Kooth – a specialist mental health service for young people – was commissioned by the CCG. GP services promoted this to their young patients and the service promoted across a range of local channels, including social media.
91. Mental health services and support targeting frontline workers during the pandemic – such as Frontline19 – have been promoted in a joint approach involving the department, LB Hackney, Bart's Health, East London Foundation trust, Homerton University Hospital Trust and the CCG. Similar initiatives exist in the neighbouring local authority and CCG areas.

92. The Children and Adolescent Mental Health Service (CAMHS) and community mental health services for adults have continued to operate throughout.
93. There have been ongoing promotion of Improving Access to Psychological Therapies (IAPT) to patients including texts and letters from GPs targeting those known to suffer severe mental illness - signposting them to IAPT and a Crisis Line.
94. The department has supported communications through a range of channels to residents promoting support services for mental wellbeing. A dedicated webpage was created on the City's website listing health and wellbeing services. The department also worked with commissioned providers to promote such services.
95. The library service has continued an online Dragon Café to support wellbeing during the pandemic. We have also launched the City Wellbeing Centre, and prior to that worked with the provider - Tavistock Relationships - to deliver a virtual offer of psychological therapies. The department is currently working with Tavistock Relationships to develop a specialist offer to support the mental wellbeing of carers.
96. Addressing the mental health impact of the pandemic is a vital element of the department's – and wider partners' - response, but there is no capacity to monitor the delivery of these initiatives, and it has not been possible to prioritise that within finite resources.
97. As a specific strand within Business Healthy, COVID has caused a focus on the health and wellbeing of all levels of employees. With businesses and partners the department is trying to drive provision of mental health support to cleaners, security guards and contract workers. These sections of the 'hidden' workforce are potentially disproportionately impacted by COVID, but do not necessarily have access to support that other grades of works do.
98. A lead officer was identified within the Public Health Team to assist with the co-ordination of bereavement counselling and signposting to bereavement counselling for children and adults. Advice on accessing bereavement counselling and support was included on the COVID 19 pages on our website, hard copy comms to residents and call-centred staff were briefed on how to refer calls to the lead officer.
99. Signposting to bereavement counselling and the scope of people who might need counselling (multi-generational loss) was further embedded within the Registration Service. Registration processes where possible were streamlined to be as flexible and supportive of families / the bereaved as possible, taking into account religious customs and practices.
100. The Assistant Director for Barbican and Housing acted as a single point of contact for community deaths with the Coroner. The Assistant Director, the Head of Registration Service and a Public Health Consultant formed part of the Corporation's Mortality Management group.

101. Covid 19 deaths within the City have remained low and we continue to plan appropriately and learn from other areas who have experienced higher death rates.
102. Supporting staff who are having to deal with the emotional impacts of managing death and dying within their home working and office environments is challenging. Managers are engaged in supportive conversations with staff and guiding staff to counselling and other support via the Employee Assistance Scheme.
103. The department has continued to work with faith groups in terms of the support they offer the unwell, dying and bereaved. We have also sought to engage more widely with faith groups and provide faith specific guidance for significant religious celebrations such as Ramadan and the Jewish New Year. We continue to seek feedback from faith groups in terms of their knowledge and intelligence re: communities and how we can improve our services.

### **Carers (unpaid)**

104. Support for carers, including the service commissioned by the department (City Connections), had to migrate to online and telephone delivery at the outset of the lockdown.
105. Information for carers – whether through the Corporation website or others – was largely online. Achieving and maintaining comprehensive lists of activities and resources has been difficult (in the context of constant change and updates across all areas of the website).
106. There are also some conflicting expectations and requests (internal and external) in terms of the department's intention that the City Connections' website serves as the main resource for carers (and a range of other needs groups) and the City's website focussed on the adult social care duty to carers.
107. Support was offered by the City Connections to all known carers. Not all took up that offer – as is the case in non-lockdown times. Support included weekly welfare telephone contact (for those wanting that) and twice monthly online carers group.
108. City Connections had to transfer its support to online delivery and telephone calls. It offered fortnightly carers session and a quarterly carers forum. It has also organised creative arts, an online tea party and a carers prize nomination.
109. There has also been a local volunteer led offer of activities for carers that City Connections has promoted.
110. The demands and circumstances of the pandemic have prevented City Connections delivering to the objective set by the department of addressing the under representation of carers from the east of the City, and delivering support to carers in the working population.

111. Clearly the reliance on digital delivery is limiting, but the restrictions of the pandemic mean in person groups are unlikely to resume in the short term.
112. Further work and service development will focus on supporting carers in accessing and feeling confident using digital technology. Delivery of this will continue to draw on the library service offer and support through a digital befriending scheme.
113. There is a need to develop other communication methods to promote services and support, and this is being looked at by the department and City Connections.
114. The department's adult social care team has written to all carers known to their service to understand their experience of the pandemic and identify needs and service gaps.
115. City Connections will continue to host sessions online and raise awareness of other support services in order to address some of the significant isolation that carers experience.

## **Housing**

116. Service delivery from the Barbican Estate Office had to be prioritised, with the focus on enhancing the safety of the Barbican Estate in terms of cleaning and sanitising common areas and reducing personal contact with and between residents.
117. Although technology has generally worked well for managers and supervisory staff in the Estate Office, many frontline staff could not work from home. Robust procedures were implemented very early on in the lockdown to ensure that frontline staff were properly managed and supervised and, given the support they required.
118. Housing Management on the City's other estates has been delivered despite the closure of all Estate Offices, Community Centres and similar buildings and communal housing related facilities. All staff, except for frontline cleaning staff, were instructed to work from home. Services were prioritised, with the focus on enhancing the safety of residents on our estates.
119. Increased cleaning was focused on areas of high hand / touch contact. Concerns re: standards of cleaning have been and continue to be followed up and remedial action taken as required. It should be acknowledged that the vast majority of our cleaning staff take immense pride in their work and need to be praised for their standard of work.
120. Going forward we are keen to work with residents and commercial tenants to reduce litter and foster a sense of collective responsibility for keeping our estates tidy.
121. Technology has supported the delivery of many services as normal without estate offices being open to residents. The pandemic response has seen

greater urgency to secure changes to modernise service delivery. Many changes are eliminating paperwork where possible – such as online void inspection system and electronic tenancy sign-ups – and will improve efficiency.

122. There are plans to enhance ways of making payments - including a 24 hour payments phone line for rent payment to reduce the burden on the Rents Team. Other payments, such as fobs and parking, are under review too. The aim is to reduce our reliance on 'in-person' customer service for routine transactions.
123. Lockdown had a significant impact on the repairs and maintenance service as contractors 'furloughed' many of their staff. However, in the case of statutory repairs such as gas servicing, asbestos management, fire safety, water testing and electrical testing and the service has worked with these specialist providers to ensure compliance throughout the lockdown period.
124. Concerns arose about continued construction of the COLPAI site. Government allowed construction to continue with COVID security measures in place. The continued construction raised concerns about noise and failure of construction workers to properly socially distance. These were addressed with the contractor.
125. The department has struggled to balance the challenge of the need to build new social housing, the needs of the homeless and those in temporary or unsuitable accommodation, with the impact of construction on our residents. The department sympathises with residents who have and continue to be affected by noise and is keen to find workable measures that meet the complex matrix of needs.
126. The department has worked closely with local authorities where we have estates outside of the City and sought to provide useful information to all our tenants / housing residents via @Home Magazine, estate notices, emails, message boards and noticeboards. A number of our estates outside of the City are in areas where COVID rates and deaths have been high.
127. The department continues to deal with the serious financial implications for all major works contracts resulting from extended contract periods and associated costs. It must also balance the impact of delayed delivery on those acute housing need awaiting homes.
128. A key focus for the department is learning, developing and reviewing how best we support our residential and commercial tenants given the financial impact of COVID on them and the financial pressures on the HRA. A range of comms have been used to inform residents of the financial support that is available to them and we look to continue to refine and improve these.
129. We are aware that for some of our HRA commercial tenants the communication and requirements re: accessing support may have been confusing and we



welcome the engagement of local ward members in trying to address and improve this.

130. Based on our learning the department is keen to provide more information to residents on the impact on services – what we can do and, what we can't do within current or future Tiers, and encourage more feedback from residents on the reduced level of services we are providing to see how it is impacting on them.
131. We are grateful to residents associations such as GLERA, Barbican Talk and Portsoken WhatsApp groups who have used their websites and communication channels to share Covid information from the department.

## **Libraries**

132. The library service responded quickly and creatively to create an online offer to support as many of its community of users that it could at least reach virtually. A timetable of virtual events for adults and children was created. The service delivered remote IT training to help people use platforms such as Zoom, download e-Books, e-Audiobooks, e-Magazines and e-Comics.
133. Events include Digital Rhymetimes, craft activities for families, online reading groups, online talks and the online Dragon Café to provide an inclusive offer across the range of library users.
134. Outreach by phone to housebound users was also delivered and continues.
135. Barbican and Community Libraries Business Continuity Plan and COVID-19 continuity plans worked well in supporting continued delivery and resumption of library-based services.
136. The opening of physical library spaces has allowed access to the internet for those without facilities at home.
137. The libraries offer has formed a significant part of the department's support to the City's communities.
138. Our libraries have been the embodiment of flexibility, creativity, ingenuity and public service. The overwhelmingly positive feedback from user across the age ranges has been treasured by our staff. Staff continue to support learning across the sector, share models of delivery and look to provide new areas of provision if it is safe (Covid Secure) to do so.
139. The model of delivery has been transformed and a mixture of physical library provision and digital provision – 'libraries without walls' will remain.
140. Loss of income and budget pressures (2021/22) are ongoing challenges while living and working with the pandemic. Staff are facing all of this with stoicism, altruism and professionalism.

## **Adult Education and Skills (ASES)**

141. ASES are operating a successful hybrid model with those courses which can be offered successfully in a virtual mode, being offered that way and courses with a stronger need for face-to-face interactions are occurring in that mode.
142. The pivot to virtual occurred very rapidly and success was due to the training tutors received and a range of resources provided for online delivery. Improved online systems have developed including Moodle and Google classroom in addition to other systems.
143. Loan computers with internet capacity were purchased to enable any learner without computer access to virtually attend courses. The tutors provided one-to-one support and phone support for any learners needing assistance with accessing the learning.
144. A better and clearer web marketing and booking system is needed to support the service.

### **Apprenticeships**

145. Apprenticeships continued to be delivered flexibly (including through e-learning and remote learning) to those apprentices working from home. In the City, apprentices remained in employment and were not furloughed and have not to date been made redundant. The City's HR decisions have served to protect and support the City's apprentices.
146. There have been delays to End Point Assessments (EPA), but tutors ensured apprentices were updated. The City also automatically extended apprentices' contracts of employment in response to this and 'rolled over' Level 2 apprentices into Level 3 schemes.

### **Family of schools**

147. All schools in the family of schools have reopened and are reporting current attendance in line with normal rates of attendance except for where pupils or staff have been required to isolate. Throughout the pandemic, schools received regular updated COVID guidance and resources that can be distributed to parents, staff, and pupils to provide general guidance. These resources were in different languages, for SEND pupils and available in many forms included printed material, videos, animations, and phone messages.
148. Advanced training for leadership occurred in risk assessment and assurance and in equalities analysis. Schools worked closely in partnership including working collectively to ensure all pupil premium children and others without online access were quickly able to access computers with data and a range of high-quality online lesson material.
149. The schools are well-prepared to function safely under these circumstances but need to remain vigilant as a second COVID-19 wave is expected.

150. The volume of information sent to the schools was extraordinary and impossible for schools to adequately implement. In one month alone, over 300 separate documents, many more than 60 pages in length were issued as guidance.
151. The number of COVID home testing kits sent to schools is not keeping pace with demand and re-ordering of additional test is occurring. Continued awareness of the importance of effective test, trace, isolating strategies is important. All schools have prepared isolation and rapid closure plans. Certain local authorities where schools operate have quite high R rates.
152. In the City of London, the department was able to quickly secure provision of education hubs for both primary and secondary pupils if they were needed. Most schools across the family of schools remained open throughout the crisis and provided high quality education to vulnerable pupils and those of key workers. Attendance was generally low, but the pupils who did attend have benefitted from the provision in terms of both social and academic development. All schools offered virtual provision, and this was most successful when it was a timetabled provision with very clear and consequential expectations around attendance.
153. Additional mental health support services are available to both pupils and teachers. All schools have access to mental health training and have designed post-trauma recovery curricula. Additional training and support have also been provided to manage any behavioural challenges as pupils returned to school.

## **Public Health**

154. The Local Outbreak Control Plan secured good engagement from partners and colleagues in the public health response, particularly through participation in the health protection board (and its forerunner).
155. Weekly meetings with the education team and meetings with head teachers to answer questions directly were felt by officers to be effective and positive.
156. The NHS worked to its own national and regional command and control system, which either did not include local authorities, as local partners, or seemed to assume that the local authorities worked to that system of governance, too. This has meant doubling up on governance structures and has, again, led to confusion about where some decisions are made.
157. There remained some internal disjunction between the public health emergency response and the wider emergency response.
158. Testing capacity has been increased with the establishment of a local walk-in test centre.
159. The impact of COVID has driven a renewed focus within the department on equality and a focus on health inequalities via the Health and Wellbeing Board.

160. Departmentally and Corporately the department is keen to engage members in embedding / re-embedding a Health in All Policies (HiAP) approach.
161. As part of the wider determinates of health the department is keen to work across the corporation and communities to learn from best practice in developing a 'green' / environmentally friendly recovery.

## **Digital Inclusion**

162. The reliance on digital platforms for most communication and service delivery has been significant during the pandemic period.
163. The department acted ahead of government support to ensure children and young people at risk of missing education and learning due to digital exclusion were supported. Over 50 children and young people were identified and supported with devices and data to ensure they could access their education. Those targeted include children in care, those with special education needs and disabilities, children and young people engaged with Early Help services, and those identified by the Aldgate School.
164. Some children and young people in receipt of this help required additional support with technical issues and skills, for which the department had no dedicated capacity.
165. Access to free internet services was hampered by the closure of libraries and community centres.
166. For households required to shield, internet access could provide a means to shop and have social contact. At the suggestion of Members as scheme was mobilised to provide free data to low income shielding households.
167. The challenge of digital inclusion has been widely reported and recognised locally, regionally and nationally. The department is reviewing initiatives and best practice to identify how it can overcome device, skills and data poverty, and how such approaches may support wider objectives to tackle financial exclusion and social isolation.

## **Communication**

168. Finding channels to communicate effectively with all parts of our community (residential and business), in ways that accord with the Corporation's usual rules and regulations has been challenging.
169. There remains a significant reliance on digital tools and channels that do not reach all sections of the community.
170. However, the corporate communications team have also used letters to residents and City Matters to deliver key messages and information.

171. The department are additionally focusing on specific service user / client groups in order to target information and elicit their feedback.

### **Staff Welfare**

172. The pandemic has also been challenging for the department's staff. The initial focus was on supporting staff to deliver their roles during a period of rapid change, and deploying staff resources to meet the additional demands placed on the department.
173. In line with Central Government and PHE guidance / directives we continue to act to ensure staff are safe, and where their role could not / cannot be delivered from home, their delivery minimised the risk of infection and transmission.
174. Staff across the department, Corporation and schools have continued to attend their places of work and manage the risks of COVID to deliver frontline services.
175. The majority of staff have had to work from home. All home working staff have assessed their working environment and the department has provided equipment to support safe and effective delivery.
176. Many staff live in households with several home working adults or home-schooling children. Others may live alone and face the challenge of isolation from colleagues. The department also has staff required to shield, and those who care for shielding family members. Despite such challenges, the response from staff has demonstrated an outstanding level of professionalism, public service and commitment to protect the most vulnerable.
177. The priorities of the pandemic meant some staff – particularly in the initial period – were required to work long hours and had limited opportunity to take leave. Managers have been asked to ensure staff plan and take leave, and that they continue the range of initiatives to support wellbeing, team building and staff development.
178. Employment insecurity is affecting and concerning staff directly and indirectly due to budget pressures (savings proposals) and the impact of COVID on the economy for their families, friends and communities.
179. Recently the department has used a questionnaire and its network of managers to assess staff needs and seek feedback on opportunities to improve support.
180. Staff morale is understandably volatile, particularly as the pandemic continues and there is wider uncertainty. However, there continues to be a strong commitment to sustain delivery of all the department's functions and services.
181. The Director has emphasized the importance of embedding a culture of learning across the department and avoiding elements of toxicity. All leaders within a learning culture need to consider the language used, the impact and timing of their actions and have a pedagogy that values respect. During a prolonged pandemic that is affecting all our lives it is essential that elected

members, senior officers and community leaders demonstrate respectful challenge and civility (avoiding or calling out incivility).

182. Coproduction needs to underpin our recovery and engagement with our communities and service users.
183. The Director wishes to take the opportunity of this report to record his sincere thanks and gratitude for the hard work of all staff within the department.
184. He would also like to thank all residents, partners, members, volunteers and Corporation staff who have supported communities during these unprecedented times, contributed to ongoing learning and mutual respect.

**Simon Cribbens**

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FROM: **COMMUNITY AND CHILDREN'S SERVICES COMMITTEE**  
28<sup>th</sup> September 2020

TO: **DIRECTOR OF COMMUNITY AND CHILDREN'S SERVICES:**

## **Consultation on Covid-19**

RESOLVED, that – the minutes of the meeting held on 24 July 2020 be approved, noting that Ruby Sayed (Deputy Chairman) had been in attendance.

### **Matters arising**

1. A Member asked about a forthcoming report, due at the Committee in November, which would set out lessons learned re: the Department's Covid responses.

A Member asked the Director about including residents' views as part of the November report.

The Director questioned the timing and resources to undertake a full consultation now and suggested a wider consultation at a later stage.

A Member strongly expressed their desire for resident consultation but with an initial understanding of the Director's position re: resources to undertake an effective consultation. The Member also expressed reservations re: levels of understanding of the Civil Contingency Act.

A Member proposed a Motion.

A Member proposed that the responses would be made public and it was agreed with the Director that officers would simply collate the responses.

The Director suggested that the letter to residents' groups should be officer neutral. The Member proposing the Motion agreed to draft this, and would send it to the Chairman, Deputy Chairman and those Committee Members who spoke on the Motion, copied to the Director and Committee Clerk, within the next 24 hours.

It was proposed by Graeme Harrower, seconded by Sue Pearson and RESOLVED, That:

*'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 the next meeting of this Committee on 6 November 2020'.*

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## DCCS Covid-19 response - Comments from limited survey 1 - 19 October 2020

Comments
My general feeling is that the department has done very well. Education has been active throughout the pandemic and as far as I am aware - given all the obvious ongoing problems - institutions and providers have been very impressed with the level of support and advice from officers. It has been a huge operation to react to constantly changing government guidelines and there are bound to be pockets where things have not gone well. Delays to construction work - particularly at one school site - has caused unrest but then so did the start up of work for an entirely different set of reasons. I appreciate that some members representing residential wards have specific issues but in my ward there is praise for the way the City has communicated and they are very philosophical about the change to a 'new normal'. Problems have arisen with things like rubbish collection, our persistent rough sleeper who declined the offer of accommodation and so has become accustomed to having the streets to himself (he is really quite a problem for residents) and for
From a personal point of view I can report that the CCS team were quick off the mark by contacting elderly and ill residents to check on their well being on Monday morning. Wearing my CC hat I asked and was given assurance that residents who wished to give information of their needs particularly over this time were being visited. For further information I was visited yesterday by a nurse from the Newman Practice and given the
Thank you (and the Chairman) so much For this request for feedback. I don't feel really able to comment (not being a resident and generally having been absent from the City since March). My Barbican engagement though suggests generally a positive view (if I am not conflicted in commenting) - particularly Michael and the Estate team. I am sure whoever that the Director and team ensured a smooth service more widely. Very
I am not aware of any action taken by the Community and Children's Services Department in response to the Covid-19 crisis. I did receive an undated letter from the Lord Mayor and the Chair of Policy and Resources outlining online and telephone support available from the City of London. We have received considerable help and support from our local Waitrose. The new City Food Bank has been in regular contact and has been providing food for those residents who requested help. The government food parcels have been delivered for those residents who have been required to shield. We have had regular visits from the City police. Age UK
has kept in touch and offered support including organising regular phone calls for those who feel, or are
I am part of a household which was required to shield. My personal experience and that of the many other ward residents with whom I was in touch was of extremely encouraging mutual help. I'm aware that my ward has no social housing and probably very few people with material poverty and, therefore, is not comparable with some other wards. My impression is that most residents who are working have been working from home. I haven't had anyone request information about what they might obtain from the city, but have continued to deal with queries about pavement licences and failure to receive notifications of
Excellent, thank you
I believe the City Corporation's response to the Covid 19 has been good and it is clear to me that officers in the Community and Children's Services team have been trying hard to respond in a caring and supportive way to all of the various groups they serve. The briefings from the various Departments at the beginning of each Community and Children's Services Committee meeting have been clear and informative and from my

The people organising the support groups around the Barbican and the food bank will reply for themselves, but from my point of view as chair of the Barbican Association, I quote what I wrote in the BA Newsletter in April: "At [the CCSC meeting on Youtube] officers gave updates on what they were doing to manage the coronavirus crisis. They described a range of practical actions they were taking to identify and support vulnerable residents, adults and children; rough sleepers; victims of domestic abuse; school children; and residents in general, and how they were working with care providers and volunteer groups and others. I was impressed: the NHS isn't the only public service doing its best at this time. The City might have been a bit slow with its communications to residents at the outset, but it has clearly been putting practical help in place. And I'd specifically like to mention the BEO here, who despite having a lot of staff unable to work, moved swiftly to maintain some level of service and support vulnerable residents, and have continued to adapt their plans. That doesn't happen without planning and hard work. We should thank them. "

Negatives: I think the City in general was bit sluggish to get moving and say what it was doing at the outset. I am assuming that it did all the things it said it was doing (i haven't heard either way). It could have communicated better. It could also have played a stronger role in communicating supportive activities that

See appendix 1

See appendix 2

See appendix 3

See appendix 4

See appendix 5

On behalf of MSERA - Middlesex Street Estate Residents Association Committee

1. MSE (Middlesex Street Estate) Estate Office was closed during lockdown but has remained so, despite the Artizan Street Library reopening. Residents have been told that the Office is small and has difficulty being covid-compliant, and it has also been suggested that all CoL offices should re-open at the same time, not when each is ready. This is very frustrating for residents as we have been denied services, there has been a lack of contact and presence of CoL Officers on the Estate. No consideration has been given to temporary or alternative arrangements that might have improved contact points and addressed ongoing issues on the Estate.

2. The CoL did not proactively respond to the challenges presented by lockdown and instead residents and councillors were left to fill the gap, i.e. by starting covid support networks, food bank distributions etc. Residents saw their living conditions deteriorate on the MSE due to multiple factors, often linked to City projects or the disruption of services. Our views and needs were neglected, and residents on the MSE felt obliged to re-form a Residents Association in order to have a greater voice and seek proactive dialogue on various topics.

3. Where residents did take the initiative, the City was often obstructive and not helpful. For example: i) City tried to shut down the mask making project, and wrote threatening letters and used councilmen to pressure people involved to stop making free masks. ii) City shut down the free distribution of sanitizer sachets in the lifts after 6 weeks of successful operation. iii) City obstructed use of the Portsoken Community Centre "Green Box" facility on Mansell Street for food distribution, and changed the locks. Resolution of this took weeks.

4. Implementation of traffic measures and road closures was imposed with little consultation and thought about how they would affect residents. New signage and traffic flows remains confusing and disruptive to

1. As an elected Member for Cripplegate Ward I have had no communication from CCSC as far as I can remember.

2. It would have been useful to have had relevant information to pass on to my electorate, particularly those residents living in Golden Lane Estate. As a Barbican resident, I have had no communication from CCSC.

3. The initial advice from Barbican Estate Office was that COVID issues were a matter for each house group to deal with. However they subsequently helped in providing a coordinating role which I think was

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16<sup>th</sup> October 2020

Dear Committee Members,

As you are not proposing to undertake a formal consultation into the City's handling of the Covid 19 crisis I thought that, as Co-chair of the Golden Lane Estate Residents' Association, I would let you have my organisations's views on the response. I would be grateful if this can be taken as constructive criticism as this emergency has been unprecedented for the last fifty years and the community as a whole needs to discuss what can be done to prepare for a similar emergency, how the ongoing situation can be handled and how peoples' lives can be improved in the future.

My first concern is the state of emergency planning in the City. I assume that there was once a plan in place given the stock of emergency beds under Great Arthur House but we have seen, not just with the pandemic, but also with the gas leak in Basterfield House, the electrical fire in Crescent House some years ago and the recent lengthy electrical outage in Hatfield House that the ability to react to an emergency is lacking.

One of the main priorities of local government must be to make sure that its residents are safe and well during an emergency and if they are not, or are in danger, to take steps to protect them. It seems to many residents that the City acted quickly (and rightly) to protect its staff by making them work from home but did not take similar steps to make sure that residents and especially the vulnerable were also safe and well. I have heard that some residents got a phone call during lockdown asking if they were well but that there was no ongoing follow-up. This should have been possible as staff, working from home, will have had a reduced workload as they will not have been handling resident matters face-to-face. Local residents working together set up an emergency food bank supplying food to the vulnerable, those in financial difficulties and people who were having to self-isolate. This has been a community initiative and we are grateful for the Corporation allowing it to be established and which has engendered much community spirit and identified needs which the Corporation were obviously unaware of. However local authority input could have been invaluable not just to identify the vulnerable on the Estate but to help with sourcing and distribution. I realise that staff were working from home but the City has a duty of care to the volunteers and residents as well and one should not be traded off against the other.

Communication with residents was limited and largely relied on Facebook which many people may not have access to. The Estate also has a significant elderly population who may not use computers and a recent survey found that 10% of the estate's residents do not have access to broadband especially as the City's cloud service does not operate over many of the blocks. To communicate effectively with residents in the past, GLERA has found it necessary to leaflet the Estate rather than rely on electronic means and I would have hoped that the Estate Office would have realised this too.

The support and information given to City residents generally could have been improved. Below is the Covid page for residents from the Islington website.

<https://www.islington.gov.uk/social-care-and-health/coronavirus-covid-19/support-for-residents>

A Google search does not bring up an equivalent page for the City and if there is the equivalent financial support as that in Islington available then it has not been easy to locate.

Hackney appears to be planning for the future post-Covid and the aims of its action plan would be worth considering for the City:

<https://hackney.gov.uk/rebuilding-a-better-hackney>

While the Estate staff were working from home the level of cleaning on the Estate has not been maintained and it should be noted that even in normal times this does not meet the standards set out in the Service Level Agreement. Ideally cleaning would have been concentrated on disinfecting areas regularly touched by people but there is no evidence that this is happening. Cleaning of doors and lift operation panels should be happening anyway under the SLA but if this ever happens it does only occasionally.

Most of these problems with the operation of the Estate are a result of there being no management on site and there has therefore been no oversight of what has been happening. It should be noted that, although this is an unusual situation, the Service Level Agreement makes no allowances for emergencies and therefore standards should be maintained. The SLA also says that the cost to residents is dependant on the level of service provided and clearly a reduced service should result in reduced costs. That residents have been paying for the level of service set out in the SLA which, to my knowledge over the past 18 years, has never been achieved would suggest that the City has been over charging for some time.

The SLA also says that the City will:

- provide clear, timely and accurate information in relation to amounts of time spent on activities charged to the Service Charge Account
- provide residents with the information reasonably required to assess the value for money in respect of all costs, whether direct service costs or indirect costs, which are included in the service charge
- provide residents with performance monitoring data as set out in the Service Level Agreement, i.e. checklists

I cannot recall this data having ever been provided but would say that this is essential during the current situation to show how productive staff have been whilst working from home.

I would have been useful for the elderly and vulnerable on the Estate that some of the community facilities such as the Sir Ralph Perring Centre could have been reopened after the end of lockdown. Facilities in Islington, such as the community centre at St Luke's which was opened on 6<sup>th</sup> July., were reopened. If pubs could be open I do not see why a handful of elderly ladies could not use a room to play bingo once a week. The Sir Ralph Perring Centre provides a social centre for the elderly who will have been especially isolated during lockdown and there are sufficient responsible residents to act as key holders while the sports centre is closed.

There has been a failure to provide emergency access and access for residents with disabilities to be picked up and dropped off while the Estate Office was closed and vehicle access to the Estate was not possible during these times.

The work on site at the City of London Primary Academy Islington site continued except for a two-week break. It should be noted that works at the Denizon opposite Bowater House stopped for far longer and this was a commercial developer without a duty of care to residents. Work on COLPAI continued during the heatwave meaning that residents in Hatfield House and Basterfield House could not open their windows because of the noise and initially dust. I, personally, live on the ground floor of Hatfield House two flats away from the site and measured from my balcony there were intermittent levels of noise that are categorised as being dangerous to hearing and noise for prolonged periods as breaking World Health Organisation guidelines. Complaints to the COLPAI team were either ignored or dismissed in a cursory manner and we were fed spurious excuses why work must continue. There was a reluctance to appreciate that, while there might have been a financial imperative to finish the building on time, the City, as a client, also should take account of the mental and physical health of its residents. Leaseholders have in their lease a right to the quiet enjoyment of their property and as the City had control over this cause of annoyance it was defaulting on the leases.

Thank you for asking for residents' views on the City's response. Clearly if the City is to take on board criticisms some mechanism is needed to develop a plan to deal better with future emergencies and I would suggest that a resident/officer/common councillor working group should be established to develop this.

Yours faithfully,

Tim Godsmark  
Co-chair Golden Lane Estate Residents' Association

I am writing in my capacity as an elected member of the City of London Corporation and of its Community and Children's Services Committee (the "Committee") about the response to the Covid 19 crisis by the Department of Community and Children's Services (the "Department").

### **Deadline for responses**

The Department is seeking views from elected members and residents' and volunteers' representatives on its response to the Covid crisis pursuant to a motion that I put at the meeting of the Committee on 28 September. The motion was unanimously passed. I volunteered to draft the request for responses, and within 20 hours after the end of that meeting had provided a draft letter to the Chair of the Committee and to the Department. The letter was sent out the following day.

I had suggested that the deadline for responses be the end of Sunday 25 October, allowing a few days for them to be published in the agenda pack for distribution around Friday 30 October for the Committee meeting on Friday 6 November. The Department, however, wanted the deadline to be Friday 16 October. This deadline would give the Department more time to collate the responses than the members and representatives would have to write them. The respondents would be writing their submissions in their spare time, unlike the Department's staff, who would be collating the responses as part of their paid employment. The Department indicated that the responses would need to be subject to a GDPR check, but this check should not take long, as the respondents would be advised in the letter not to identify individuals, and it was reasonable to expect them to comply. The Department refused to set the deadline any later than the morning of Monday 19 October. This deadline still gives the Department as much time to carry out a couple of minor administrative tasks (collation and GDPR check) as it has given the respondents time to write their submissions.

I am making this point in my submission because I think it does of itself illustrate a major problem in the response of the Department to the Covid crisis. The Department, and the Corporation generally, seem to operate according to rigid and unduly long timescales, which accommodate the convenience of officers more than those whom they should be serving, in this case the residents.

### **COLPAI construction works**

I give my views on the Department's handling of this issue in this blog that I posted on the Golden Lane Estate website: <http://www.goldenlaneestate.org/profiles/blogs/city-corporation-continues-to-fail-residents> .

### **General approach of the Department**

On 20 May, an open letter was sent to the Department on behalf of a number of residents on Golden Lane Estate expressing deep concerns about the COLPAI construction works continuing during lockdown. The Department sent a substantive reply on 14 July - eight weeks later. Although the Department apologised for the delay and explained this was due to "a lot of research that needed to be done and information was required from several different teams", this delay was not acceptable. Internal procedure is never a valid excuse for a service organisation to give to a customer. The organisation should ensure its internal procedures work in such a way that the customer receives a satisfactory response within a reasonable timescale.

Not being given within a reasonable timescale was not the only problem with the Department's reply. The other problem was its content. In an email from the residents on 27

July, the Department's reply was described as not "a response, it's an essay in evasion and self-justification".

Here are a few excerpts from the residents' email concerning particular aspects of the reply:

"The comments made about mental health support would be offensive if they weren't absurd: the point the response carefully misses is that it is the City itself which has caused great distress to a number of vulnerable Golden Lane residents by persisting with noisy construction work only a few metres away during lockdown and done nothing to support them.... How is the Southbank Centre's *"fantastic and free initiative bringing free poetry and visual art activities"* relevant to residents effectively trapped during lockdown in their flats shaking with vibrations from the building site?....

After weeks of delay, you use words like "exploring", "considering" and "reviewing" several times each. How much "exploring", "considering" and "reviewing" does it take to do things like meeting your commitment to clean residents' dust covered windows?....

Covid 19 has created challenges for all of us, however there is no excuse for abandoning community meetings. You say, *'We are considering the possibility of setting -up digital platforms to host virtual meetings'* but we fail to understand why you are only now considering this as a possibility. The City has been holding virtual internal and public meetings on Zoom and Teams for over 3 months surely it could have arranged at least one for resident stakeholders over the 5 months that have now been missed.

Will the project team or City ever acknowledge that it might have got something wrong? Or will it carry on with the pretence that everything it does is right, and - when anyone queries this - send defensive and evasive responses like this one?

When will the possibilities referenced in your letter become actual actions?"

On 14 August the Department sent an email to the residents, saying:

"We are satisfied that [its reply] does address the key points raised by you and other residents in your Open Letter....

The City Corporation has not abandoned community meetings. COVID-19 has completely changed the way staff at the City Corporation have worked and the way services have been delivered over the last four to five months. The level of confusion and uncertainty created by COVID-19 made it extremely difficult for us to continue with the community meetings in any meaningful format and, it is only very recently, that the City Corporation has deemed it appropriate for Officers to look to set up online meetings where it is beneficial and practical to do so...."

Even a cursory review of the correspondence (which is reproduced in its entirety in the comments on this blog: <http://www.goldenlaneestate.org/profiles/blogs/mental-health-awareness-week-open-letter-to-colpai-project>) reveals that the Department's claim that its reply "does address the key issues raised....in your Open Letter" is unfounded.

The statement about "the level of confusion and uncertainty created by COVID-19" is a separate cause for concern. Any large organisation, and particularly one like the Corporation which has responsibility for vulnerable people, should have in place a contingency plan in the event of a major disruption to service. A pandemic is an entirely foreseeable contingency. A proper contingency plan should have resulted in no "confusion and uncertainty".

I have described this correspondence not only to illustrate the Department's inadequate response to the issue of the COLPAI construction works, but also to illustrate fundamental issues with the Department's general approach, including:

- a lack of contingency planning
- delay



- a lack of creative problem solving, and
- evasion and self-justification when questioned.

### **Recognition of volunteers**

In the meeting of the Committee on 28 September, the issue was raised of the Corporation recognising the work done by resident volunteers during the crisis. Members suggested that the Corporation could send a letter to each volunteer thanking them for what they have done, and perhaps produce pin badges for those who want them to recognise their involvement.

I understand that the Square Mile Food Bank has been asked for a list of its volunteers, presumably for this purpose. But the GLE Covid 19 Hub has not. It is obviously important that all volunteers are recognised. Details of the others are easily obtainable from the relevant persons.

At the Committee meeting, the Chair of Policy, who sits on the Committee, made an alternative proposal that the volunteers be recognised in some kind of “Hidden Heroes” event at the Guildhall. I strongly oppose this. The Corporation is adept at staging events which praise others, so that reflected glory falls upon itself. It is especially not acceptable that the Corporation makes PR capital out of its failure to respond to provide adequate support to its own residents in the Covid crisis, which is why the volunteers had to do so much in the first place.

**Councillor Graeme Harrower**

**18 October 2020**

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## **My views on the Department's response to the Covid-19 crisis to date**

**18 October 2020**

### **PREAMBLE**

I am responding as a resident of Golden Lane Estate and community volunteer. I have looked after the community website and newsletter for a number of years. During Covid 19 I implemented the administrative infrastructure for the GLE Covid 19 HUB, which I managed with our resident Councillor. The HUB is GDPR compliant and offers support, advice and protocols for volunteers and connects them with residents in need.

Whilst we all appreciate that these are challenging times, responding to these challenges is a job of work in order to provide a service with professional standards. The general response of the City did not reach those same standards we volunteers set and maintained for the HUB. I was not furloughed and like many people who were lucky enough to keep their jobs, work demands did increase with managing a transition to homeworking and remote communications etc. During this time I felt that in effect I had two jobs, and that my service charge was paying someone to do the work I was in fact doing.

**As a community volunteer I expected to be supported - the efforts of volunteers should complement rather than replace a City of London response.**

### **EARLY DAYS**

In the week before lock down anxiety levels on the Estate were rising and it was obvious something needed to be done. It was clear that residents were being left to self-organise. The HUB was set up and first flyer delivered to residents on **24 March, followed by further flyers on 30 March, 9 April and 20 April.**

### **LOCAL KNOWLEDGE**

Through the HUB communications (email, flyer, phone support and door knocking) we were able to uncover 'hidden needs' particularly around food and internet connectivity. Initially it felt like our findings were denied by the Department, and our on the ground knowledge discounted. There is now some acceptance that there was and will continue to be a Covid related food need and connectivity is a big issue BUT the action required to remedy these problems is painfully slow in implementation.

### **HIDING BEHIND GDPR**

GDPR is designed to protect the privacy of individuals and should not be used as an excuse not to inform residents about what is going on. This is particularly important to stop panic and rumours. If a Covid death happens on the estate then surely residents in that block should be told in a considered formal way, with relevant information about how to protect themselves, be more vigilant etc rather than through a grapevine?

## CITY COMMUNICATIONS

I posted all City Communications on the GLE website as and when they were received, with an overview so residents would know what info they would find behind each link: <http://www.goldenlaneestate.org/page/covid19>

**18 March:** Letter to Community Groups

<http://www.goldenlaneestate.org/page/covid-19-message-to-community-groups>

*'Rather than look to encourage or develop new groups to respond to coronavirus, we are encouraging those that are already organised by local communities for local communities.'*

At the start of the outbreak there were clearly opportunities for the unscrupulous to take advantage of the vulnerable and scared. This note from the City whilst highlighting this didn't offer any points of contact if you thought neighbours were being exploited or where support for existing groups may come from, or even where to find information on public health. Basically not useful for residents, more of a liability reducing exercise for the City.

**19 March:** Letter delivered to all residents

<https://storage.ning.com/topology/rest/1.0/file/get/4178331711?profile=original>

Whilst a useful letter some of the web links were incomplete / inaccurate. I corrected them for the website.

**30 March** Councillors provided with letter to forward to residents seeking advice

<http://www.goldenlaneestate.org/profiles/blogs/covid-19-a-letter-from-the-corporation-to-all-residents>

Whilst the letter contained useful information this put a huge burden on our single residents councillor on how to distribute the information. This should have been delivered in letter form to all residents.

**28 April** Letter to community volunteers re community food based distribution

After sharing the letter with HUB volunteers I felt compelled on 5 May to take the time to respond – something we were invited to do. One comment from a volunteer:

*'I often think GLE would be much better off managing ourselves than folk who don't live here and are so far removed from the realities of our community that they constantly put their foot in it like this.'*

My response was critical of the tone of the letter and the obvious PR wash but I did make constructive suggestions for moving forward. I received no response.

**@Home newsletter** 3 editions: **27 March; 9 April; 7 May** I posted on the GLE website

Key observation: the City must create a regular email newsletter for the Estate. This shouldn't replace other methods but be in addition. I have offered to help on a number of occasions. The community newsletter gets opened by well over 200 residents and here has been little effort made to grow the sign ups.

## **CONTACT WITH OFFICERS**

By April a number of Officers were getting in touch offering help but in reality the help flowed the other way and I was asked to disseminate City communications on the GLE website, in our flyers etc

An example - an Officer sent through emails and websites of a number of companies delivering food, acknowledging that it may be out of date. This was useful but we needed an up to date list with telephone numbers for vulnerable residents with no internet access. Myself and another volunteer therefore had to make our way through the whole list, finding phone numbers and calling them to check their delivery criteria etc. Residents were anxious enough – they did not want inaccurate information. It would have been useful if the Officer had recognised this and done the research themselves.

I would be happy to discuss contact with individual Officers – both positive and productive, negative and undermining, as a follow up.

## **GOING FORWARD**

As a matter of urgency a task force of Officers, our resident Councillor, GLERA representatives and nominated residents should be set up. Volunteers want to understand what is reasonable to expect from the Corporation and the extent of CoL's duty of care to which residents. The City must be more flexible and proactive in its efforts to find solutions. We can then find a way to work together in these difficult times to make sure all residents are offered the appropriate support and information.

Residents are responsive and can feedback the on-the-ground experience, the City should offer timely support, structure, protocols, accurate and properly researched information.

If there is another lockdown the City must liaise more closely with residents affected by the COLPAI construction and come to a reasonable and speedy resolution about levels and duration of noise, or offer respite facilities. It is very clear that residents suffered immensely from the stress of noise, dust and fumes during the lockdown. An open letter to the COLPAI Project on behalf of 30 residents took **over 8 weeks** to get a response.

<http://www.goldenlaneestate.org/profiles/blogs/mental-health-awareness-week-open-letter-to-colpai-project>

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Below are my views on the response to the Covid19 crisis by the Department of Community and Children's Services of the City of London Corporation. I am giving these views in my capacities as a member of the Corporation, representing the ward of Cripplegate which encompasses Golden Lane Estate (GLE), as a resident of GLE and as a local volunteer.

### **Information from the Department**

Information has been sent out by the Department in @home, a digital magazine, with information about what to expect from the estate team and where to get help, but it has been only sent to those residents who have given their email addresses.

The Department's weekly Facebook page is posted as a pdf on the GLE website with information, but nothing was provided during the lockdown in printed format, e.g. door leafleting by staff or information in the post. This is a major failing. The residents most in need often do not have internet access. To fill the gap left by the Department, GLE Covid Hub, established by volunteers, produced and distributed door to door leaflets, with information about the GLE Covid Hub, and regular updates of contact details for help and local information.

As a member I was not informed for weeks after lockdown began that the Corporation's post room had been closed and that nothing was being posted.

### **Communication with the Department**

The requirement that members only use the dedicated Covid19 email address during lockdown resulted in emails being triaged, often not understood and leading to a long dialogue to get an answer to the question.

As an example, I sent an email to this Covid19 email address asking that volunteers on GLE be provided with name card lanyards, so that when they went around the estate providing assistance they could be readily identified as volunteers doing essential work and not seen as residents flouting lockdown. The Guildhall had a large stock of these lanyards lying unused because it was closed. After a delay, I received an irrelevant response to my email about the view of the City Police, and no offer to provide the lanyards. Eventually a fellow member went in person to the Guildhall to collect a batch of them from the security guard, who using common sense willingly handed them over. This caused an issue at a higher level in the Corporation about procedures not being followed, but eventually it was recognised that the lanyards should be provided for the volunteers, and an officer came to the estate to give me a further batch. It took a lot of time and effort on the part of two members in the face of what appeared to be sustained resistance from the Corporation to get this little help that it could and should have so easily given.

I found that calling the Department to get help for GLE residents often resulted in calls being passed from one person to another, sometimes returning to original recipient of the call without resolution.

### **Referral and GDPR**

A small number of referrals were made from the Department's hotline to myself about residents seeking help, but most came directly to the GLE Covid Hub hotline or by word of mouth.

I asked if information about GLE residents who were vulnerable or shielding could be made available to me, understanding the limitations imposed by GDPR. I understood that these residents were being called by officers, so they could simply have been asked if they were happy for their information (name/ address/ contact details) to be given to me or to the GLE Covid Hub. It might not have been a full list, but it would have been easier and quicker if something as simple as this had been done at the outset. It was not, and to this day I am unaware of the full number of vulnerable tenants and leaseholders.

I am also unclear as to how regularly the vulnerable residents were phoned and what happened as a result of these calls. I know that residents say that they are OK, and may be that week, but not the next. I know of at least one case where it became obvious to volunteers that the resident needed help, and they persuaded the resident to call social services, as there had been no follow up calls from the Department to check their situation.

### **Community engagement**

Despite the Department having a community engagement team, I am unaware of any attempt by it to engage with the community until recently in relation to an art project. In the past few months, many people have visited the GLE Community Centre to find out about courses, youth club and social events. These inquiries have had to be dealt with by Square Mile Food Bank volunteers, as no information has been provided by the community engagement team. Some people were turning up to pay fees for lessons because the automatic email response said that the centre would be taking fees between certain hours. Eventually the email response was amended, and a poster appeared on the door, but only providing the address of the YMCA for the youth club.

Although the Community Centre has been taken over by the Square Mile Food Bank as its base for doing essential work on GLE and other parts of the City, the Perring Centre on GLE has been

unoccupied and provides a large room which would be perfectly suitable for socially distanced meetings. There appears to have been no thought given to opening up this space as soon as the easing of restrictions allowed. I asked in the meeting of the Community and Children's Services Committee in July about resuming events for small groups of elderly single residents, who were obviously suffering from social isolation. Three months later, the bingo group has still not been able to meet in the Sir Ralph Perring Centre. St Luke's Community Centre opened its doors on 6<sup>th</sup> July and held social events, provided lunches and other helpful sessions, but nothing was put in place for our residents, and still is not as we go back into partial lockdown.

The community has itself organised a plant giveaway day, an art competition, an internet access survey, an Easter egg giveaway (with the Square Mile Food Bank), monthly play pack deliveries to children (with Culture Mile), the resident's association AGM and continues to support those we know who still need help.

### **Support for elderly residents**

There is a large elderly population on GLE who have been seriously let down. Age UK City of London and the Memory Club provided weekly activities for older residents pre Covid. Age UK City of London tried to hold an outdoor concert on the estate, but the request was turned down by the Department. It was held in Tudor Rose Court, but as it was in an internal courtyard, only Tudor Rose residents could attend. I have already mentioned the elderly residents who play bingo. Resident volunteers were happy to open up, prepare and clean the centre after they left, but there seems to be no trust in our volunteers, and the proposal was turned down with the suggestion that the time be changed to suit estate staff who would then monitor the session.

### **Lack of trust in volunteers**

This lack of trust also means that since the Square Mile Food Bank opened in the Community Centre, I have physically locked and unlocked the building every day. Before the Food Bank used the building, when the Community Centre was fully functioning, the physical lock was unused, and the electronic lock was the only security measure, but the volunteers running the Food Bank were not trusted to be given the code, or the keys.

### **COLPAI construction works**

Whilst understanding that there are commercial contracts in place, there appeared to be little or no consideration by the Department of the effect of continuing work on residents under lockdown conditions, and no meaningful communications from the Department on why work was continuing. The closure of the site was brought about by residents, implying that there was no oversight of site conditions and that commercial decisions were more important than the duty of care. Once work restarted, still under severe lockdown conditions, no provision was put in place for respite for families under particular stress, or even advice on how to reduce sound transmission. Unless a resident had signed up for the email COLPAI newsletter, there was no information.

### **Internet access / digital exclusion**

Throughout the Covid crisis the Department, and Corporation as a whole, has ignored the fact that it is likely that the most needy and vulnerable are digitally excluded because of age, infirmity or poverty. This continues today with information distributed to our estate residents via the Department's Facebook page.

The residents' internet access survey found that 10% of our homes did not have internet access despite there being free wifi in most of the business City, a project that cost £5m but excluded our residential areas. Following pressure by members, limited short term access was provided to a limited group of residents, but many are still without access as they did not fit the category specified.

### **Conclusion**

#### **Coverage**

While a system of providing support for those in need was established by the Department, its coverage was limited, and relied heavily on volunteers to fill the gap without giving them the help required to ensure all in need were covered. Digital exclusion does not appear to have been taken into account, and is still largely ignored, despite these being the people who are often most vulnerable and in need.

#### **Speed of response**

Response was laboured and slow, often needing multiple inputs and with unclear paths ...some things like opening up community facilities have just not happened.

#### **Creative thinking**

There was little creative thinking or work arounds, but a lot of reasons why something could not be done.



## Re. Corporation response to us as a Food Bank:

Unhelpful at best, actively a significant hindrance at worst.

**We absolutely recognise that we are a random group of residents who are providing very small service in the overall context of the CoL operations. However, the way that the CoL works (or doesn't work) exacerbates these issues.**

1. Refusal to engage in a meaningful way - No one has taken up our offer to visit and see what we are doing and build trust in us.
2. The lack of empowered employees to make decisions at the appropriate level has meant that all petty items have to go all the way up to a senior officer to be resolved.
3. A labyrinth of people to navigate to find anyone who can be of assistance, generally with a negative, inflexible attitude whose first response is always 'No'. Not suitable for a pandemic crisis response.
4. A focus on process for its own sake, with hours devoted to Zoom meetings (where the main point has been to read aloud an email sent the prior week, wasting over 5 man hours of volunteer time with nothing important discussed, much less resolved), allocation of tasks, etc, but no focus on delivery
5. What can be most charitably described as a slapdash attitude towards work. Not answering phones, not replying to messages or emails (or only partially, ignoring substantive issues), conflicting instruction and advice given by people within the same area as well as different (perhaps commissioned) areas, maintenance of drains, etc
6. **One of the most egregious examples is the failure of the Supermarket Voucher Scheme. These were not validated for use before being distributed, therefore people were subjected to the humiliation of being turned away at the tills with full baskets**
7. We have been able to operate successfully because of the support of a network of lobby porters, CPAs, estate office staff and City bin men. They are the heroes.
8. Rules, seemingly for their own sake. Refusal to engage to find practical solutions to substantive issues
9. Patronising and untrusting and obstructing (keys, chaperoning, as well as talking about us, not to us which, shockingly, continues right into our current transition to FLF phase)
10. Not understanding where people are at: please use our fabulous website, internet/ email newsletters . We have volunteers without home internet or smartphones, imagine our beneficiaries.
11. Poor communication, in general.
12. Massive wasting of our time, which is the only resource we have. We dare not think about what more we could have achieved, if we could have devoted that time to forging new partnerships, seeking donations, etc

## Positive Experiences

1. The most important is being designated as the City of London Food Hub for the London Food Alliance.

2. Grant funding of £11,000, which has been decided quickly, apparently. We had been operating for 2 months on £500 before the first tranche was received.

This is just an outline list of issues we have faced. Once we have turned over to FLF and have some time, we will be more than happy to discuss everything in more detail.

**Re. Corporation response to us as resident volunteers:**

1. There has been an expectation that resident volunteers will undertake all work required to look after vulnerable residents. Little support has been given to either the vulnerable residents, or the volunteers. On the contrary, if any vulnerable residents have contacted the Corporation or Estate Offices for assistance, they have been passed straight to the resident support groups.
2. No way to get help with easy things / systems difficult to navigate: for example the government box scheme. Boxes turned up outside the doors of people in Barbican who hadn't registered as requiring them. No way of cancelling them. Some placed outside doors of residents who were living out of London - no way for volunteers or Barbican staff to establish whether they had been incorrectly delivered and whether there were therefore people in need who hadn't received them.
3. Difficulty in contacting Corporation workers except via email. Often issues with tardiness in, or entire lack of, response. Even when phone numbers given, phones were infrequently answered. For example the number of people who came to the door of the Golden Lane Community Centre having been given incorrect information that courses/classes/youth groups were starting at (or needed to be paid for at) the centre. No response when they or we tried to ring to clarify (with the exception of Adult Education who did at least respond to our email).
4. As House Group Covid volunteer organisers of two different blocks on the Estate, we have never been offered any support by the Corporation.
5. As mentioned in point 10 above, the assumption is that all residents have access to the internet. Comments have been made by the Corporation that there has been little takeup of the email 'newsletters' relating to Covid. However, many vulnerable residents within the City Estates do not have internet access or computers. They feel very isolated as no information is given to them - indeed the Barbican Estate Office email has a tag on it requesting that the volunteer neighbours print off a copy for neighbours who may not have internet access. However, it is 20 pages long and mainly has links to other websites for more information on anything. Not helpful for people without internet.

<b>Committee:</b>	<b>Date:</b>
Community and Children's Services Committee	6 November 2020
<b>Subject:</b> Decisions taken under delegated authority or urgency powers since the last meeting of the Committee	<b>Public</b>
<b>Report of:</b> Town Clerk	<b>For Information</b>
<b>Report Author:</b> Julie Mayer	

## **Summary**

This report advises Members of actions taken by the Town Clerk in consultation with the Chairman and Deputy Chairman, in accordance with Standing Order Nos. 41(a) and 41(b) since the last meeting.

**Recommendation** – Members are asked to note the actions taken since the last meeting of the Committee.

## **Pan-London commissioning support**

The City of London Corporation has been asked to act as the commissioner of a number of pan-London drug and alcohol services for people who sleep rough, or who have been accommodated from the streets. The role will require establishment of a small team. The funding of the Corporation's role, and the services that will be commissioned, is sought through a number of bids to a funding pot made available for this purpose by Public Health England. This urgent decision sought approval for the Corporation to undertake this role if bids are successful.

## **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.

## **Contact:**

Julie Mayer

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