

COMMUNITY & CHILDREN'S SERVICES COMMITTEE

Friday, 5 March 2021

Minutes of the meeting of the Community & Children's Services Committee streamed to You Tube at <https://youtu.be/NFYAPRNzpVY> 11.00 am
(please note recording is available for one year from the date of the meeting)

Present

Members:

Randall Anderson (Chairman)	Graeme Harrower
Ruby Sayed (Deputy Chairman)	Sheriff Christopher Hayward
George Abrahams	Deputy Jamie Ingham Clark
Munsur Ali	Alderman Alastair King
Matthew Bell	Natasha Maria Cabrera Lloyd-Owen
Peter Bennett	Deputy Catherine McGuinness
Mark Bostock	Benjamin Murphy
Deputy Keith Bottomley	Susan Pearson
Mary Durcan	Deputy Elizabeth Rogula
Helen Fentimen	James de Sausmarez
John Fletcher	Sir Michael Snyder
Marianne Fredericks	Dawn Wright
Caroline Haines	
The Revd Stephen Haines	

Officers:

Andrew Carter	- Director of Community and Children's Services
Sandra Husbands	- Director of Public Health, City and Hackney
Chris Lovitt	- Deputy Director of Public Health, City and Hackney
Carol Boswarthack	- Community and Children's Services
Simon Cribbens	- Community and Children's Services
Chris Pelham	- Community and Children's Services
Paul Murtagh	- Community and Children's Services
Jason Hayes	- Community and Children's Services
Gerald Mehrstens	- Community and Children's Services
Ellie Ward	- Community and Children's Services
Mike Kettle	- Community and Children's Services
Michael Gwyther-Jones	- Community and Children's Services
Scott Myers	- Community and Children's Services
Julie Fittock	- City Surveyors
Ola Obadara	- City Surveyors
Steven Chandler	- City Surveyors
Graeme Lowe	- City Surveyors
Mark Jarvis	- Chamberlains
Julie Mayer	- Town Clerks
Chandni Tanna	- Town Clerks – Communications Department
Jim Gamble	- Independent Child Safeguarding Commissioner, City and Hackney Safeguarding Children Partnership (CHSCP)
Rory McCallum	- Senior Professional Adviser for the CHSCP
Mark Golledge	- Neighbourhoods Programme Lead

1. **APOLOGIES**

Apologies were received from Tijs Broeke, Alderman David Graves, Alderman Bronek Masojada, Deputy Joyce Nash, Henrika Priest 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 public minutes and non-public summary of the meeting held on 29th January 2021 be approved.

4. **OUTSTANDING ACTIONS**

The Committee received its outstanding actions list. The Chairman asked for the completed actions to be removed.

5. **REVIEW OF COMMITTEE'S TERMS OF REFERENCE: COMMUNITY SAFETY AND PUBLIC PROTECTION**

The Committee considered a report of the Town Clerk in respect of an amendment to the Committee's Terms of Reference. The Town Clerk agreed to check the Terms of Reference in respect of City Resident Members being able to stand as Chairman/Deputy Chairman of the Committee, as it was noted that this part of the Standing Order had previously been revoked.

RESOLVED, That - The Terms of Reference of the Community and Children's Services Committee (set out at Appendix 1) be approved and recommended to the Court in April 2021, subject to the following addition under 2 (b) viii:

Safer Communities

'In order to reflect a multi-agency approach to public protection, the Chairman or Deputy Chairman of Community & Children's Services Committee shall also be elected as Chairman of the Safer City Strategic Partnership Group (SCSPG), with the Chairman or Deputy Chairman of the Police Authority Board acting as Deputy Chairman'.

6. **COMMUNITY CENTRE (20 LITTLE SOMERSET STREET)**

The Committee considered a report of the Director of Community and Children's Services which sought approval for the City of London Corporation (the Corporation) to enter into a 15-year lease for a new Community Centre at 20 Little Somerset Street. The Committee noted that the new centre is being delivered as part of the Minories development, as a requirement of planning consent.

In response to questions the following points were noted:

- I. Whilst there was a chance of some impact from Covid, completion was still expected at the end of May 2021.

- II. A breakdown of proposed rent was set out in the non-public appendix 2 to the report. Appendix 3 to the report set out a business planning exercise, which sought to give reasonable assurance of breaking even under normal circumstances. However, there was some uncertainty in the immediate term and post-covid recovery, which would be underwritten by the Department. Members had already agreed that the Department should run the Community Centre initially, and any significant budgetary issues would come back to the Committee at the earliest opportunity.
- III. The terms of Green Box Lease require the City of London Corporation to give notice to Guinness, remove the structure and make good the area on which it stood. However, discussions were underway with partners to explore options for alternative temporary use that would transfer the obligation to remove the Greenbox. There would be a transition period and soft launch of the new Centre.
- IV. The local community welcomed the opening of their new community centre and Members asked if bookings could resume with the easing of lockdown. The booking and marketing of the new centre will be led by a centre manager and Assistant Director was awaiting guidance from HR colleagues in respect of management and staffing arrangements.
- V. The Town Clerk would seek expressions of interest from Members willing to serve on the Advisory Board, in order to make an appointment at the next Committee meeting.
- VI. Officers were meeting regularly with the developer in respect of the office block development and will seek to mitigate any significant impact on the Community Centre through these meetings.

RESOLVED, that:

- i. The lease with 4C Hotels for a duration of 15 years be approved, with annual costs as summarised:
 - a. Rent in Year 1: £20,300 rent (net of VAT) inclusive of agreed services
 - b. Rent in Years 2 to 5: £25,050 rent per annum (net of VAT) inclusive of agreed services
 - c. Inclusive rent to be reviewed every five years by CPI.
 - d. Insurances: Proportional recharge of rebuilding insurance costs currently estimated to be £1500 in Year 1.
 - e. Other costs: DCCS to be responsible for outgoings as consumed, or in proportion (power, water).
- ii. The financial issues which may arise from the challenging operating environment in which the centre will open, and the removal of the redundant existing facility, be noted.

7. HRA COMMERCIAL TENANTS AND COVID-19 - RENTAL SUPPORT (MARCH QUARTER 2021)

The Committee considered a report of the Director of Community and Children's Services in respect of the assistance packages provided to support its HRA commercial tenants during the COVID-19 pandemic.

The Committee had received the Resource Allocation Sub Committee's (RASC) non-public minutes ahead of this meeting. Members also noted that the Court of Common Council had agreed unanimously to establish a business support fund but the details had not been finalised. Members strongly agreed that the City Corporation should seek to retain its tenants, rather than risking long term voids and noted that the decision of the Court would lessen the burden on the HRA. In order to allow eligible tenants within the City the opportunity to access this fund to support the repayment of deferred arrears, the City Surveyor presented an additional recommendation*.

Members had also received comments from the Middlesex Street Retail Association ahead of this meeting. The Committee noted how this group had experienced considerable difficulties over the past year, and might never return to pre-pandemic trading levels; limiting their chances of being able to catch up on deferred rents. Concerns were expressed by Members about the affordability of repayment plans risking more voids and unsettled debts.

RESOLVED, that:

1. Deferment of the full quarter's rent due from 24 March 2021 to 23 June 2021 be approved for all 'at risk' tenants requesting further support. NB. This will delay the estimated income outlined in Appendix 2 (non-public) until 24 June 2021, payable thereafter by equal monthly payments over 24 months or, for shorter leases, on terms to be delegated to the Director of Community and Children's Services (DCCS), in consultation with the City Surveyor and Chamberlain, excepting only, those tenants that have already paid or wish to pay the March 2021 quarter's rent.
2. Deferment of previously agreed, 24-month or tailored repayment plans due to commence in March 2021, at a combined value noted in Appendix 2, will now include the full rent deferral from 24 March 2021 to 23 June 2021, and be repayable from June 2021, on terms to be delegated to the DCCS, in consultation with the City Surveyor and Chamberlain, excepting only those tenants that have already paid or wish to continue to pay their rent.
3. The use of rental deposits be approved, where applicable, as part of the repayment plan to support tenants, the terms of such use, being delegated to the DCCS in consultation with the City Surveyor and Chamberlain.
4. The potential budget implications of the recommendations above, as set out in Appendix 2 (non-public) be noted.

5. It be noted that, where leases are close to expiry, it will be possible to offer terms for new leases, which will include provision for the repayment of deferred rents, subject to assessment of a reasonable prospect of the tenant's ability to repay.
6. It be noted that all tenants will be invoiced for the March 2021 quarter rental payments, consistent with previous quarters.
7. It be noted that, in the absence of agreed payment plans (either if a tenant refuses to engage on a case by case basis or, if terms cannot be agreed) it is expected that the Chamberlain's Department, in consultation with the Comptroller and City Solicitor, will continue to pursue all operational tenants for debt using such remedies that are currently available and further means, subject to Government lifting the restrictions on pursuing forfeiture that are currently in place until 31 March 2021.
8. It be noted that, the 'case by case analysis' of tenant's financial status and trading position will now be suspended until June 2021. At this point, recommendations on non-standard, tenant specific repayment plans for payment of the rent due for the full year period from 25 March 2020 to 24 March 2021, will be developed and submitted jointly by the City Surveyor and the Chamberlain to the DCCS and this Committee for approval.
9. It be noted that, following evidence provided in the case-by case analysis, this Committee may decide to provide additional support to that outlined above or support to tenants not within the originally classified 'at risk' category.
10. *As part of case by case considerations, authority be delegated to the Town Clerk, in consultation with the Chairman and Deputy Chairman of the Community and Children's Services Committee (or within the permitted Officer Scheme of Delegation) to allow eligible tenants the opportunity to access the new COVID Business Recovery Fund, as considered by the Court of Common Council on 4/3/21, once the details are fully known.

8. CITY OF LONDON PRIMARY ACADEMY, ISLINGTON (COLPAI) - LICENCE TO THE PRIMARY ACADEMY OVER HOUSING REVENUE ACCOUNT (HRA)

The Committee considered a report of the Director of Community and Children's Services in respect of a small strip of land (approx. 2m²) off Baltic Street West, situated in the vicinity of the boundary between the new City of London Primary Academy Islington School (the Academy) and Hatfield House. Members noted that it had been previously assumed that this section of land was public highway but on further consideration has been confirmed as HRA land.

There was some challenge as to the timing of this report, given that granting of the Licence would only be valid once the Planning Condition, in respect of deliveries and refuse removal, had been discharged by the City of London Corporation and the London Borough of Islington. Members noted that resident

consultation had taken place in August 2020 and a solution offered to the objections raised. There was also a point of clarity in terms of 24/7 deliveries, in that they would only take place during the School's opening hours. Members also noted that Hatfield House's refuse would be collected at the same time as the School, in order to limit disturbance.

The Director advised that, in presenting this report today, officers had sought to avoid undue delays by ensuring that everything was in place. However, the Director agreed to check the impact of a delay in agreeing the Licence on the ability to draw down DfE funds and welcomed a deferral period in order to do so.

It was proposed by Deputy Bottomley, Seconded by Sheriff Haywood and RESOLVED, that:

Once the Planning Condition in respect of refuse collection and deliveries has been discharged by the London Borough of Islington and the City of London Corporation, authority be delegated to the Town Clerk, in consultation with the Chairman and Deputy Chairman of the Community and Children's Services Committee, to exercise the Committee's Housing Authority capacity, in order to allow the use of the HRA land (shown on the plan included as Appendix 1 to the report) by the Academy, and authorise the grant of a Licence to the Academy on the terms outlined in the report.

9. **COVID-19 UPDATE**

The Director of Public Health for the City and Hackney and the Director of Community and Children's Services were heard in respect of the latest position in London and the Committee noted the following points:

- a) Infection rates has fallen considerably since the last meeting on 29th January 2021, with London having the lowest rates in the UK, after the South West. The number of City cases was down 100% on last week's rates but a small number of residents can cause large fluctuations. There had been no cases in the over 60s group since the middle of February, and most of the cases in recent weeks had been amongst the working-age population.
- b) There had been good progress with the vaccination programme in the City, when compared to North East London, but the NHS, CCG and the City and Hackney GP Confederation were working to improve this. There had been a good uptake in the City, with 1700 first doses administered, and over 80% uptake in the over 65 group. All second doses would be administered in the same place as the first, including Barts, which was no longer offering first doses.
- c) Three City pharmacies had applied to administer vaccinations, a tender process was underway and the successful bidder would be supported by the City and Hackney. One of the bidders would need support in terms of

accommodation and the Director would be discussing this further with the relevant Members. Member Susan Pearson was thanked for her assistance in this matter.

- d) The number of vacant premises in the City was acknowledged, however, the NHS was seeking to close the gap between those readily taking up vaccines and those having practical difficulties in reaching vaccination venues or more general concerns about its safety. Measures to resolve this were likely to include 'pop-up' clinics in community venues, with volunteer support in terms of language difficulties etc., and this might include the use of some of the City's vacant premises. There was a further comment in that the City would like to open up again, cautiously, once the data permits.
- e) The Government was encouraging businesses with 50 or more employees to organise on site testing, with assistance from the Department of Public Health. The City Corporation will continue to support businesses with less than 50 employees, via community testing. Self-regulation was being promoted for private testing, and the City has a standard response which encourages engagement with the Department of Public Health and their call out for new research into methods of testing.
- f) The Director of Public Health stressed the importance of continuing with social distancing and hand hygiene whilst the vaccine programme is rolled out, as they are all essential to ensuring that infection and transmission rates fall to an acceptable level. The Director also felt that it was too early to consider planning large, face to face meetings. Whilst the UK's approach has been measured and cautious, the majority of adults in the UK and around the world still need to be vaccinated and it was difficult to predict how long this might take in some countries.

10. **UPDATE FROM THE COVID-19 WORKING PARTY**

The Chairman had provided a summary of the meetings undertaken by the Working Party and thanked Member Sue Pearson for her input. There was strong support for the action point in respect of appointing a 'Carers' Champion' from the membership of the Committee, as this would provide a point of contact. There was a view expressed in that the Working Party had been helpful in drawing out the issues, mainly around communications.

Members suggested that it would be helpful for the Working Party to have a final wrap-up meeting and for the Committee to receive a final report in response from Officers.

RESOLVED, That – the report be noted and the suggestion for a final working party meeting.

11. **CORPORATE PARENTING ANNUAL REPORT 2019/20 AND CORPORATE PARENTING STRATEGY UPDATE**

The Committee received a report of the Director of Community and Children's Services in respect of the performance of the City Corporation as a corporate

parent, and the outcomes achieved for the children in its care during 2019/20. Members noted an error in that the main report had been watermarked as 'draft'.

In response to a question, the Committee noted that the City of London Family Therapy Training Clinic is a partnership arrangement with Kings College, providing trainee therapists to work with vulnerable children and their families, alongside their social workers and based on the City's Model. The Assistant Director offered to provide more details on request. The Sleep Therapy work was targeted at unaccompanied asylum-seeking children who had experienced trauma.

RESOLVED, that – the report be noted.

12. **CITY & HACKNEY SAFEGUARDING CHILDREN PARTNERSHIP (CHSCP) ANNUAL REPORT 2019/20**

The Committee received a report of the CHSCP In line with statutory guidance (Working Together 2018); i.e. - in order to bring transparency for children, families and practitioners about the activity undertaken, safeguarding partners must publish a report at least once in every 12-month period.

Members commended an excellent report and thanked officers for their hard work in helping young people through the pandemic. Members also noted that the City of London and Hackney had won a bid to become a pilot in a strategic approach to scrutiny activity, which sought to avoid duplication of effort. The bid would provide funding for a Partnership Strategic Analyst, covering a skills gap in this area. In addition to the Statutory Annual Reports, this additional data resource would enable Members to receive quarterly risk assessments.

RESOLVED, that – the report be noted, in particular the sections setting out progress on implementation of the new arrangements, Covid-19 and the strategic priorities of the CHSCP going forward.

13. **DIRECTOR OF PUBLIC HEALTH REPORT FOR 2019/20**

The Committee received the Director of Public Health's Annual Report (DPHAR) for 2019/20. Members noted that the report had also been presented to the Health and Wellbeing Board, which would be monitoring the actions and outcomes. The Committee noted that the 2020/21 report would focus on the health impacts of the economic recession and how they can be mitigated.

RESOLVED, that – the report be noted.

14. **INTEGRATED CARE - NEIGHBOURHOODS MODEL**

The Committee received a report of the Director of Community and Children's Services in respect of the Neighbourhoods Model, which was part of an approach to integrated health and social care, based on joining up health and social care services, so that people are supported to live healthy lives, and receive the right level of care and support when they need it. The report updated Members on the evolution of neighbourhoods, what it means for City of London residents, and the further work underway.

RESOLVED, That – the report be noted.

15. DIGITAL INCLUSION PROJECT

The Committee received a report of the Director of Community and Children's Services in respect of the City Corporation's project to strengthen digital literacy and close the digital divide among its residents as we recover from the COVID 19 pandemic.

The Committee noted that the report responded to some of the recommendations from the Covid Working Party. The Chairman referred to the City's redundant laptops and suggested a resolution to the Digital Services Sub Committee requesting that they be donated to the community service sites. Members were very supportive of this suggestion, which would also boost the high take up of adult education courses. There was a further suggestion in that some of the laptops could be set up in the community centres, once they re-open, with training provided. Members commended Appendix 1; i.e. - 'How to access our current offer' and asked for it to be communicated widely. In response to a question, it was noted that the Golden Lane paper-based IT survey had received a 75% response rate.

RESOLVED, That:

1. The current activity in place to support digital inclusion for City residents and the approach set out to develop and deliver a programme of support be noted.
2. The Digital Services Sub Committee be asked to give consideration to donating redundant City of London Corporation laptops to community services sites, as suggested above and as part of the digital inclusion project

At 12.50 pm Member agreed to extend the meeting to conclude the business on the agenda.

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

1. The Judicial Review Hearing in respect of the Mais House Planning Application had been scheduled for April 2021.
2. Request for a report on progress on the City Wellbeing Centre following its first year of operating. In respect of an allegation of some 'hard sell' in respect of counselling services, the Director advised that the City of London Corporation's complaint service should be used for individual cases and agreed to investigate the wider issue of fee transparency.
3. There would be competing needs for the Community Centres once they re-open, and the Director would speak to the relevant Members in order to gain a steer on priorities.

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

The Chairman and Town Clerk had discussed scheduling the Committee's Autumn meetings to follow the same pattern as last year; i.e. – to hold meetings in late September, early November and mid-December. The Town Clerk would email Members with the amended meeting invitations.

In response to a question about holding meetings in the evening, the Chairman advised that this would be considered as part of the Governance Review, under 'Committee Structures' and any changes would be in place before the intake of new Members in March 2022 following the all-out Common Council Election.

18. **EXCLUSION OF THE PUBLIC**

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

Item no	Paragraph No.
19-28	3
29	1,2,3 and 4

19. **NON-PUBLIC MINUTES**

RESOLVED, that – the public minutes of the meeting held on 29th January 2021 be approved.

20. **PROPERTY PROJECTS GROUP (PPG) COVID-19 CAPITAL PROJECTS FUND - UPDATE**

The Committee considered and approved a report of the City Surveyor.

21. **1ST FLOOR MIDDLESEX STREET, CAR PARK, MIDDLESEX STREET E1 7AD - LEASEHOLD DISPOSAL TO BANKSIDE GROUP LTD**

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

22. **MIDDLESEX STREET, CAR PARK, MIDDLESEX STREET E1 7AD - CITY OF LONDON POLICE OCCUPATION UPDATE**

The Committee received a report of the City Surveyor.

23. **AVONDALE SQUARE ESTATE - GATEWAY 2 (ISSUES REPORT)**

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

24. **CLIMATE ACTION STRATEGY - HOUSING UPDATE**

The Committee received a report of the Director of Community and Children's Services. Members acknowledged that resident engagement is crucial to the success of the Strategy, they were aware that residents were keen for it to progress and can make a valuable contribution. *Subsequent to the meeting, a public, redacted version of the report was added to the public part of the Committee's web page for this meeting.*

RESOLVED, That – the report be noted.

25. **COMMUNITY CENTRE (20 LITTLE SOMERSET STREET) - APPENDIX**
The Committee received a non-public appendix in respect of agenda item 6
26. **HRA COMMERCIAL TENANTS AND COVID-19 - RENTAL SUPPORT (MARCH QUARTER 2021) - APPENDICES**
The Committee received 2 non-public appendices in respect of agenda item 7.
27. **QUESTIONS ON MATTERS RELATING TO THE WORK OF THE COMMITTEE**
There were no questions whilst the public were excluded.
28. **ANY OTHER BUSINESS THAT THE CHAIRMAN CONSIDERS URGENT AND WHICH THE COMMITTEE AGREE SHOULD BE CONSIDERED WHILST THE PUBLIC ARE EXCLUDED**
There were no items whilst the public were excluded.
29. **REVIEW OF COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT AND RESIDENT INVOLVEMENT CONFIDENTIAL**
The Committee considered and approved a confidential report of the Director of Community and Children's Services

The meeting ended at 13.40 pm

Chairman

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