

COMMUNITY & CHILDREN'S SERVICES COMMITTEE

Thursday, 22 September 2022

Minutes of the meeting of the Community & Children's Services Committee held at Committee Rooms, West Wing, Guildhall on Thursday, 22 September 2022 at 2.30 pm

Present

Members:

Anne Corbett	Deputy Natasha Maria Cabrera Lloyd-Owen
Mary Durcan	Owen
Helen Fentimen (Deputy Chairman)	Alderman Ian David Luder
Deputy John Fletcher	Alderman Bronek Masojada
Deputy Marianne Fredericks	Deputy Susan Pearson
John Griffiths	Jason Pritchard
Florence Keelson-Anfu	Ceri Wilkins

Officers:

Andrew Carter	- Director of Community and Children's Services
Simon Cribbens	- Community & Children's Services Department
Jason Hayes	- Community and Children's Services Department
Dr Sandra Husbands	- London Borough of Hackney
Mark Jarvis	- Chamberlain's Department
Julie Mayer	- Town Clerk's Department
Paul Murtagh	- Community & Children's Services Department
Chris Pelham	- Community and Children's Services
Chandni Tanna	- COLC
Ellie Ward	- Community and Children's Services Department
Nicholas Welland	- City Surveyor's Department

1. APOLOGIES

Apologies were received from : Naresh Sonpar, Ruby Sayed, Henrika Priest, Ben Murphy, Tim McNally, Frances Leach, Alderman Alastair King, Alderman Gregory Jones, Jamel Banda, Coraline Addy, John Absalom, Steve Goodman, Sophie Fernandes, Joanne Abeyie, Philip Woodhouse, Matthew Bell, Aaron D'Souza, Munsur Ali, Jamel Banda and James Bromiley-Davis.

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

John Fletcher declared a general non-pecuniary interest in respect of agenda item 5, as his wife works for the Adult Skills and Community Learning Department.

Susan Pearson declared a general non-pecuniary interest in respect of agenda item 7, as she might be indirectly affected by the proposals for winter measures.

Before commencing the business on the agenda, the Deputy Chair advised that the Chair had asked for updates from the Chairs of the Sub Committees and the various Lead Members to be a standing item on future agendas. The first of these updates would take place on today's agenda, before questions and items of urgent business.

3. **MINUTES**

RESOLVED, that – the minutes of the meeting held on 20th July 2022 be agreed as a correct record, subject to noting that John Griffin was in attendance at this meeting.

During the summer recess, the Chair and Deputy Chair had visited the City of London's Corporation's housing estates, both in and out of the City.

Matters arising

- The Head of Housing Management was arranging a number of walkabouts and informal meetings to both the City and out-of-City Estates. Once finalised, the dates would be shared with Members of the Grand and Sub Committees.
- The Director had met with the Tudor Court's Residents' Association, ahead of a legal planning meeting to consider whether Counsel's advice would be required. Members would receive a non-public update at the next meeting of the Committee.
- The Housing Revenue Account (HRA) Review was being led by Chamberlains, who had engaged Saville's to review its delivery in terms of the 5-year budget forecast. Members would receive an update at the next Committee.

4. **OUTSTANDING ACTIONS**

Members asked if the actions list could include allocated officers and target dates.

In terms of the food poverty actions, the Director reminded Members they had agreed to this be progressed through an overarching approach to poverty, and this appeared later on the agenda (item 6).

5. **ADULT SKILLS AND COMMUNITY LEARNING: OFSTED INSPECTION REPORT - JUNE 2022**

The Committee received a report of the Director of Community and Children's Services in respect of the full Ofsted Inspection of the City of London Corporation's Adult and Community Learning Service, which had taken place in June 2022.

Members congratulated the team on the outcome. Officers advised that they were working with the GLA to reduce the number of sub-contractors and to deliver as many in-house services as possible. Minor issues were being resolved, and Members were invited to help steer the team in their community work.

RESOLVED, that – the overall rating of good be noted.

6. **RESPONDING TO POVERTY AND COST OF LIVING PRESSURES**

The Committee considered a report of the Director of Community and Children's Services, which set out actions and proposed activities in response to cost of living pressures. It also sought approval for an amendment to the Stronger Communities Grant Programme.

Members commended a good report and practical suggestions. During the discussion and questions, the following points were noted:

- a) Officers accepted that 'warm spaces' might not work for everyone, but would increase opportunity, and vulnerable residents would continue to be referred to Social Services.
- b) A Member reported difficulty in accessing the Emergency Support Service webpage. The officer agreed to ask the Benefits Team in Chamberlains to investigate. Members were informed that the London Borough of Lambeth administers the fund for the City Corporation.
- c) The Housing Support Fund targets residents known to their services and need of support, and those in receipt of welfare benefits
- d) The Multi Officer Steering Group has only just been established and is yet to agree its Terms of Reference.
- e) Some actions are being taken forward by partners. The Department is not able to identify leads for all actions given limited resources, but the action plan will help to identify gaps.
- f) It was suggested that there could be conflicting messages in respect of the 'Warm Winter Welcome' and 'Destination City' communications. The officer agreed to raise this with the Communications Director.
- g) It was suggested that warm space opportunities for workers should be promoted, as it may be cheaper to travel into the City than work from home during the winter months.
- h) St Luke's is a highly valued community facility providing food support and warm space and should be promoted.
- i) It was suggested that public access computers were provided at the Community Centres.

- j) The availability of warm spaces grants may open up facilities and provide more opportunities to run events on the estates. The Stronger Communities Grants are available for amounts above £2,000; the application process is simple and grants can run concurrently or successively.

RESOLVED, that :

1. The Action Plan be strengthened to include timings and officer accountability.
2. An amendment to the Stronger Communities Grant criteria be approved, to allow a 6-month 'warm spaces' criteria, to fund activities and spaces over the winter period.

7. **HOUSING SPECIFIC WINTER MEASURES**

The Committee considered a report of the Director of Community and Children's Services which sought Members views and approval, if appropriate, to a suite of housing specific thermal winter measures to homes on its social housing estates, where residents will have at least one more winter with poorly performing single-glazed windows.

During the discussion and questions, the following points were noted:

- a) Officers had taken advice since the agenda had been circulated and Members noted that it would be illegal to fund the rent credit via the HRA. It would also be illegal to offer HRA services to leaseholders.
- b) There was adequate funding within the existing budget but, as the proposals represent a change of scope, they would need formal approval via the City Corporation's Project Gateway Process.
- c) The cost will be around £600 per property but not all homes would need them. The thermal curtains cost £90 per window.
- d) Once the recommendations had been agreed, works would start immediately and October and November generally see milder temperatures.
- e) Officers will work with colleagues in Chamberlains, to make the process as streamlined as possible, and present a timetable to the next Committee.
- f) Officers work closely with the Climate Action Team and would give consideration to the use of Energy Doctors, which have been successful in the London Borough of Islington. Energy Doctors are also able to carry out 'fall assessments', which are a particular danger to older residents during cold spells.

- g) Some residents are reluctant to let contractors into their properties as they have concerns about disruption and unfinished works. Members sought assurance of open and constructive communications and consultation.
- h) The City Corporation offers services to leaseholders for electrical testing and gas servicing, and encourages them to join schemes, where they will benefit from economies of scale. Quick wins could be achieved in terms of jackets for water tanks, for example.
- i) Temporary glazing is a cheaper option than secondary or double glazing and will be considered.

RESOLVED, that:

- 1. Having considered the suite of housing specific thermal winter measures proposed for homes on the City of London Corporation's social housing estates, where residents will have at least one more winter with poorly performing single-glazed windows, officers be asked to consider Members' views and suggestions, as set out above.
- 2. All of the housing specific thermal winter measures set out in the report be approved, together with Members' further suggestions set out above.
- 3. All of the housing specific thermal winter measures be offered and rechargeable to leaseholders on the social housing estates in question.

8. **CITY & HACKNEY HEALTH AND CARE PLACE BASED PARTNERSHIP - DRAFT TERMS OF REFERENCE**

The Committee considered a report of the Director of Community and Children's Services in respect of the draft Terms of Reference for the bodies that, as a whole, represent the City and Hackney 'Place Based Partnership'. The report sought a delegated authority, to enable timely decision making, in the event of the next City and Hackney Health and Care Board falling before this Committee's next meeting.

During the discussion on this item, the following points were noted:

- a) Officers explained that the Terms of Reference would allow specific parties to agree Section 75 arrangements – which allow pooling of local authority and health funding.
- b) The Terms of Reference need to be refreshed as the Clinical Commissioning Group (CCG) no longer exists. The Sub Committee will still be appointed by the Community and Children's Services Committee and make decisions with Hackney Members.
- c) Members requested a flow chart/organigram to illustrate the various structures.

- d) In response to a question about community and voluntary sector representation, it was noted that Hackney Council for Voluntary Service (HCVS) works close with City organisations and helps represent their views alongside partners such as City Healthwatch and City Connections. The Director of Public Health advised that HCVS is seeking to expand its City based community and non-profit organisations and is considering rebranding to reflect this.
1. Strategies such as the Joint Health and Wellbeing Strategy and Better Care Fund will continue to provide strategic direction alongside links to the City's Health and Wellbeing Boards.

RESOLVED, that:

2. The draft Terms of Reference be noted.
3. Authority be delegated to the Town Clerk, in consultation with the Chairman and Deputy Chairman, to approve the terms of reference for the City and Hackney place based partnership arrangements.

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

There were no questions.

At 4.20pm, Members agreed to suspend standing orders in order to finish the business on the agenda.

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

Updates from the Chairs of the Sub Committees and Lead Members.

Further to the discussion earlier on the agenda in respect of the Placed Based Care Partnership, Members noted that the first meeting had taken place and future meetings would be alternated with development sessions. From January 2023 onwards, the dates would not clash with Court of Common Council days.

Florence Keelson-Anfu had been working with officers in respect of a City Corporation UN Accreditation for Young People and welcomed input from Members in terms of work, study and recreation. Anne Corbett was thanked for her contributions in respect of carers. The Lead Member had also been working with fellow Ward Members in Farringdon, in terms of quick wins in play areas, as some places simply required better signage.

Anne Corbett advised that the number of carers had increased, with 600 self-identified in the City, and the Census data was expected at the end of October. Whilst the Carers' Group valued City Connections, they welcomed the Tower Hamlets pilot appointment at the end of October. The Group have ongoing concerns about the cost of living and are pleased that face-to-face meetings have resumed.

The new High Support Hostel was expected to open in November 2022, and the Chair would arrange a visit for Members in due course. The next meeting of the Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Sub Committee was scheduled for 3rd October 2022. There was a report on this non-public agenda about the Assessment Centre and a request for a delegated authority.

The Chair and Deputy Chair of the Housing Management and Almshouses Sub Committee had been visiting the City's Housing Estates during the summer, including those outside the City. Some quick wins had been achieved and the Chair and Deputy Chair felt that they had made good connections with residents, particularly at Sydenham Hill. All Members were invited to provide input to the new Customer Services and Care Review.

There has been a temporary remedy to the problems with static electricity on play equipment and officers were looking for a permanent solution.

The Safeguarding Sub Committee had not met since the last Committee and was due to meet again on 10th October 2022.

Complaint issue following a leak

A Member raised an issue arising from a recent complaint about a leak, where calls went unanswered, were picked up by answering machines and not returned, and/or the wrong advice was given by contractors. The leak had persisted for several days with no updates to residents. The Assistant Director had visited the tenants and investigated the issue. Whilst accepting that there would always be a risk of leaks, Members felt strongly about the service failures in this case and stressed that a resolution must not wait until the completion of the Customer Service Review.

The Director advised that he would carry out a full investigation and provide all Members of the Housing Sub Committee with a response. The Director also advised that the Housing Sub and Grand Committees would receive a report on repairs and maintenance at their next meetings, specifically in terms of repairing leaks, and presenting a timeframe. The Director also stressed the importance of Member feed-back on the Communications and Customer Service Review and advised that there had been a consultation session with residents last week.

In closing the meeting, the Committee thanked Executive Director of Community and Children's Services for this excellent service over the past 5 years and wished him well in the future.

11. **EXCLUSION OF THE PUBLIC**

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

Item no(s)	Para No(s)
13-18	3

12. **NON-PUBLIC MINUTES**

The minutes of the meeting held on 20TH July 2022 were approved.

13. **NON PUBLIC ACTIONS**

The Committee received the non-public action list.

14. **ARTIZAN STREET LIBRARY**

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

15. **HOUSING REVENUE ACCOUNT (HRA) COMMERCIAL TENANTS UPDATE**

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

16. **ASSESSMENT CENTRE FOR ROUGH SLEEPERS - GW4/5 - REQUEST FOR A DELEGATED AUTHORITY**

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

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

There were no questions whilst the public were excluded.

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

The Chair agreed to accept an item of urgent business in respect of a capital funding shortfall on the Rough Sleeping Assessment Centre project. The Committee considered and approved a report of the Director of Community and Children's Services

Chairman

Meeting ended at 5pm

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