

**HOUSING MANAGEMENT AND ALMSHOUSES SUB (COMMUNITY AND
CHILDREN'S SERVICES) COMMITTEE**
Monday, 24 May 2021

Minutes of the meeting of the Housing Management and Almshouses Sub
(Community and Children's Services) Committee held at VIRTUAL MEETING –
ACCESSIBLE REMOTELY on Monday, 24 May 2021 at 11.00 am

Present

Members:

John Fletcher (Deputy Chairman)
Mary Durcan (Chairman)
Randall Anderson
Marianne Fredericks
Susan Pearson
William Pimlott
Peter Bennett
Ruby Sayed
Caroline Haines
Deputy Jamie Ingham Clark

Officers:

Paul Murtagh	-
Liam Gillespie	-
Jacqueline Whitmore	- Community & Children's Services
Julie Mayer	-

1. APOLOGIES

There were no apologies

Randall Anderson (Deputy Chairman of the Grand Committee) took the Chair until the new Chairman was elected.

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

There were no declarations.

3. ELECTION OF CHAIRMAN

The Sub Committee elected a Chairman in accordance with Standing Order 29. Being the only Member expressing a willingness to serve, it was RESOLVED, that – Mary Durcan be appointed as Chairman of the Housing Management and Almshouses Sub Committee for 2021-22.

4. ELECTION OF DEPUTY CHAIRMAN

The Sub Committee elected a Deputy Chairman in accordance with Standing Order 30. The immediate past Chairman exercised the right to serve as Deputy Chairman for the year and it was RESOLVED, that - John Fletcher be

appointed as Deputy Chairman of the Housing Management and Almshouses Sub Committee for 2021-22.

5. **MINUTES**

RESOLVED, that - the public minutes and non-public summary of the meeting held on 22nd March 2021 be approved as a correct record.

Matters arising

The Chairman advised that the Planning Conditions in respect of the COLPAI Development had been discharged last week. Members noted that the Grand Committee had agreed to delegate authority for granting the Licence to the Town Clerk, in consultation with the Chairman and Deputy Chairman.

6. **ALLOCATED MEMBERS TO THE VARIOUS HOUSING ESTATES**

As there was a standing vacancy for an allocated Member for the Sydenham Hill Estate, Members agreed that it be offered to all Members of the Grand Committee.

7. **OUTSTANDING ACTIONS**

The Sub Committee received the actions list and noted those items which would be discharged on today's agenda. Members welcomed the addition of vehicle charging points for Middlesex Street and Golden Lane.

8. **PORTSOKEN COMMUNITY ENERGY PROJECT - ALDGATE SOLAR POWER (ASP)**

The Sub Committee considered a report of the Director of Community and Children's Services, which updated Members on progress and sought approval to proceed with the installation of community-owned solar panels on the Middlesex Street Estate in August 2021. Members noted that the project would be the City of London Corporation's first community-owned solar power station.

In response to questions, the following points were noted:

- a) The saving represented a 5% reduction on the unit price of electricity purchased by the City of London Corporation for the Middlesex St Estate.
- b) The figure of £6,000 was based on today's purchase prices plus inflation. The supply would benefit community supply and not residential usage.
- c) Electricity charges were likely to rise the next 20 years. Repower is a not-for-profit community organisation, working with the City of London Corporation, and hence the pricing cap. Although electricity prices tended not to drop, the price floor would be helpful on the co-op side, to ensure it remained financially viable.
- d) Whilst there was a consensus of support for the project, a couple of views were expressed in that the pros and cons and financial analysis could be articulated better. However, it was noted that the savings estimate was a

minimum and it was expected to be higher. There would also be a full financial disclosure, as part of the share offer, and Repower offered to share this with Members on request.

- e) Repower had been working with the City of London's Energy Team in respect of future projects. There had been a lot of engagement pre the pandemic, which would continue as lockdown eased, and the co-ops would also encourage behaviour change.
- f) Repower have been teaching young people about solar energy, running apprenticeships and holding workshops to help residents save on energy bills.
- g) All insurance aspects had been explored with the Chamberlain's Insurance Team and there would be no impact on other masts or community spaces.
- h) The Grand Committee would need to approve the Power Purchase Agreement and Licence, and the next iteration of the report would seek to address the queries raised at today's meeting.
- i) It was anticipated that the panels would be installed on the roofs by August 2021, and the community share offer would be launched in the Spring of 2022.

In concluding, the Chairman thanked Common Councillor Jason Pritchard, for his tenacity in this project over the past 3-4 years, and the officers for their support.

RESOLVED, that – the installation of community-owned solar panels on the Middlesex Street Estate by Aldgate Solar Power (ASP) in August 2021 be approved. *NB. the Licence and PPA would need to be agreed by the Grand Committee.*

9. HOUSING POLICY REVIEWS - EXTENSION OF REVIEW DATES

The Sub Committee considered a report of the Director of Community and Children's Services in respect of the housing management policies, which was largely complete.

Members noted that, should any of the policies require an urgent update, the Sub Committee would receive them before the dates set out in the report. It was suggested that, whilst the Community Centre Policy is generic, the Portsoken Community Centre is progressing its management model and it should, therefore, be reviewed before the others. The Deputy Chairman advised that this community centre differs from the others, as it is not located on an estate, and asked if it could be reviewed in March 2022.

RESOLVED, that – the review of Housing Policies be agreed, as set out in Appendix 1 to the report, with an amendment to include a review the Portsoken Community Centre in March 2022. *NB During a discussion at agenda item 11, in respect of the 'No Access Policy for Cyclical Electrical Testing', Members agreed that all other services requiring access policies be collated and added to this list.

10. FIRE SAFETY UPDATE - HRA PROPERTIES

The Sub Committee considered a report of the Director of Community and Children's Services in respect of progress made in relation to fire safety matters since the last update report in November 2020.

The Assistant Director advised that sprinklers had been discussed at some length at both the Community and Children's Services and Projects Sub Committees. Members of the Community and Children's Services Committee had recently received a myth busting document, which had been circulated to residents. The Project Manager was finalising a communications protocol across all estates and was happy to share this with all Members and/or discuss it with the relevant Ward Members. Members noted that the protocol included the offer of 1-1 contact with residents. The Assistant Director advised that the sprinklers would work in all flats where the heads had been installed and, access was not required to all flats for the system to function. However, the City Corporation is striving to install them in all properties, particularly in the aftermath of Grenfell and a recent fire at Canary Wharf.

Following the completion of the destructive testing of fire doors, Members noted that the works to Holloway Estate would take place first. The Project Leader explained that some bespoke elements concerning York Way would require additional costing but works to both estates would start on site in the Summer of 2021. In respect of the replacement of front doors in Petticoat Tower, notices had been posted in respect of asbestos removal, and the remaining 50% of works would commence as lockdown eased.

The Assistant Director advised that a new round of fire risk assessments would be completed this year, and on the advice of the fire officer, the 5 high rise blocks would be inspected first. By the next meeting of the Sub Committee in July, it is expected that Turner Townsend, the City Corporation's approved consultant would have submitted a full programme, setting out when each block would be risk assessed. Once the assessments had been carried out, the Sub Committee would receive a new action plan, reflecting the works done and any further legislative changes.

In response to questions, the Assistant Director advised that the fire sprinklers and doors were classified as improvements and residents would not be recharged. However, the maintenance costs of the doors and sprinkler would be rechargeable under the terms of the Lease.

RESOLVED, that – the report be noted.

11. NO ACCESS POLICY FOR CYCLICAL ELECTRICAL TESTING

The Committee considered a report of the Director of Community and Children's Services in respect of an access policy for cyclical electrical testing. Members noted that the proposed new policy would set out formally the City Corporation's approach to gaining access to complete a fixed wire test in those properties that are difficult to access.

The officer explained that such policies were necessary for example, as evidence of clearly set out and communicated procedures for tenants in the event of Ombudsman referrals and, whilst there was currently no formal policy in respect of electrical works, there was in respect of gas works. Members suggested that all other services requiring access policies be collated and added to the list at item 9 above*.

RESOLVED, that – the ‘No Access – Electrical Safety Policy’ be approved for use under the Electrical Testing Programme.

12. HOUSING MAJOR WORKS PROGRAMME (MWP) - PROGRESS REPORT

The Sub Committee considered a report of the Director of Community and Children’s Services in respect of progress made in relation to the Housing Major Works Programme and the issues affecting progress on individual schemes.

In response to a question relating to the Window Replacement Programme and subsequent problems with condensation, the Assistant Director advised that both passive and mechanical ventilation would be important factors, particularly in bathrooms and kitchens, and in properties where there are no facilities for drying clothing.

The Assistant Director advised that, whilst this report set out a 5 year programme, unforeseen delays and additional works meant that it had extended to 7-8 years. In response to a question, it was noted that the next stage of the roof replacement programme for the Golden Lane Estate would be a Gateway 1-2 report, to approve funding for staff costs and, the appointment of a design consultant. Members noted the complexities in the design of some of the roofs on the Golden Lane Estate, and officers would be extending the current MWP programme timeline to include works coming late into the programme. It was anticipated that Members would receive a revised plan before the September meeting of the Sub Committee.

Officers had previously submitted to this Sub Committee a further list of major works for consideration, following the completion of the current programme. Once funding was in place, it would be presented formally to the Sub Committee, so that Members could consider both plans in parallel. The Assistant Director explained that the works were ringfenced within the HRA Account and Housing Financial Plan, which had been overseen by the Chamberlain and approved by Members, and further projects would be subject to a similar approval process.

RESOLVED, that – the report be noted.

13. FIRE RISK ASSESSMENTS FOR VULNERABLE RESIDENTS

The Sub Committee received a report of the Director of Community and Children’s Services in respect of a new procedure for risk assessing vulnerable residents who may need help evacuating in an emergency situation, or benefit

from further help and advice on fire safety issues in their homes. Members noted that the process would also ensure that the City Corporation has more accurate, centrally managed data that would also assist the emergency services.

Members noted that officers had worked with the London Borough of Hackney, which has a similar process, and had adopted a lot of their recommendations. The Chairman commended cross working with other boroughs in order to find best practice.

The officer advised that the current contact lists were based on local knowledge and the judgement of Estate Managers, and Social Services would advise where care plans were in place. Officers would be writing to all residents to invite self-referrals; a form would be enclosed with the letter and an on-line form would also be available for use by family members, professionals or ward members. Members would be advised once the report was on-line and ready for use.

RESOLVED, that – the report be noted.

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

There were no questions.

15. ANY OTHER BUSINESS THAT THE CHAIRMAN CONSIDERS URGENT

Caroline Haines provided an update on Fortune Street Park, following a question raised at the Grand Committee. Members noted that, whilst the park was used by both City workers and residents, it was located within the London Borough of Islington, who were now in receipt of the Section 106 funding. However, the Director of Community and Children's Services would try to access Community Infrastructure Levy funding.

16. EXCLUSION OF THE PUBLIC

RESOLVED – That under Section 100(A) of the Local Government Act 1972, the public be excluded from the meeting for the following items on the grounds that they involve the likely disclosure of exempt information as defined in Part 1 of Schedule 12A of the Local Government Act.

Item No (Paragraph)

17 - 3

20 - 5

17. WATER CHARGE REFUNDS FOR SECURE TENANTS

The Sub Committee agreed to defer this report.

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

There were no non-public questions.

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

There was no other business.