

COMMUNITY & CHILDREN'S SERVICES COMMITTEE

Wednesday, 17 September 2025

Minutes of the meeting of the Community & Children's Services Committee held at
Committee Rooms, West Wing, Guildhall on Wednesday, 17 September 2025 at
2.00 pm

Present

Members:

Deputy Helen Fentimen OBE JP (Chair)
Matthew Bell
Deputy John Fletcher
Philip Woodhouse
Deputy Ceri Wilkins
Deputy Anne Corbett
Alderman Christopher Makin
Deputy Nighat Qureishi
Beverley Ryan
Dawn Frampton
David Williams
Jason Pritchard

Lesley Cole
Leyla Ostovar
Helen Ladele
Leyla Boulton
Sushil Saluja
Stuart Thompson
Sarah Gillinson
Mark Wheatley
Amy Horscroft
Charles Edward Lord, OBE JP
Simon Burrows

Observing Virtually:

Joanna Abeyie
Sophia Mooney

Officers:

Judith Finlay

Beverley Andrews
Sam Bedford
Peta Caine
Helen Chantry
Simon Cribbens
Hannah Dobbin
Liam Gillespie
Will Norman
Chris Pelham
Rachel Talmage
Gregory Wade
Mark Jarvis
Frank Marchione
Sheena Etches
Jack Joslin

Kate Doidge

- Executive Director, Community and Children's Services
- Community & Children's Services Department
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- Community & Children's Services Department
- Chamberlain's Department
- Comptroller & City Solicitor's Department
- Central Funding and Charity Management Team
- Central Funding and Charity Management Team
- Town Clerk's Department

1. **APOLOGIES**

Apologies for absence were received from Joanna Abeyie, Munsur Ali, Steve Goodman, Deputy Christopher Hayward, Sandra Jenner, Alderman Tim Levene, Sophia Mooney, and Deputy James Thomson.

Sophia Mooney and Joanna Abeyie observed the meeting online.

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

There were no declarations.

3. **MINUTES**

The Committee received the public minutes and non-public summary of the previous meeting, held on 19th June 2025.

It was noted that Deputy John Fletcher had declared an interest as a resident of Mansell Street, not Golden Lane Estate.

A Member raised three suggestions to the accuracy of the minutes, as follows:

- To amend "... During the discussion, Members raised concerns about the accuracy of the data (provided by the headteacher on 19/06/25) regarding the number of City children benefiting from the subsidy." to:

"During this discussion, it was necessary for figures cited by a Member to be corrected, and these were certified as accurate by the Director of Community and Children's Services."

- To amend "...working collaboratively with TAS to secure its future" to:

"...working collaboratively with TAS, with the aim of providing a sustainable funding model for childcare going forward."

- To amend "Approve that the £174,000..." to:

"Approve that up to £174,000..."

All the suggested amendments described above were agreed by the Committee.

RESOLVED:- That the public minutes and non-public summary of the previous meeting be agreed, as amended.

4. ***PUBLIC OUTSTANDING ACTIONS**

The Committee received the public outstanding actions report.

In relation to no. 4 (Golden Lane Leisure Centre Management Options), the Committee heard that officers were working towards an open market tender. They were working with specialists to refine the specifications, and would return to the Committee with design options report, and then a fully costed options

report, to future meetings. A communications consultation had been commissioned to lead on resident engagement – the estimated value of this contract was £561,300 over 10 years. The contract with Fusions Lifestyle had been extended to 31 March 2026 with provision – if needed and accepted by the provider – for a final extension until 31 December 2026. It would coincide with closure for works. The Leisure Centre would re-open with the successful operator.

RESOLVED: - that the report be received, and its contents noted.

5. **RESIDENT INVOLVEMENT STRATEGY 2025-29**

The Committee received a report of the Executive Director of Community and Children's Services, concerning the Resident Involvement Strategy 2025-29, that set out the approach to working with residents in the design, delivery, and scrutiny of housing services.

Members raised that the Strategy should not only concern engagement with residents, but also learning and unlearning ways of working with residents. Officers accepted that there needed to be a cultural change with resident involvement, and it was expected by the regulator and residents. This was illustrated in the culture change objective of the Strategy, which included creating the Resident Voice group. The group had received ten applications, and whilst there was no specific quota of members per estate, officers assured that there was a good mix from across the estates.

During the application process, the age of the respondents was not required to be provided, but officers were fully aware of need to involve those who were not digitally connected, such as the older population. Promotional material was posted through doors, and accommodations could be made for those without internet as part of the different ways of working with residents.

It was queried whether the Strategy was for tenants and leaseholders of the City Corporation, or all residents living in the City. It was confirmed that the Strategy was for the former, and this would be made clear in communications.

A Member requested clarification on the development of KPIs and a risk matrix. The response was that the current KPIs were limited and mostly related to activity in community centres. To demonstrate the outcomes of the Strategy, a comprehensive suite of KPIs would be developed and reported regularly to the relevant Committee. The housing performance dashboard already provided an overview of risks, which was reported to Members as and when required.

RESOLVED: - That Members approve the draft Resident Involvement Strategy 2025-29 for implementation by the Housing Service.

6. **BALTIC STREET WEST - DEVELOPMENT PROPOSAL**

The Committee received a report of the Executive Director of Community and Children's Services, concerning a development proposal on Baltic Street West.

RESOLVED: - That the Community and Children's Services Committee formally reject the application to declare this parcel of land surplus for housing purposes.

7. HOUSING SERVICES ASSET MANAGEMENT STRATEGY

The Committee received a report of the Executive Director of Community and Children's Services, concerning the City of London Corporation's Housing Asset Management Strategy 2025 for approval. Following an introduction of the report, the Committee asked questions and made comments, as follows:

The Committee heard that the stock condition survey would be undertaken by an external provider. There was a risk that investment priorities would shift once the stock condition survey data was available.

Concerning the ambition for 700 new homes by 2026, the Committee heard that this included homes that were already under development, and there was an ambition for a further 500 by 2037. Most new homes would be located outside of the City of London on existing estates, and there were plans for additional homes in Southwark.

Progress would be predominantly reported to the Housing Management and Almshouses Sub Committee and would include KPIs. Responding to a query on resources, officers said that the resource need had been identified, with some resource already in place for the preparatory work. It was likely that this would be scaled up for implementation, delivery, and management.

A Member noted the figure on the Annual Repairs & Maintenance Spend and queried whether this was based on previous spend and would be enough to meet needs. The response was that, comparatively, the spend was high for the organisation's size and was indicative of a lack of investment and planned maintenance programmes and reflected a higher proportion of responsive repairs. There was a process of shifting to planned spend rather than responsive spend, and this figure was likely to not reduce until ways of working had been changed. It was raised that a figure had been provided to Finance Committee for spend on maintenance across the City Corporation, and whether Annual Repairs & Maintenance Spend was reflected in that figure. Noting that the HRA was treated separately, it was agreed that this would be followed up with separately following the meeting.

Following some questions, it was requested that officers provide a briefing on s106 for members of the Committee.

RESOLVED: - That Members:

- Approve the Housing Asset Management Strategy 2025 as the guiding framework for the management, maintenance and investment in the City of London's housing stock.
- Note the commitment to refresh the strategy in early 2026 following completion of the full stock condition survey programme.

8. **NORTH EAST LONDON (NEL) ROUGH SLEEPING PREVENTION AND RECOVERY GRANT DELIVERY PROPOSAL**

The Committee received a report of the Executive Director of Community and Children's Services, concerning approval for the City of London to act as the lead authority, commissioning body and administrator for the Rough Sleeping and Prevention and Recovery Grant on behalf of the North East London (NEL) sub-region.

The Chairman drew the Committee's attention to the total number of rough sleepers in the report, particular the increase in numbers, and the pressures this brought on the service, commenting that it was a growing issue.

Following a query, it was clarified that the City Corporation would not be accountable for performance in other boroughs, as it was responsible for the administration rather than the delivery. The proposed governance arrangements were that the individual boroughs would report back to Central Government.

RESOLVED: - That Members of the Community and Children's Services Committee note the report and endorse the proposal for consideration and approval by the Policy & Resources Committee.

9. ***FAMILIES IN THE CITY UPDATE**

The Committee received a report of the Executive Director of Community and Children's Services, concerning an update on the Families in the City programme.

A Member questioned whether the location of the Best Start Family Hub had yet been identified. Officers confirmed that they had a preferred location to develop as a family hub site, which was the Artisan Street Library. Satellite delivery sites across the City of London would continue to be used to accommodate activities.

It was raised that other methods of communications should be used for families providing information on the programme, other than WhatsApp messages, including receiving a physical information pack. The Committee heard that physical signs were used to signpost activities, information circulated via Members and newsletters, and flyers handed out in estates but were happy to receive feedback on ways to improve. Providing information packs would have to be reviewed in light of the cost of printing and posting and whether it was an affordable option.

Families not receiving information on the programme highlighted a communications issue that linked to families not being able to access services, and this needed to be improved. A Member commented that the service needed more information for it to be useful, such as location, timings, and making the information accessible, for instance, for those who were colour blind.

Following a query, it was confirmed that traffic on the Best Start Family Hub webpage was being monitored and had seen an increase. The online offer would be reviewed, including refining the information provided and how services available would be communicated to families.

RESOLVED: - That the report be received, and its contents noted.

10. ***COMMUNITY AND CHILDREN'S SERVICES (NON-HOUSING) REVENUE OUTTURN FORECAST AS AT QUARTER 1 2025-26**

The Committee received a joint report of the Executive Director of Community and Children's Services Committee and the Chamberlain, concerning the Quarter 1 estimated outturn for the Committee budget (excluding the ring-fenced Housing Revenue Account (HRA)) for the 2025/26 financial year.

RESOLVED: - That the report be received and its contents noted.

11. ***BARBICAN AND COMMUNITY LIBRARIES BUILDING PROJECTS UPDATE**

The Committee received a report of the Executive Director of Community and Children's Services Committee, concerning an update on the current Barbican and Community Libraries projects.

RESOLVED: - That the report be received, and its contents noted.

12. ***RISK REGISTER**

The Committee received a report of the Executive Director of Community and Children's Services, concerning the department's current risk register and the actions taken in mitigation to reduce those risks.

During the discussion, Members of the Committee made several recommendations in relation to the risk register. These included providing dates when the risks were first recorded; providing the relevant departmental leader against the risks; and risks grouped by theme rather than listed in order of rating. Officers noted these recommendations and advised that these would be taken away for further consideration. Members further commented that training on how to interpret the risk register would be appreciated. Officers would discuss this request with Governance and Member Services, but in the meantime it was agreed that a link to the Risk Management Policy would be linked in the minutes of the meeting: [Risk Management at the City of London Corporation](#)

Members also heard that the department's risk management had been reviewed and had been subject to an internal audit. This had resulted in new processes and protocols in relation to risk management, including training, and internal audit had indicated that the department had been fully compliant with their recommendations. The risk register was thus being reviewed and would take into consideration the recommendations made by Members, as described above.

A Member requested a current position statement in relation to Blake Tower. The Committee heard that an improvement notice had been issued by the City Corporation for Blake Tower. There were regular meetings to assist with achieving the aims of the improvement notice and respond to resident concerns. These reports were received at the Barbican Residential Committee.

Following a query, the Committee heard that officers were working with the Housing Management Team to reflect the full range of risks in relation to the HRA.

RESOLVED: - That the report be received, and its contents noted.

13. UPDATES FROM SUB COMMITTEES, ALLOCATED MEMBERS AND PORTFOLIO HOLDERS

The Committee received an update from the Allocated Member for Middlesex Street, which highlighted snagging issues that affected the perceived quality of the estate, following a walkabout of the estate with residents. This had been reported to officers and action had been taken. The Member suggested that a report be received to a meeting of the Housing Management and Almshouses Sub-Committee (HMASC) on actions taken on improving the performance of Property Services and providing an explanation on how it operated. They also encouraged Allocated Members to look at the photographs they had shared and partake in walkabouts on estates with residents. Following the update, the Chairman echoed Members frustrations with repairs and maintenance on the estates.

Officers responded that they were working on identified outstanding repairs and maintenance in batches. An action list had been produced and was monitored by the resident services officer for the repairs and maintenance identified in Middlesex Street. It was agreed that a report on Property Services would be received at a meeting of HMASC, providing assurance that the issues that Members had raised were on the Department's agenda.

A Member queried who was responsible for reviewing and signing off repairs and maintenance. The response was that this was a combination of external and internal staff. It was acknowledged that contract management was below expectations, and specialists were being engaged who had experience, such as in compliance, with managing contracts to share, educate, and bring confidence to staff to better hold contractors to account. Members commented that whilst this was good progress, residents needed visibility of staff, as not having staff 'on the ground' combined with slow progress of repairs and maintenance sent an unintended message of a lack of care. Following this, the Committee heard that a request had been made for frontline staff to bring in more resources to have the tools to work better and more efficiently.

It was asked how the service worked with City Surveyors, especially with the sharing of how to work with contractors. Officers said that there were strong relations with City Surveyors, and this would continue for contract management and monitoring.

The Committee then heard an update from the Chairman of the Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Sub-Committee. As noted earlier in the meeting, the numbers of rough sleepers had increased and there were anecdotes of increases in anti-social behaviour, and a promise from the Chairman of Policy & Resources to host an event in Guildhall on homelessness. The Committee also discussed the recent resolution from the Committee to the Finance Committee on homelessness and also heard the response from Finance Committee.

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

A Member asked a question on the current impact of the new Building Safety Regulations on the Housing Revenue Projects. The response heard was that this required the appointment of specialist architects and project team members with qualifications in building safety. It also could mean more difficulty in the tendering process, as there could be some resistance for projects with higher risk buildings. Lastly, it would also require some buildings being registered with the building safety regulator, which could add to the length of the project. Further information would be supplied separately.

15. ANY OTHER BUSINESS THAT THE CHAIRMAN CONSIDERS URGENT

The Chairman wished to acknowledge the enquiries received and frustrations expressed in relation to Black Raven Court. There was a likelihood of deferral due to sign-off from building control. Representations had been made, and were awaiting a response.

16. 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.

17. NON-PUBLIC MINUTES

RESOLVED: - That the non-public minutes of the previous meeting, held on 19th June 2025, be approved as an accurate record.

18. *NON-PUBLIC OUTSTANDING ACTIONS

The Committee received the non-public outstanding actions report.

RESOLVED: - That the report be received, and its contents noted.

19. NON PUBLIC APPENDIX

The Committee received the non-public appendix that was read in conjunction with Agenda Item 8.

20. RISK REPORT FOR THE CITY OF LONDON CORPORATION COMBINED RELIEF OF POVERTY CHARITY (CHARITY REGISTRATION NUMBER 1073660)

The Committee received a report of the Acting Managing Director, City Bridge Foundation, concerning the risk report for the City of London Corporation Combined Relief of Poverty Charity (Charity Registration Number 1073660).

21. MANAGEMENT UPDATE FOR THE CITY OF LONDON COMBINED RELIEF OF POVERTY CHARITY (CHARITY NUMBER 1073660)

The Committee received a report of the Acting Managing Director, City Bridge Foundation, concerning a management update in relation to The City of London Combined Relief of Poverty Charity (Charity Registration Number 1073660).

22. *FINANCE UPDATE AND DRAFT ACCOUNTS FOR CITY OF LONDON COMBINED RELIEF OF POVERTY (CHARITY REGISTRATION NUMBER 1073660)

The Committee received a report of the City Bridge Foundation Finance Director (representing the Chamberlain), concerning a finance update and draft accounts for the City of London Corporation Combined Relief of Poverty Charity (Charity Registration Number 1073660).

23. *REPORT OF ACTION TAKEN

The Committee received a report of the Town Clerk, concerning details of decisions taken under urgency between Committee meetings.

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

One non-public question was raised.

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

There were no non-public items of urgent business.

The meeting ended at 3.48 pm

Chairman

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