

COMMUNITY & CHILDREN'S SERVICES COMMITTEE

Wednesday, 20 July 2022

Minutes of the meeting held at Guildhall at 4.00 pm

Present

Members:

Helen Fentimen (Deputy Chair)	Alderman Gregory Jones QC
Joanna Tufuo Abeyie	Frances Leach
Jamel Banda	Alderman Ian David Luder
Aaron Anthony Jose Hasan D'Souza	Alderman Bronek Masojada
Mary Durcan	Deputy Susan Pearson
Deputy John Fletcher	Jason Pritchard
Deputy Marianne Fredericks	Naresh Hari Sonpar
Steve Goodman OBE	Deputy Philip Woodhouse

Officers:

Andrew Carter	- Director of Community and Children's Services
Carol Boswarthack	- Community and Children's Services
Simon Cribbens	- Community and Children's Services
Chris Pelham	- Community and Children's Services
Mike Kettle	- Community and Children's Services
Dean Elsworth	- Community and Children's Services
Paul Murtagh	- Community and Children's Services
Sandra Husbands	- Director of Public Health, LB Hackney
Chris Lovitt	- Deputy Director of Public Health, LB Hackney
Andrew Trathan	- London Borough of Hackney
Sam Hutchings	- Town Clerks
Julie Mayer	- Town Clerks
Mark Jarvis	- Chamberlains
Andrew Cusack	- City Solicitors
Ola Obadara	- City Surveyors
Chandni Tanna	- Communications, Town Clerks

1. APOLOGIES

Apologies were received from Ruby Sayed, Chair*, Deputy John Absalom, Caroline Addy, Matthew Bell, Ceri Wilkins*, Ben Murphy, Florence Keelson Anfu*, Natasha Lloyd Owen, Tim McNally*, James Bromiley-Davis, Henrika Priest, Alderman Alastair King, Munsur Ali*, Philip Woodhouse, Sophie Fernandes.

**Members joining remotely.*

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

Alderman Ian Luder had spoken on Crescent House at the Planning and Transportation (P&T) Committee on 19th July 2022. When Alderman Luder addressed the P&T Committee, he stated that he would leave the room during any discussion on this matter at today's Community and Children's Services Committee meeting.

3. **MINUTES**

RESOLVED, that – the public minutes and non-public summary of the meeting held on 8th June 2022 be approved.

4. **OUTSTANDING ACTIONS**

The Committee received the outstanding actions list.

In respect of affordable food provision, the Director reminded Members of their agreement at their last meeting to consider responses to food poverty such as a pantry as part of a wider discussion and decision on a '*Tackling Poverty Strategy*', at a meeting in the Autumn of 2022. The Director reminded Members that food vouchers are still available and thanked Common Councillor Mary Durcan for her update in respect of St Luke's. The Director also stressed that the Department does not have capacity to deliver this project without a specialist partner.

5. **HOUSING REVENUE ACCOUNT - UPDATE ON 5 YEAR PLAN AND 30 YEAR FINANCIAL PROJECTIONS**

The Committee received a report of the Chamberlain and the Director of Community and Children's Services, which presented an update on the 5-year finance plan for the Housing Revenue Account (HRA) and set out financial projections for the 30-year period. Members noted the key risks and challenges and two options to ensure the HRA retains positive reserves going forward. The Resource Allocation Sub Committee had approved Option 2, as set out below.

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

- a) Officers' hard work and the tenacity of Members was commended but it was noted that the position is not sustainable, even with the funding assistance.
- b) The water rates rebate had been factored into the projections, as had loss of income from HRA properties and this was being monitored.
- c) Projections in terms of inflation and income had been pegged at 5%. As this was linked to the RPI, one would compensate the other, but all service departments need to find appropriate savings within their budget envelopes.

- d) The report presents 5-year estimates and not a budget, which will be presented to service committees in the Autumn. If recommendation 2 in the report is approved, the projects will go ahead and be reviewed as part of the Autumn budget report.
- e) HRA borrowing will be allocated to the Major Works Programme, to improve existing stock. All the available Section 106 funding has been earmarked for new schemes, and this will generate rental income.
- f) CIL funding is used for community based projects, which cannot be funded from the HRA, but it is held centrally and subject to a bidding process. The Government requires a certain percentage of CIL funding to be allocated to neighbourhood projects, and this is managed by the City Bridge Trust. The electric vehicle charging points on estates was noted as an example.
- g) The Chair and Deputy Chair of the Housing Management and Almshouses Sub Committee have arranged a series of visits to the City's estates, together with an opportunity to speak to the residents. The first visit was scheduled for Avondale Estate, and Members were asked to contact the Chair/Deputy Chair of the Housing Sub if they would like to join either this, or any future visit.

RESOLVED, that –

1. The adverse implications of the latest 5-year financial plan for the HRA and the 30-year financial projections be reviewed and noted as currently projected to go into deficit by the end of 2023-24 and Option 2 in the report be approved: i.e. – to seek to fund the capital fire safety works, at a cost of up to £15 m, outside the HRA envelope, with £5m from City Cash and £10m from City Fund, of which half would be on the basis of being ultimately repaid, potentially from the value of property surplus to housing requirements.
2. Additionally, an external review be carried out to suggest areas of potential savings to enable longer-term remodelling of the HRA and to ensure its ongoing financial viability; and it be noted that:
 - a) there remains a risk of delays to the delivery of new build projects at Sydenham Hill and York Way causing further loss of related rental income;
 - b) further remaining risks include significant construction inflation above current levels of provision and the potential for non-recovery of leaseholder elements of the cost of planned major works given the outcome to the Great Arthur House cladding case; and
 - c) the 30-year financial projections show headroom for new major works programme begins to emerge from 2025/26 under Option 2 as the revenue position recovers.

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

1. **Family Information Service – use of ‘memojis’**

The City Parent Forum have asked for contacts to be named officers and if the website could be changed to show the line management structure?

The Assistant Director (People) advised that the Parent Carer Forum recently made this request to the Education and Early Years’ Service. The City Corporation’s Information Officer and Data Protection lead has confirmed that: *‘Where there is no need to provide personal data, then we should be supplying generic contact details instead, whether this be on the website or in newsletters’.*

The Assistant Director further advised that using a generic email address ensures a timely response to any enquiries and mitigates the risk of individual members of staff being away, not accessing emails and responses to enquiries being delayed. The generic email address is checked on a regular basis and there have not been any complaints / concerns regarding the timeliness of responses to enquiries.

Whilst not mentioning names/ personal contact details, the Website clearly sets out the roles of the Education and Early Years Team. If enquiries to the generic email progress to requiring an officer response, then personal contact details will be shared accordingly. Having reviewed the sites of 14 other London local authorities, only one uses personal contact details and the remaining sites use generic emails. The memojis have now been removed from the site.

2. **Establishing a community hub, using part of the Barbican Library space**

The Head of Barbican and Community Libraries advised that she is currently working with the Barbican Residents’ Association, who are applying for CIL Neighbourhood funding for a much needed hireable space in the library which will also provide additional space for library events, meetings, quiet study and a much needed income stream. Members noted that officers cannot apply for grants from this fund. Whilst the facilities will be offered at favourable rates for community use, it will remain a library space and not a community centre, as anything else would require a change of use application. Members noted that the Barbican Residents’ Association is being supported in progressing the design and planning application, which will also require Listed Building consent, obtaining quantity surveying estimates and making the CIL application, subject to governance of the fund.

The Head of Barbican and Community Libraries advised that, whilst she is very supportive of this proposal, she was unable to give an indication of when it might be complete as it is subject to external procedures beyond her control and that a recent overhaul of the grant process had caused a delay.

3. Crescent House – considered by the Planning and Transportation (P&T) Committee on 19th July 2020.

Alderman Ian Luder left the room during the discussion on this question.

A Member expressed concerns at a perceived lack of engagement with residents and the gap between the decision being taken and the planning application being submitted. The Member also asked when the works would start on 'Flat 37' and asked for assurance of future engagement with residents, in terms of variations, and for work to start on the windows themselves by the end of 2022.

The Director advised that a meeting of Cripplegate Ward Members had been arranged for 25th July 2022, where a full response would be provided and the programme would be circulated to Community and Children's Services Members. This meeting would also confirm the next steps in terms of communications to residents.

In response to a supplementary question about the large number of objections, and whether this might suggest a fault in the process, the Deputy Chair advised that she has spoken briefly to the Chair of Planning and would provide feedback after she has spoken to the Chair (of this Committee).

The Director further advised that this is a pilot scheme, which seeks to demonstrate the full range of options. The Chair of Community and Children's Services had made a statement at the start of the P&T Committee, setting out this position. The objectors had given a presentation to the P&T Committee and discussed their concerns with officers ahead of this. A detailed Q&A document had been produced, which was shared with members before being made available to residents. Members were also reminded that an option put forward by the objectors had not been ruled out.

4. Tudor Rose Court

The Chair asked a question about Tudor Rose Court in respect of the City of London Corporation's lease, which was granted to Network Housing Association in 1998, to develop housing for the elderly at Tudor Rose Court. Members noted that this is the only housing scheme of this kind within the City. However, since 1998, the head lease had passed from Network Housing Association, to Stadium, to Hanover and now to Anchor Housing Association. Over the years, the terms of the tenancy agreements have gradually been extended and made more onerous than was originally intended by the City Corporation.

Anchor is now requiring elderly tenants to pay for major works, including replacement lifts and flooring to all common parts, which was never intended by the City Corporation. An annual sinking fund contribution from tenants, which was never provided for in the head lease, has more than doubled in one year. Furthermore, the 19 City-nominated elderly tenants have endured increasingly

poor management from successive housing association landlords, and escalating costs of management. In 2022/23 Anchor increased tenants' management fee costs by over 100%, without consultation or justification in terms of value for money.

Members agreed unanimously that this presents a serious issue for many elderly City residents and that, if those residents had been direct City tenants, they would not incur these escalating costs. Given that there was never any intention by the City Corporation, acting as freeholder and nominator, to make tenants liable for major works under the terms of the head lease, Members asked if advice could be sought from the City Solicitor in terms of challenging Anchor Housing Association's actions.

The following questions had not been provided in advance and officers agreed to provide a response to all Members, after the meeting

- a) A Member asked about a delay in repairing leak on the Golden Lane Estate and asked officers to ensure that contact details are up to date.
- b) Some parents and children had experienced static electric shocks from some of the equipment at the Middlesex Street Play area. A Member asked if this could be remedied in time for the school holidays. The Director urged Members not to wait until Committee to bring such matters to his attention, and to let him know if officers do not respond to queries in a timely manner.
- c) A Member asked if the car park shutters at Middlesex Street had been fixed and, in order to ensure the safety of bikes, could officers also investigate the provision of a bike parking shed or secure area.
- d) There were no carers at the Volunteers Event on Monday, 18th July and a Member asked if invitations could be wider next year.

7. ANY OTHER BUSINESS THAT THE CHAIRMAN CONSIDERS URGENT

The Director thanked Portsoken Members for their open letter on behalf of the residents of Middlesex Street, to which he had responded. Members were reminded of the decision taken at the last meeting; i.e. - the first step would be to decide if the space is needed for housing purposes and consider options for the commercial tenants. There is a break clause in the majority of tenancies, in terms of re-letting, extending or relocating, based on whether the business model is commercially viable. The Director stressed that this would be for the Committee and not the Director to decide. Members were reminded that the consultation period ends at the end of July, in respect of the change of use of 6 units and a car park, and the outcome would be reported to Members in September 2022.

At 5.50 pm and 6.10 pm, Members agreed to extend the meeting to conclude the business on the agenda.

The Town Clerk confirmed that the 'Awayday' to discuss the Terms of Reference and composition of the Sub Committees would take place on 12th September 2.30pm.

8. **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)
9-19	3

9. **NON-PUBLIC MINUTES**

RESOLVED, that – The non-public minutes of the meeting held on 8th June 2022 be approved.

9.1 **Non-Public Outstanding Actions**

The Committee received the non-public outstanding actions list.

10. **LONG TERM MODEL FOR THE CITY MENTAL HEALTH STREET TRIAGE**

The Committee considered and approved a report of the Director of Public Health.

11. **ISLEDON HOUSE INFILL REPORT - GATEWAY 5 - ISSUES REPORT**

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

12. **YORK WAY ESTATE PROVISION OF SOCIAL HOUSING - GATEWAY 5 - AUTHORITY TO START WORK**

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

13. **ROUGH SLEEPING ASSESSMENT CENTRE - REQUEST FOR A DELEGATED AUTHORITY AT GATEWAY 5**

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

14. **INSTALLATION OF SPRINKLERS IN SOCIAL HOUSING BLOCKS - GATEWAY 5 - ISSUES REPORT**

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

15. **SUMNER BUILDINGS AND AVONDALE SQUARE**

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

**16. LEISURE SERVICES (GOLDEN LANE LEISURE CENTRE) -
PROCUREMENT UPDATE**

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

17. GREAT ARTHUR HOUSE CURTAIN WALL

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

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

There were no questions.

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

Two items were discussed whilst the public were excluded.

The meeting ended at 6.30 pm

Chairman

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