

HOUSING MANAGEMENT AND ALMSHOUSES SUB (COMMUNITY AND CHILDREN'S SERVICES) COMMITTEE
Friday, 14 October 2022

Minutes of the meeting of the Housing Management and Almshouses Sub (Community and Children's Services) Committee held at Committee Room 3 - 2nd Floor West Wing, Guildhall on Friday, 14 October 2022 at 11.30 am and available to view at www.youtube.com/watch?v=UplfEvT97Zc

Present

Members:

Mary Durcan
Timothy James McNally (Deputy Chairman)
Helen Fentimen
Deputy Marianne Fredericks (Chairman)
Jamel Banda
Alderman Susan Pearson
Henrika Priest

In attendance (observing online)

Gregory Jones KC
Ruby Sayed

Officers:

Paul Murtagh	- Community and Children's Services Department
Jason Hayes	- Community and Children's Services Department
Christopher Rumbles, Clerk	- Town Clerk's Department
Liam Gillespie	- Community and Children's Services Department
Marie Rene	- Community and Children's Services Department
Paul Dudley	- City Bridge Trust
Julia Pridham	- City Bridge Trust

1. APOLOGIES

Apologies were received from Ceri Wilkins, Florence Keelson-Anfu and John Fletcher.

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

Susan Pearson declared an interest as a resident and leaseholder on the Golden Lane Estate.

3. MINUTES

RESOLVED – That the public minutes and non-public summary of the Housing Management and Almshouses Sub-Committee meeting held on 8th July 2022 be approved as an correct record.

The Chair referred to the issue of railings at ColPAI and a suicide risk presented from the balcony. It was confirmed the matter had been referred back to the City Surveyor and that a response would be chased seeking an update.

4. **OUTSTANDING ACTIONS**

The Sub-Committee received a report of Town Clerk detailing outstanding actions.

Security / Access Report - A security and access report was due to be produced with an overarching report to be presented at Community and Children's Services Committee in November. This would present key findings from both audits and bring to Members' attention those areas that had been identified as requiring more work. A report would then follow to this Sub-Committee allowing an opportunity for Members to review the findings in more detail.

Vehicle Charging Points at Middlesex Street and Golden Lane – A meeting had taken place with the consultants relating to specification and funding application. A report would be brought back to this Sub-Committee at the first opportunity. A Member referred to charging points already being available on Golden Lane Estate, which it was noted were operational and available for people to use through an app. It was agreed that information would be provided to Members detailing how to access these charging points.

RECEIVED

5. **CCTV POLICY REVIEW**

The Sub-Committee considered a report of the Director of Community and Children's Services presenting changes to the CCTV Policy used by the Housing Division.

The report was welcomed as offering a pragmatic solution and a level of flexibility that was needed.

The Deputy Chairman remarked on what he considered to be a pragmatic and sensible response to the issues presented. There were instances where CCTV would be needed with certain residents not always wanting to go to their door e.g., disabled residents or those experiencing domestic violence.

It was questioned if any further detail could be provided on what might qualify a resident for installing CCTV or what might be turned down, with it being explained that doing so could potentially lead to requests being more difficult to administer and so this had been avoided. It was further clarified that the presumption would be that permission would be granted, with the option of reviewing usage to ensure it was not being abused and was being used for the purpose intended.

A Member referred to retrospective approval where CCTV was already in place. It was confirmed that a Resident Service Officer would make contact with a household and offer advice on where relevant guidance can be found. It was further clarified that contact would be made to explain the existing policy, with residents not being asked to remove CCTV unless there was a reason to do so.

A Member referred to estate wide CCTV at Golden Lane, but with this not currently being recorded to assist with security issues around burglary, anti-social behaviour and fly tipping. Members noted that Community and Children's Services Committee would be receiving an access and security report at its next meeting that would look to address relevant issues and tie these together.

RESOLVED: That Members: -

- Approve the revised CCTV Policy for use by the Housing Division.

6. **HOUSING MAJOR WORKS PROGRAMME - PROGRESS REPORT**

The Sub-Committee received a report of the Director of Community and Children's Services providing an update on progress that had been made with the Housing Major Works Programme and advising Members on issues affecting individual schemes.

The Sub-Committee were talked through the various projects and works that were ongoing on an estate by estate basis. It was explained how material costs were having a huge impact on project costs across the City Corporation, with Members' attention being drawn to the Capital Review process currently underway that would have an impact on all projects across the City Corporation.

Members noted a project that had been significantly impacted by the Capital Review was the William Gateway Estate project that was at Gateway 5. A Member questioned what this Sub-Committee could do to ensure these works go ahead and that the planning timeframe was met.

It was explained that work was underway in producing a list of priority projects to include within a report due to be presented to Resource Allocation Sub-Committee setting out those projects that needed to proceed and putting forward a business case for each of these. It would be hoped that Resource Allocation Sub-Committee would agree to those projects that needed to proceed, with there being the potential for challenge and with a need to respond to this setting out why certain projects were urgent and would need to proceed.

The Chair added how it would have been helpful for Members of this Sub-Committee to meet and discuss issues in advance of the report going to Resource Allocation Sub-Committee to allow an opportunity to review those projects under risk; officers were encouraged to enter into a good level of early dialogue in future, with the Sub-Committee's remit being to present an evidence-based argument. An assurance was given that a strong business case had been prepared, with it hoped all would go well at Resource Allocation Sub-Committee and it would be possible to take forward the projects that needed progressing.

It was agreed that the report going to Resource Allocation Sub-Committee would be circulated to Members of this Sub-Committee. It was agreed a meeting would be held with Ruby Sayed, Mary Durkin, Marianne Fredericks

and Tim McNally to allow a discussion and agree a position and approach in advance of Resource Allocation Sub-Committee.

In response, the Director of Community and Children's Services confirmed that should proposals not go as planned at Resource Allocation Sub-Committee, that feedback would be provided making it clear to Members of this Sub-Committee in which areas their support would be needed.

The Deputy Chairman remarked on how he had found it helpful visiting the estates, talking to residents to understand their concerns and to witness issues first hand. It was good to go out to sites and be able to respond to residents' concerns. The Deputy Chairman welcomed hearing that works had started again at Sydenham Hill.

The Deputy Chairman remarked on how he welcomed the visit to Golden Lane Estate that had been arranged for himself and the Chair and stated a commitment given during the visit to attend a Golden Lane Residents Association meeting. The Chair had also taken the opportunity during visits to make it clear that they would be happy to attend resident association meetings where this would be welcomed.

A Member added how they would find it useful to receive a summary spreadsheet showing where costs had reduced and what would cost more so the bottom line could be seen and understood.

RESOLVED: That Members receive the report and not its content.

7. **WATER CHARGE REBATES UPDATE**

The Sub-Committee received a report of the Director of Community and Children's Services in relation to a project repaying an element of weekly water charges paid by secure tenants of the City Corporation from 2005-2019.

A Member referred to an issue that had been raised with them by a tenant whose rent was being paid through housing benefit and their concern that they would not be aware of the water charge rebate. It was confirmed that each tenant would receive a statement detailing the level of water rebate coming to them, with officers happy to look at individual cases outside of the meeting if further information can be provided.

It was also noted that the water charge rebate would continue to be advertised in Home Magazine and that there was no time limit on when people can make a claim for this.

RESOLVED: That Members receive the report and note its content.

8. **FIRE SAFETY UPDATE**

The Sub-Committee received a report of the Director of Community and Children's Services providing Members with information on how the City Corporation, through its Housing Property Services Team, was ensuring that its homes on its twelve social housing estates were managed in a way that was compliant with current health and safety legislation, best practice and regulatory standards relating to fire safety.

A Member sought clarity on reference included within the report to splitting the Great Arthur House Sprinkler project from the compartmentation and it was suggested these projects would be better delivered through only impacting residents once. It was clarified that any reference to splitting out projects at Great Arthur House related to the main sprinkler project only. Re-assurance was offered that it would be one package of measures for Great Arthur House.

A Member raised a concern in holding a virtual residents' meeting later in the month and suggested an in person meeting would be preferred with very few attending when these were online. In response, it was confirmed that feedback from Barbican residents had shown they welcomed this way of engaging with them, following which it had been agreed to hold a virtual meeting with residents of Great Arthur House.

Clarity was sought regarding publication of Fire Risk Assessments and it was confirmed that final sign off was due to be completed by Community and Children's Services in December, following which Fire Risk Assessments would be published on the City Corporation's website.

A Member noted there were 80 residents across all City Corporation high rise housing requiring personal emergency evacuation plans (PEEP's) and suggested this appeared to be a low number. In response, it was suggested an additional notice could be placed in Home Magazine asking people to come forward. There was currently a shorter list of vulnerable residents, with those needing to go on the list being included and relevant information having been passed on as appropriate e.g., Fire Brigade.

RESOLVED: That Members receive the report and note its content.

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

There were no questions.

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

The Chair referred to a customer services and repair webinar that would be taking place on the evening on 20th October 2022, confirmed an estate visit was being arranged for Members and referred to a poster that was being produced to go on display at all estates showing who their Common Councillor was and their email address.

A Member referred to an excellent initiative on Golden Lane Estate through offering help with winter warmth. It was suggested that Members needed to know what was happening and the initiative needed publicising. In response, it was confirmed that officers were working with contractors looking at winter measures that can be applied on Golden Lane and other estates; looking at a shopping list of what can be installed and looking at supporting residents going forward.

11. **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.

12. NON-PUBLIC MINUTES

RESOLVED – That the non-public minutes of the meeting held on Friday 8 July 2022 be approved as a correct record.

13. MANAGEMENT UPDATE REPORT : THE CITY OF LONDON ALMSHOUSES (REGISTERED CHARITY NUMBER: 1005857)

The Sub-Committee considered a report of the Director of Community and Children's Services relating to a management update of the City of London Almshouses.

14. RISK MANAGEMENT UPDATE: THE CITY OF LONDON ALMSHOUSES (REGISTERED CHARITY NUMBER: 1005857)

The Sub-Committee considered a joint report the Director of Community and Children's Services and Managing Director of Bridge House Estates relating to a risk management update of the City of London Almshouses.

15. QUESTIONS ON MATTERS RELATING TO THE WORK THE SUB COMMITTEE

There were no non-public questions.

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

REDEVELOPMENT OF MAIS HOUSE

The Chair updated Members regarding a letter that had been received relating the Maise House Redevelopment.

The meeting ended at 1.22pm

Chair

Contact Officer: Chris Rumbles
christopher.rumbles@cityoflondon.gov.uk