

## COMMUNITY & CHILDREN'S SERVICES COMMITTEE

Monday, 23 January 2023

Minutes of the meeting at Guildhall at 2.30 pm

### Present

#### Members:

Helen Fentimen (Deputy Chair – in the Chair)  
Munsur Ali  
Jamel Banda  
Anne Corbett  
Deputy John Fletcher  
Deputy Marianne Fredericks  
Steve Goodman OBE  
John Griffiths  
Frances Leach

Deputy Natasha Maria Cabrera Lloyd-Owen  
Alderman Ian David Luder  
Alderman Christopher Makin  
Alderman Bronek Masojada  
Timothy James McNally  
Henrika Priest  
Jason Pritchard  
Naresh Hari Sonpar  
Deputy Philip Woodhouse

### In attendance

Deputy Edward Lord – Policy and Resources Committee, Lead Member for the Sports Strategy

Deputy James Thomson – Chair of Police Authority Board

Alderman Prem Goyal – Portsoken Ward

#### Officers:

Clare Chamberlain - Interim Executive Director, Community & Children's Services  
Sam Hutchings - Town Clerks  
Julie Mayer - Town Clerks  
Chandni Tanner - Town Clerks  
Deborah Bell - Community & Children's Services  
Simon Cribbens - Community & Children's Services  
Paul Murtagh - Community & Children's Services  
Chris Pelham - Community & Children's Services  
Jason Hayes - Community & Children's Services  
Ellie Ward - Community & Children's Services  
Chris Lovitt - Deputy Director of Public Health  
Mark Jarvis - Chamberlains  
Ola Obadara - City Surveyors  
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### 1. APOLOGIES

At the start of the meeting, the Chair reminded Members of the dedicated start time (4.15 pm) for considering the Middlesex Street Report. The Chair and Town Clerk stressed that this would be a meeting held in public and NOT a public meeting and therefore, Members of the public would be able to observe

but not address the Committee. However, Ward Members would be able to make representations on their behalf.

As today's agenda had been structured to accommodate this, some Members would need to leave before 4.15 pm. Those Members departing early; Natasha Lloyd Owen, Alderman Ian Luder and Tim McNally, welcomed the improved recommendations in the Middlesex Street report and, had they stayed, would have voted in support of it. Members asked for consistency in future meeting timings and more notice, should they need to change.

Apologies were received from Ruby Sayed, Joanna Abeyie, Caroline Addy, James Bromiley-Davis, Mary Durcan, Aaron D'Souza, Sophie Fernandes, Florence Keelson-Anfu, Alderman and Sheriff Alastair King, Alderman Bronck Masojada, Benjamin Murphy and Ceri Wilkins. The following Members joined remotely: Ruby Sayed (Chair), Joanna Abeyie, Mary Durcan and Benjamin Murphy

The Committee Welcomed Deborah Bell the new Strategic Education and Skills Director.

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

Deputy John Fletcher declared an interest in respect of agenda item 8 - Middlesex Street Estate, areas of car park and six shop units; by virtue of being a serving Member of the Planning Committee. Deputy Fletcher stressed that he is fully aware of his obligations in terms of a perceived pre-determination.

Deputy Marianne Fredericks abstained from voting, in respect of agenda item 8. Middlesex Street Estate, areas of car park and six shop units; by virtue of being a serving Member of the Planning Committee. *Deputy Fredericks stressed that she did not have an interest as such; this was a personal decision to avoid any perception of predetermination.*

3. **MINUTES**

RESOLVED, that – the minutes of the following meetings be approved, subject to an error correcting the spelling of John Griffiths' name.

3.1 **3rd November 2022**

3.2 **15th November 2022 (Special Meeting)**

4. **OUTSTANDING ACTIONS**

Members noted that the recent **Estate visits** had been poorly attended but more dates had been circulated. The Assistant Director advised that, if they were generally inconvenient for Members, more options would be offered. The Chair of the Housing Management and Almshouses Sub Committee stressed the importance of resident attendance during the visits and had asked for a report, to the Sub Committee, in respect of any issues raised.

In respect of the **COLPAI development**, the City Surveyor advised that completion would not be by Easter 2023, as expected, due to delays in Building Control and Planning issues. The City Surveyor would provide a more detailed response in the non-public part of the meeting.

5. **DEPARTMENTAL BUDGET ESTIMATES: COMMUNITY AND CHILDREN'S SERVICES - EXCLUDING THE HOUSING REVENUE ACCOUNT (HRA)**

The Committee considered a report of the Executive Director and the Chamberlain, which presented the budget estimates for the Department of Community & Children's Services for 2023/24, excluding HRA. Members noted that proposed budget has been prepared within the resource envelope allocated to each Director by the Resource Allocation Sub Committee.

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

1. Officers were asked to cease using the term 'manpower'.
2. There are currently 12 children in care, with none in residential homes. In respect of unaccompanied asylum seeking children, Members asked if future reports could show how much of the cost is recoverable from central government and comparators with other authorities. The Assistant Director, People, advised that the Safeguarding Sub Committee receives reports at this level of detail. Members noted that government funding for asylum seeking young people in care ceases at a certain threshold. The Department had been carrying an overspend as demand can fluctuate and is not within the department's control. However, this had recently levelled off to 12 Looked After Children, with over 50 care leavers, for whom financial liability ends at age 25. The Department had been working with the Home Office in respect of 'leave to remain' status, which enables young people to access benefits and support, resulting in a saving of £120,000. Members noted that, by joining the Alliance Framework, the Department will achieve greater economies of scale.
3. The Housing Service Repair and Maintenance contract was currently being retendered, with a new contractor expected by October 2023. This would be the subject of a report to the Housing Management and Almshouses Sub Committee on 30 January 2023.

In summarising, the Chair noted that a number of Member questions had been performance orientated and, whilst accepting the limitations of such a small service in producing comparative data, asked if this could be given consideration when producing future reports. Members also noted the Department's 3-5 Year Plan, which would anticipate future budgets. The Chair advised that, at the recent Resource Allocation Sub Committee, the Chair of the Finance Committee had commended the Department's approach and suggested that it be adopted across the City Corporation.

RESOLVED, that, subject to noting the comments set out above:

- i) The Community and Children's Services Department's (excluding HRA) proposed revenue budget for 2023/24 be approved for submission to Finance Committee, noting that additional resources totalling £1.2m had been added to the 2023/24 Original Budgeted, to help meet the ongoing pressures across Adults and Children's Social Care, and the cost of Unaccompanied Asylum Seeking Children.
- ii) The Community and Children's Services Department's (excluding HRA) proposed capital and supplementary revenue projects budgets for 2023/24 be approved for submission to the Finance Committee.
- iii) The Chamberlain, in consultation with the Executive Director of Community and Children's Services, be authorised to revise these budgets to allow for any further implications arising from Corporate Projects and changes to the Cyclical Works Programme.
- iv) Minor amendments for 2022/23 and 2023/24 budgets arising during the corporate budget setting period be delegated to the Chamberlain.
- v) The factors taken into consideration in compiling the Community and Children's Services Department's Business Plan, including efficiency measures, be noted.

**6. HOUSING REVENUE ACCOUNT (HRA) AND CAPITAL BUDGETS 2023/24**

The Committee considered a report of the Executive Director of Community and Children's Services and the Chamberlain, which presented the annual submission of the revenue and capital budgets overseen by the Committee.

Members noted that the 7% rental increase would be subject to a separate officer delegated decision, following several years of capping, and the rent statements would be sent out in February.

RESOLVED, that:

1. The provisional 2023/24 revenue budget be approved for submission to the Finance Committee.
2. The draft capital budget be approved.
3. The Chamberlain be authorised to revise these budgets to allow for further implications arising from departmental reorganisations and other reviews.

**7. DRAFT CARERS' STRATEGY: 2023/27 - FOR CONSULTATION**

The Committee considered a report of the Director of Community and Children's Services in respect of the draft Carers' Strategy. The report sought the Committees approval to take the draft to wider consultation.

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

1. Census data in respect of unpaid carers had been released and, due to the tightening of definitions, the profile had not changed dramatically, neither for the City nor its neighbouring boroughs.
2. The Strategy will be as inclusive as possible; this consultation will be based on focus groups, with round tables being used for the stakeholder group. Face to face meetings, hybrid meetings and on-line surveys would be available. Members noted that officers had avoided being too rigid at this stage, as the detail would emerge as engagement progresses. Furthermore, other stakeholders would need to own some aspects; i.e. healthcare.
3. The Committee's 'Carers' Lead Member asked if the Vision could be more ambitious; i.e. – '*to create a better life for all carers*' and if the full NHS description of a carer could be used.
4. In terms of the Care Act, the person being cared for falls under the remit of their Local Authority but a City worker could approach City Connections.
5. Members asked if the next draft could be shared with unpaid carers before it comes back to the Committee.

RESOLVED, that – subject to noting the above comments, the current draft Carers Strategy 2023–2027 be approved for consultation.

**8. MIDDLESEX STREET ESTATE - AREAS OF CAR PARK AND SIX SHOP UNITS**

The Committee considered a report of the City Surveyor and Interim Executive Director, Community and Children's Services, which asked Members to consider whether areas in the car parks and the seven Gravel Lane shop units, proposed for non-housing use at the Middlesex Street Estate, are no longer required for housing purposes, and may be appropriated for other use. The report included information from further estate-wide consultation with residents and commercial tenants, and recommended that the areas are not required for housing purposes, for the next 20 years, in lieu of a capital sum for housing purposes.

Members noted an error, since the agenda has been published, in respect of the Shop Unit at 20 Gravel Lane, which had been added to the original six units outlined in the initial report as being surplus. Although this unit is currently occupied, it is one of the least desirable retail units on the Estate and, historically, has proven very difficult to let. This would also enable residents to have access to 3 lifts, rather than 2, as per the previous design. It could also create a liaison office for the City of London Police, on the ground floor, and a community space on the first floor, subject to available funding and if needed.

The Chair invited the Portsoken Ward Members to make statements and Members noted the following points:

1. Officers, Resident representatives and Ward Members were commended for working together to reach this position. The revised recommendations presented solutions to some of the residents' major concerns; i.e. identifying additional space cycle storage, bespoke cycle lifts, a properly managed service area, with an attendant, improved CCTV, disabled access and spaces, provision of an estate office and outdoor gym equipment. The Chair endorsed this comment.
2. There are positive aspects in respect of the close proximity to the City of London Police, in terms of resident safety, and the Police's plans appear to be robust enough for presentation to the Planning and Transportation Committee.
3. The financial benefit of £3.4m is a non-HRA capital sum, ringfenced for housing use, which could potentially be used to expedite outstanding works. The Chair stressed that its future use will be for the Committee to determine.
4. In addition to the £3.4m, the CBB had signed off on £1.34 m for the additional items in the report, including £50,000 for acoustic improvements to the ball courts. Members were concerned that they had been closed for 2 years, and officers undertook to get them back into use as soon as possible. Members also noted that conversations would continue in terms of further improvements.
5. The Chair of the Police Authority Board advised that the Commissioner had made a commitment to residents about vehicle egress and Members noted that it is rare for them to leave at speed and/or use sirens when doing so.
6. Ward Members stressed that they are both public servants and stewards of public resources and would, therefore, be voting for the surplus declaration.

RESOLVED, that:

1. The outcome of further estate-wide consultation with residents and commercial tenants on the Middlesex Street Estate be noted.
2. It be agreed that:
  - 2.1 The seven shop units (shown within the MSCP on the plans annexed to this report at Appendix 1) proposed for non-housing use at the Middlesex Street Estate are not required for housing purposes for a period of 20 years from the date of resolution.
  - 2.2 The areas of car park (shown within the MSCP on the plans annexed to this report at Appendix 1) proposed for non-housing use at the Middlesex Street Estate, are not required for housing purposes for a period of 20 years from the date the Relocation and Consolidation Works are completed.
  - 2.3 At the end of the 20-year period, unless further appropriations are agreed by the City of London Corporation (City Corporation), in its capacity as

housing authority, the MSCP areas described at 2.1 and 2.2 will revert to their normal use for housing purposes; and

3. The Comptroller and City Solicitor be instructed to prepare a Memorandum of Appropriation in accordance with Recommendation 2, to be placed on the Middlesex Street Estate Deed Packet as soon as any appropriation has taken effect.

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

The officer advised that 150 residents had been notified of the winter services available but there had only been 20-30 responses. Members noted there was currently a national shortage of curtains but officers had sourced a supplier who could reduce the 8 week lead-in time and residents were being kept informed. The officer also advised that the Contractor will only provide a service for tenants and not leaseholders.

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

1. Members noted a **successful tenancy fraud prosecution** at the Central Criminal Court, where the Judge had imposed the following criminal penalties:

- Six months imprisonment, suspended for two years.
- A three-month electronic curfew (tag) between 10pm and 6am
- A criminal benefit confiscation order made to the value of £91,480, to be paid in three months.
- If the confiscation order isn't paid within three-months, the Defendant may have to serve a twelve-month default sentence.

*NB. The confiscation order is subject to the Asset Recovery Incentivisation Scheme (ARIS) rules, which means that the City Corporation will receive 37% of the value (approx. £33,847), with 50% going to the home office, and the remainder to the Courts Service.*

2. Members had received a number of complaints about the **noisy fans on the Middlesex Street Estate** and asked if this could be resolved as a matter of urgency.

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)
14-15	3

12. **NON-PUBLIC MINUTES**  
RESOLVED, that – the non-public minutes of the meeting held on 3<sup>rd</sup> November 2022 be approved.
13. **OUTSTANDING ACTIONS (NON-PUBLIC)**  
The Committee received the non-public outstanding actions list.
14. **PROPOSED EASTERN BASE FOR COLP - UPDATE ON ENGAGEMENT AND SUPPORT FOR COMMERCIAL TENANTS**  
Members noted a non-public appendix in respect of agenda item xx
15. **CORPORATION SPORTS PROVISION/ GOLDEN LANE LEISURE CENTRE**  
The Committee considered and approved a report of the Interim Executive Director, Community and Children’s Services.
16. **QUESTIONS ON MATTERS RELATING TO THE WORK OF THE COMMITTEE**  
There were no questions.
17. **ANY OTHER BUSINESS THAT THE CHAIRMAN CONSIDERS URGENT AND WHICH THE COMMITTEE AGREE SHOULD BE CONSIDERED WHILST THE PUBLIC ARE EXCLUDED**  
There were no items.

**The meeting ended at 5pm**

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Chairman

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