

COMMUNITY & CHILDREN'S SERVICES COMMITTEE

Wednesday, 13 December 2023

Minutes of the meeting held at Guildhall at 2.00 pm

Present

Members:

Ruby Sayed (Chair)	Deputy John Fletcher
Helen Fentimen (Deputy Chair)	Deputy Marianne Fredericks
Munsur Ali	Steve Goodman OBE
Jamel Banda	Florence Keelson-Anfu
Matthew Bell	Naresh Hari Sonpar
Deputy Anne Corbett	Deputy Philip Woodhouse
Mary Durcan)	

In attendance

Eamonn Mulally – Chair of the Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Sub Committee

Officers:

Judith Finlay	- Executive Director, Community and Children's Services
Pam Wharfe	- Community and Children's Services
Jason Hayes	- Community and Children's Services
Michael Gwyther-Jones	- Community and Children's Services
Ellie Ward	- Community and Children's Services
Hannah Dobbin	- Community and Children's Services
Rachel Talmage	- Community and Children's Services
Simon Cribbens	- Community and Children's Services
Valeria Cadena	- Community and Children's Services
Liam Gillespie	- Community and Children's Services
Deborah Bell	- Community and Children's Services
Chris Pelham	- Community and Children's Services
Teresa Shortland	- Community and Children's Services
Ola Obadara	- City Surveyors
Mark Lowman	- City Surveyors
Andrew Cusack	- City Solicitors
Mark Jarvis	- Chamberlains
Julie Mayer	- Town Clerks
Charles Smart	- Town Clerks

1. APOLOGIES

Apologies were received from Joanne Abeyie*, Munsur Ali, Shahnan Bakth*, John Griffiths*, Caroline Haines*, Alderman Alastair King, Alderman Christopher Makin*, Ben Murphy, Henrika Priest, Ian Bishop-Legatt, Aaron De Souza, Deputy Nighat Qureishi*, Ceri Wilkins and Natasha Lloyd Owen.

*Members who joined on line.

At the start of the meeting the Chair welcomed a group of City of London Corporation unpaid carers. The carers had been invited to an earlier informal meeting of the Committee to present their views on the new Carers Strategy, which appeared next on today's agenda. The Chair thanked Members, Officers and Carers for an excellent example of co-production, commending the sterling work of Carers' Champion, Anne Corbett. A Member spoke on behalf of those who are cared for, who are also very supportive of the new Strategy.

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

The following Members declared general non-pecuniary interests:

- Deputy John Fletcher by virtue of his Membership of the Advisory Board for the Portsoken Community Centre (agenda item 12) and as a Governor of the Aldgate School (agenda item 15)
- Deputy Marianne Fredericks by virtue of her position as a Governor of the Aldgate School (agenda item 15)

3. MINUTES

RESOLVED, that – the public Minutes and non-public summary of the Meeting held on 1st November 2023 be approved.

Members would be updated on the following in due course.

- The total cost of the service, which was not included in the Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Strategy report.
- Consultation over the use and recharging of agency cleaning staff.
- The Womens Project update, noting that this needs extensive discussion ahead of a further report.
- Middlesex Street now has an action plan which can be shared with Members

4. OUTSTANDING ACTIONS

The Committee received the actions list, noting that some of the items could now be removed. The Executive Director and Town Clerk would be working on a more concise format.

5. ANNUAL REVIEW OF THE COMMITTEE'S TERMS OF REFERENCE

The Committee considered a report of the Town Clerk in respect of the Committee's Terms of Reference. Members noted a number of suggested updates in respect of the City and Hackney Health and Care Board, the Health and Social Care Act (2022) and Community Safety.

The Town Clerk advised that the January meeting would be able to receive an update of this report, in good time for the Policy and Resources Committee in March and the Annual Meeting of the Court in April 2024. Members were

asked to contact the Town Clerk with any further suggestions, noting that the next iteration of the report would show tracked changes.

RESOLVED, that – noting the above comments, the report be deferred to January 2024.

6. **APPOINTMENT TO THE HOUSING MANAGEMENT AND ALMSHOUSES SUB COMMITTEE**

The Town Clerk was heard in respect of the above appointment and it was RESOLVED, that – being the only Member expressing a willingness to serve, Steve Goodman be appointed to the Housing Management and Almshouses Committee.

7. **CARERS STRATEGY 2023-27**

The Committee considered a report of the Executive Director, Community and Children's Services. The report presented a revised Carers Strategy for 2023 – 2027 for Members' approval, which set out the strategic priorities for the City of London Corporation (City Corporation) and guides its activities in relation to carers.

The Chair acknowledged the feedback from carers at the informal session. The Officer confirmed that the points raised had been captured in the Strategy but accepted that some could be strengthened. The Chair also stressed that this would not be an isolated forum for discussion, as the City of London Corporation (CoLC) is committed to ensuring that unpaid carers get the best possible support. Members agreed that the Strategy presents a very positive step change.

Members noted the following two questions which had been received in advance of the meeting:

Aside from Statutory advocacy, how will carers be able to self-refer for Advocacy services, which specialise in the Care Act or Health? In addition, this service could provide training for Social Care, partner agencies and residents.

It was recognised that there are different levels of advocacy required for carers: i.e. the Statutory Care Act must be provided, however, the Carers Support Service will be recommissioned to offer primary and preferred requirements. Requirements for signposting to specific disability and health pathways have been noted and included in the new specification.

How will we support parent carers in their right to have a 'parent carer needs assessment' and ensure we have a knowledgeable staff member to undertake this?

Holistic child and family assessments are undertaken by Children's Social Care (CSC) but a parent carer can choose to receive a separate assessment. Some staff in CSC have specialist experience of children with disabilities and can provide advice and support to other members of

the team. The Team Manager has been networking with other local authorities in terms of benchmarking the levels of support offered.

In response to further questions

1. In respect of financial difficulties and inequalities experienced by carers, officers agreed to feed back to Members, if the data is available.
2. Facilitating respite care can be complex but the new Carers Service will assist with access to funding for short breaks, benefit entitlement and volunteering services such as shopping etc. During the informal session, it was noted that respite breaks are vital to the health and wellbeing of carers.
3. The formulation of an emergency plan is a key action point; working with adult social care and health service colleagues. There are some national schemes for 'carers' cards' which will be included.
4. When the cared-for person goes into residential care it doesn't end a carer's responsibility. The Strategy acknowledged this transition but it could be stronger in terms of support offered.
5. The City Wellbeing Centre undertook a pilot to provide support to unpaid carers but there had been mixed reviews. The officer had met with them recently in terms of lessons learnt. One of the local Primary Care Networks had conducted a pilot on carers' support and they would be included in future discussions in Shoreditch Park and the City Primary Care Network. Officers will work with carers to understand more about the type of emotional support they need. A Member suggested approaching '*Hackney Coaching for Unpaid Carers*'.
6. The City's extensive business community might be able to offer staff volunteering days; i.e. shopping assistance, and Florence Keelson-Anfu kindly offered to lead on this. Another Member had been approached by businesses offering help. The Chair offered to set up a meeting to co-ordinate this work and welcomed further input.

In the event of any reflections from this Committee requiring further adjustments, it was RESOLVED, that - authority be delegated to the Town Clerk, in consultation with the Chair and Deputy Chair of the Community and Children's Services Committee to approve the Carers' Strategy for 2023-27.

NB. in the event of no further changes being necessary, then the Strategy for 2023-27 be approved as set out in the report.

8. **CARE LEAVER COMPACT**

The Committee considered a report of the Executive Director, Community and Children's Services in respect of the Pan London Care Leavers Compact, which provides a framework for developing consistency, breadth and quality in the support offered to City of London (CoL) care leavers.

Members noted the new Lord Mayor's '*Bridge to the City*' initiative, which seeks to create an environment where care leavers are encouraged to apply for positions in the financial sector, without fear of discrimination about their lived experience. The Chair advised that she had been working with the Strategic Education and Skills Director to ensure joint working. Members noted that the '*Bridge the Gap Conference*' had been scheduled for 30th January 2024; it would be open to all Members and the Education Board Clerk, Jayne.Moore@cityoflondon.gov.uk could provide further details. The Committee asked to receive further updates on this venture.

RESOLVED, that:

1. The progress made on the six commitments, which all London local authorities have been invited to sign up, to be noted.
2. The Community and Children's Services Committee signs up to the six commitments set out in the Compact.

9. **SAFE HAVENS IN THE CITY OF LONDON**

The Committee considered a report of the Executive Director, Community and Children's Services which sought support for the delivery of Safe Havens across the City of London Corporation's buildings and estates. Members noted that the scheme aims to help tackle and prevent violence against women and girls in public spaces and make the Square Mile a safer place to live, work, study and visit. Members noted that the report had been approved by the Court of Alderman, ahead of a final decision by Resource Allocation Sub Committee on 21st January 2024.

During the discussion, the following points were noted:

1. Other minority groups, who disproportionately experience harassment and violence, should also be offered a 'safe haven'.
2. Officers are working with the Business Improvement Districts in respect of their schemes, noting that this report focusses on City of London Corporation buildings. The Chair welcomed the collaborative working.
3. Funding for training and communications for the City of London Corporation is being met from the Safer City Partnership.
4. Care experienced and other vulnerable young people, who might be at risk of exploitation by 'County Line' gangs, would also benefit from this venture. It was suggested that some of the Livery companies could assist by offering access to the basic facilities in their buildings and the Chair asked if officers could explore this.

RESOLVED, that - the Safe Havens Scheme be endorsed, noting that Guildhall, Mansion House, Central Criminal Court, Bastion House and Libraries are suitably equipped, allowing the one-hour training to be rolled out to start the accreditation

10. **CITY OF LONDON ANTI-SOCIAL BEHAVIOUR POLICY**

The Committee considered a report of the Executive Director, Community and Children's Services, in respect of the new City of London Corporation Anti-Social Behaviour (ASB) Policy, which seeks to bring clarity in terms of how the City Corporation deals with the different types of ASB. Members felt that, generally, the report presented a positive development.

During the discussion, a number of points were raised and Members identified the following gaps, which they felt were not addressed within the policy:

- irresponsible skateboarding and cycling
- irresponsible parking of dockless e-scooters and hire bikes
- public urination/defecation in Portsoken Ward
- littering
- alcohol related anti-social behaviour
- illegal filming
- use of drones
- illegal drug use
- sex working
- protest events in the Square Mile
- unreasonable behaviour – citing the policy recently considered by the Housing Management and Almshouses Sub Committee

Members suggested the implementation of such a policy could be strengthened by:

- A communications plan to ensure that it is advertised on the City of London Corporation web page, social network pages and community publications
- Removal of acronyms
- Contact details for associated responses
- Work with businesses so they can educate workers on ASB – such as alcohol related issues
- Details of how to report issues to dockless bike and scooter operators
- Further clarification of the ASB definitions as 'not limited to' might be misleading
- More information on the webpage on the role of the Community Safety Team
- Consideration of how the policy might work in practice to avoid residents being passed between various departments

It was noted that the City of London Police have been running a successful pilot to tackle irresponsible behaviour by some cyclists, scooter and skateboard users. The Chair offered to follow up on the issues of defecation and urination

by Aldgate Square, noting that the Ward Member had attempted to report and resolve this.

The Chair welcomed the above suggestions and asked Members to be mindful that they were being asked to approve a Policy, noting that the operational detail would be worked in later. The Assistant Director explained that the Policy, and the work of the Community Safety Team (CST), brings together the work of including licensing, street trading, housing, homeless outreach and cleansing, but the CST not have jurisdiction over them. Furthermore, changing elements of agreed Policy might require a decision by several committees. Members noted that the Policy seeks to codify existing agreed and approved policies, which respond to ASB, which is defined by legislation and, by definition, does not include areas of criminality or nuisance.

Members noted that the report would be presented to the Policy and Resource Committee and the Police Authority Board in January 2024. However, they felt unable to approve the report without clarification of the issues raised. The Chair agreed to speak to the Chair of Policy and Resources in respect of adding a separate document, by way of an appendix, reflecting the suggestions of Members of the Community and Children's Services Committee. Officers advised that the preparation of an additional document could be undertaken, but the report would have to be delayed to provide time to do so.

RESOLVED, that – the report be deferred in light of the comments set out above, which Members would like to see in an appendix to the report.

11. **CARE EXPERIENCE AS A PROTECTED CHARACTERISTIC - POLICY APPROVAL**

The Committee considered a report of the Executive Director, Community and Children's Services, in respect of the Independent Review of Social Care's Final Report (published May 2022) which had looked in-depth at the experience of people who had been in care.

The final report recommended that the Government should make '*care experienced*' a protected characteristic. Whilst the Government chose not to implement this, local authorities across the country have been adopting the principle within their policy and procedural arrangements.

The Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Committee supported the Policy, noting that there might be other potential protected characteristics that could be included in the future.

Members noted that evidence is very clear in that care leavers have much poorer outcomes in adult life than their peers:

- They are they are more likely not to be in education, employment and training; i.e. - 39% of CL was compared to 13% of the general population.

- 25% of the homeless population is estimated to have been in care at some point.
- 52% of care experienced young people have had a criminal conviction by the age of 24, compared to 30% of young people who have not been in care.

In concluding, the Assistant Director advised that the Policy would provide a significant opportunity to address these poor outcomes, and support care experienced young people as they become adults, in line with the CoC's approach to others with protected characteristics. This in turn would fulfil the City Corporation's Public Sector Equality Duty and role as Corporate Parents.

RESOLVED, that – the Court of Common Council be recommended to recognise care experience as a protected characteristic where practicable and, in doing so, approve the Policy as set out in Appendix 1 to the report; ie - '*Care Experience as a Protected Characteristic*'.

12. COMMUNITY CENTRE FINANCE (PORTSOKEN AND GOLDEN LANE COMMUNITY CENTRES (GLCC))

The Committee considered a report of the Executive Director, Community and Children's Services in respect of the operation of the two community centres at Portsoken and Golden Lane Estate, which are managed by the Housing Division. A Member commended the success of the Portsoken Community Centre for adding great value to the local community and thanked the Leadership Team for their hard work.

Members noted that a report on leaseholder recharges would be presented to the next meeting of the Housing Management and Almshouses Sub Committee (HMASC), which has decision making powers, delegated from the Community and Children's Services Committee (CCS). The Chair and Deputy Chair agreed to refer the decision back to CCS, if appropriate.

RESOLVED, that:

1. The current operating models for Portsoken and Golden Lane Community Centres be endorsed, noting that officers will consider the viability of any suggested alternative arrangements
2. The requirement to contribute to Golden Lane Community Centre's costs from a non-HRA budget be noted.
3. It be noted that officers will consider in more detail whether leaseholders will continue to be recharged costs relating to GLCC and, if so, how the contribution will be calculated, with a decision to be made before the new financial year.

13. COMMUNITY PATROLLING SERVICE - VARIATION OF CONTRACT

The Committee received a report of the Executive Director, Community and Children's Services, in respect of the Variation of the Community Patrolling

Service Contract to deliver Home Office funded activity on the City's bridges, thereby allowing for the rapid mobilisation of an expanded service, in line with the conditions of the grant.

A Member raised concerns expressed by residents about the amount of time operatives spend in their vehicles, as they feel they should be patrolling the Estates. The officer agreed to raise this with the Contract Manager.

Members were encouraged to contact the officer after the meeting if they had any further suggestions or questions and, if so, the Chair asked if they could be shared with all Members of the Committee.

RESOLVED, that – the report be noted.

14. **ROLES AND POWERS OF COMMUNITY SAFETY AND CONSTABULARY POWERS IN THE CITY**

The Committee received a report of the Town Clerk in respect of issues raised by the Police Authority Board over the course of 2023 which relate to the roles of, and the powers available to, several 'policing-adjacent' organisations in the City.

RESOLVED, that – the report be noted.

15. **CHILDREN'S SOCIAL CARE SELF EVALUATION FRAMEWORK (SEF)**

The Committee received a report of the Executive Director, Community and Children's Services, which presented the Self-Evaluation Framework (SEF), which is used for the Annual Engagement Meeting. Members noted the positive feedback in the engagement letter from Ofsted, circulated the previous day, in respect of the Annual Engagement Meeting.

RESOLVED, that – the report be noted.

16. **COMMUNITY & CHILDREN'S SERVICES (NON-HOUSING) REVENUE OUTTURN FORECAST AS AT QUARTER 2 - 2023/24**

The Committee received a report of the Executive Director, Community and Children's Services and the Chamberlain, which presented the Quarter 2 estimated outturn for the Community & Children's Services Committee budget (excluding the ring-fenced Housing Revenue Account (HRA) Repairs and Maintenance budget). Members noted that this would be reported with the Budget Estimates and the updated 5 year plan at the next meeting of the Committee.

The Chair asked that, going forward, finance reports be marked 'for discussion', rather than 'for information'. The Director advised that her Senior Leadership Team would be having a budget review meeting early in the New Year. Members noted the volatility of social care budgets and it was suggested that the City of London Corporation should ensure the Department receives a realistic allocation.

At 3.50pm Members agreed to extend the meeting to 4.15pm, to conclude the business on the agenda.

RRESOLVED, that – the report be noted.

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

Middlesex Street Estate

The allocated Member had circulated a report ahead of this meeting and would be arranging to meet with officers to run through the outstanding items. The Town Clerk advised that the officers' 14 days submission deadline for Committee reports is relaxed to 7 days for Member updates.

Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Sub Committee

The Chair provided the following updates:

- The Sub Committee's successful visit to the Rough Sleeping Assessment Centre on Wednesday 6th December. When complete, the Centre would be handed over by the building contractor to Thames Reach. Their approach is to have a 'soft go-live' to identify teething issues and implement solutions before becoming fully operational within two weeks of the handover. Media officers are preparing a press release to be delivered once the Centre is operational.
- A Severe Weather Emergency Plan (SWEP) was activated between Wednesday 29th November and Monday 4th December when London wide night time temperatures were consistently at 0 degrees C or below.
- It is anticipated the Sub Committee's Terms of Reference will be presented to the Community and Children's Services Committee in January 2024.

Sydenham Hill Estate

The Chair provided the following update:

- The spade in the ground event took place on 8th December 2023.
- There has been some anti-social behaviour since the bus stop had been moved and fencing was being put up to provide privacy for residents.

Young People

The Chair provided the following update, on behalf of the Young People's Champion:

- Five City of London Corporation apprenticeships had been ringfenced for care experienced young people. The Chair thanked Florence Keelson-Anfu, who is on the Board of 'Partnership for Young London'.
- The Chair advised Members of a couple of vacancies for Allocated Members to the City's various housing estates and the Town Clerk agreed to circulate them after the meeting, to seek expressions of interest.

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

In response to a question about financial arrangements for leaseholders, particularly on Golden Lane, the Housing Management and Almshouses Sub Committee would receive a report at its next meeting, as noted under agenda item (12) above.

19. ANY OTHER BUSINESS THAT THE CHAIRMAN CONSIDERS URGENT

Members noted that Matt Piper had stepped down as Chair of Governors at the Aldgate School and been replaced by Beverley Ryan.

20. 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)	Paragraph no(s)
21-22, 28	1,2 & 3
23, 27, 31	1,2
24-26, 29	3

21. NON-PUBLIC MINUTES

RESOLVED, that – the non-public minutes of the meeting held on 1st November 2023 be approved.

22. NON-PUBLIC OUTSTANDING ACTIONS

The Committee received the non-public outstanding Actions list.

23. CHILDREN'S SOCIAL CARE SEF - NON-PUBLIC APPENDIX

The Committee received a non-public appendix in respect of agenda item 15.

24. NON-COMPLIANT WAIVER: EMERGENCY AND TEMPORARY ACCOMMODATION

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

25. GATEWAY 3/4 OPTIONS APPRAISAL: WILLIAM BLAKE ESTATE WINDOW REPLACEMENT AND COMMON PARTS REDECORATIONS

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

26. **GATEWAY 5 ISSUES REPORT: CITY OF LONDON PRIMARY ACADEMY ISLINGTON (COLPAI)**

The Committee considered and approved a report of the City Surveyor.

27. **CITY OF LONDON CHILDREN'S CENTRE SERVICES AND FAMILY HUB DEVELOPMENT**

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

28. **HOUSING REVENUE ACCOUNT (HRA) - COMMERCIAL PROPERTY DEBT POSITION AND ARREARS RECOVERY**

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

29. **EXTENSION TO REPAIRS AND MAINTENANCE CONTRACTS**

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

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

There were no questions.

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

There was one item whilst the public were excluded

The meeting ended at 4.15pm

Chairman

Contact Officer: julie.mayer@cityoflondon.gov.uk