

## COMMUNITY & CHILDREN'S SERVICES COMMITTEE

Monday, 11 November 2024

Minutes of the meeting of the Community & Children's Services Committee held at Committee Rooms, West Wing, Guildhall on Monday, 11 November 2024 at 2.00 pm

### Present

#### Members:

Joanna Tufuo Abeyie	Alderman Christopher Makin
Jamel Banda	Eamonn Mullally
Anne Corbett	Henrika Priest
Mary Durcan	Deputy Nighat Qureishi
Helen Fentimen OBE JP (Chairman)	Beverly Ryan
Deputy John Fletcher	Naresh Hari Sonpar
Steve Goodman OBE	Jacqui Webster
Alderman Prem Goyal, OBE	Deputy Ceri Wilkins
Deputy Natasha Maria Cabrera Lloyd-Owen	David Williams

#### In Attendance:

Dawn Frampton  
Deputy Marianne Fredericks

#### Officers:

Deborah Bell	- Community & Children's Services Department
Peta Caine	- Community & Children's Services Department
Simon Cribbens	- Community & Children's Services Department
Liane Coopey	- Community & Children's Services Department
Andrew Cusack	- Comptroller & City Solicitor's Department
Zoe Dhami	- Community & Children's Services Department
David Downing	- Community & Children's Services Department
Judith Finlay	- Executive Director, Community & Children's Services
Michael Gwyther-Jones	- Community & Children's Services Department
Kirstie Hilton	- Community & Children's Services Department
Mark Jarvis	- Chamberlain's Department
Jack Joslin	- City Bridge Foundation
Michael Kettle	- Community & Children's Services Department
Greg Knight	- Community & Children's Services Department
Rachel Levy	- Community & Children's Services Department
Chris Lovitt	- Community & Children's Services Department
Mark Lowman	- City Surveyors
Scott Myers	- Community & Children's Services Department
Will Norman	- Community & Children's Services Department
Ola Obadara	- City's Surveyor's
Chris Pelham	- Community & Children's Services Department
Debby Rigby	- Community & Children's Services Department
Dan Sanders	- Community & Children's Services Department
Emily Slatter	- Town Clerk's Department
Blair Stringman	- Town Clerk's Department

Chandni Tanna  
Ellie Ward

- Communications & External Affairs
- Community & Children's Services Department

1. **APOLOGIES**

Apologies were received from Aaron D'Souza, Matthew Bell and Deputy Shravan Joshi Deputy Philip Woodhouse and Munsur Ali.

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

There were several declarations.

- Deputy Natasha Maria Cabrera Lloyd-Owen declared:
  - That she is a former trustee of PYL and so would not be speaking or voting on item 7.
- Jacqui Webster declared:
  - That, her organisation Shoreditch Trust is a named supporter of the Young Londer's Manifesto 2024 developed with PYL, relevant to items 7 and 11.
- David Williams declared:
  - An interest as a parent of two children who have been through the Children's Centre childcare and Aldgate School relevant to item 9.
- Beverly Ryan declared:
  - That, she is the Chair of Governors at Aldgate School, relevant to discussions around item 9.
- Anne Corbett declared:
  - An interest as a resident at Golden Lane in relevant to item 27.

3. **MINUTES**

**RESOLVED** – That, the public and non-public summary of the minutes of the meeting held on 20 September 2024 be agreed as a correct record.

4. **\*OUTSTANDING ACTIONS**

The Committee received a report of the Executive Director, Community & Children's Services concerning outstanding actions.

5. **ANNUAL REVIEW OF THE TERMS OF REFERENCE**

The Committee considered a report of the Town Clerk concerning the annual review of the Terms of Reference.

The following points were noted:

- A typo was noted in the subject heading of the report, which should refer to the Community and Children's Services Committee, not the Audit Risk Management Committee.
- A request was made by officers to rename the Safeguarding Sub-Committee to the "Safeguarding and SEND Sub-Committee." This was agreed in principle by Members.
- A discussion was held regarding the management of the Old Gate Pavilion and its alignment with the committee's functions, particularly

considering a current planning appeal. Officers agreed to take the matter offline.

**RESOLVED** – That Members,

- a) Agree in principle to change the name of the Safeguarding Sub-Committee to the "Safeguarding and SEND Sub-Committee."
- b) Agree that the terms of reference of the Community & Children's Services Committee, subject to any comments, be approved for submission to the Court of Common Council in April, and that any further changes required in the lead up to the Court's appointment of Committees be delegated to the Town Clerk in consultation with the Chairman and Deputy Chairman.

6. **ALLOCATED MEMBERS TO THE CITY CORPORATION'S VARIOUS HOUSING ESTATES**

The Committee considered a verbal update from the Town Clerk concerning allocated Members to the City of London Corporation's various housing estates following the Housing Management & Almshouses Sub-Committee.

The following points were noted:

- It was agreed to express the allocation in terms of a link member with the borough rather than by individual housing estates.
- Specific allocations were noted:
  - Islington, Mary Durcan
  - Tower Hamlets and Middlesex Street, Deputy John Fletcher
  - Hackney and Golden Lane, Deputy Ceri Wilkins
  - Lambeth, Eamon Mullally
  - Southwark, Timothy McNally
  - Lewisham, VACANT
- It was noted that remaining vacancies would be filled through consultation with the Chair and Deputy Chair of the Community and Children's Services Committee and the Housing Management & Almshouses Sub-Committee and brought back for confirmation at the next Community & Children's Services Committee.

**RESOLVED** – That Members agree the following allocated Members to the City of London Corporation's various Housing Estates:

- a) Islington, Mary Durcan
- b) Tower Hamlets and Middlesex Street, Deputy John Fletcher
- c) Hackney and Golden Lane, Deputy Ceri Wilkins
- d) Lambeth, Eamon Mullally
- e) Southwark, Timothy McNally

7. **UPDATE ON THE PARTNERSHIP FOR YOUNG LONDON AND REQUEST FOR EXTENSION OF SERVICE LEVEL AGREEMENT**

The Committee considered a report of the Executive Director, Community & Children's Services concerning updates Members on the work and

achievements of the Partnership for Young London (PYL) since the last review and seeks approval for an extension of the existing Service Level Agreement (SLA) between the City of London Corporation and PYL for an additional five-year term, with the option for annual reviews.

The following points were noted:

- The SLA provides office space and corporate services at a reduced rate of £10,000 per annum, enabling the Partnership to focus on strategic objectives.
- Questions were raised about the governance and review process of the SLA to ensure it remains relevant and beneficial for both parties.
- It was noted that the appendix detailing the SLA was still under legal review and would be shared with Members once finalised.
- The Committee agreed in principle to extend the SLA for another five years, with final approval delegated to the chair and deputy chair after legal review.

**RESOLVED** – That Members, agree in principle to the approval of the extension of the Service Level Agreement with the Partnership for Young London for a further five years, subject to annual reviews and delegate authority to the Town Clerk in consultation with the Chairman and Deputy Chairman for final approval following finalisation of the SLA.

8. **\*COMMUNITY AND CHILDREN'S SERVICES (NON-HOUSING) REVENUE OUTTURN FORECAST AS AT QUARTER 2 2024/25**

The Committee received a report of the Executive Director, Community & Children's Services concerning the Quarter 2 estimated outturn for the Community and Children's Services Committee budget.

The following points were noted:

- The forecast showed a projected underspend of £644,000, mainly due to a higher-than-expected Home Office grant.
- Concerns were raised about the budget pressures and the need for a strategy to avoid an overspend in the next financial year.
- Questions were asked about the certainty of the Home Office grant. It was confirmed that the grant is secure and would not be reclaimed.
- The issue of temporary agency costs in social care was discussed, with explanations provided about the need to backfill critical posts and the use of grants to offset these costs.

9. **\*CITY OF LONDON CHILDREN'S CENTRE SERVICES – UPDATE REPORT**

The Committee received a report of the Executive Director, Community & Children's Services concerning progress with the delivery of Children's Centre services from September 2025.

Members noted that the report had been restricted after publication as non-public and sensitive information was contained within the report. However,

Members agreed, to move debate of the item into the public part of the meeting. The Committee noted that any sensitive information that Members wished to discuss, could be addressed in the non-public section of the meeting.

Officers noted that the update focused on the transition of Children's Centre services from the Aldgate School to a broader city-wide approach, aiming to create a Family Hub offering holistic support from early childhood to young adulthood. The Committee were informed that the decision to not renew the service level agreement with Aldgate School was driven by the need to better meet residents' needs across the city and not for financial reasons.

Concerns were raised about the impact on affordable childcare and the need for a clear policy on future funding and provision. It was agreed that a policy paper on affordable childcare would be brought to the January Committee meeting. The importance of effective communication with parents and stakeholders was emphasised, with suggestions for improving transparency and addressing concerns about service continuity.

The Committee acknowledged the need for a contingency plan (Plan B) in case the new arrangements could not fully replace the current services by September 2025.

10. **\*CITY OF LONDON SPECIAL EDUCATIONAL NEEDS AND DISABILITY SELF-ASSESSMENT FRAMEWORK (SEND SEF)**

The Committee received a report of the Executive Director, Community & Children's Services concerning re-introduction of the City of London Corporation Special Educational Needs Self-Assessment Framework (SEF) (current version September 2024).

Members noted that the report had been restricted after publication as non-public as sensitive information was contained within the report. However, Members agreed, to move debate of the item into the public part of the meeting. The Committee noted that any sensitive information that Members wished to discuss, could be addressed in the non-public section of the meeting.

The Committee noted that the SEND SEF was updated to reflect the findings of a peer review with the aim of improving services for children with special educational needs and disabilities. Concerns were raised about the high percentage of children with persistent absence and the need for strategies to address the issue. Members were informed that strategies to address this included contacting schools to gather more information about those children. It was noted that many of those children attend schools outside the City of London.

Questions were raised about the waiting times for speech and language therapy and mental health assessments via CAMHS. Officers committed to providing this information at the next meeting. In response to a question raised on timeframes for issuing Education, Health, and Care Plans (EHCPs), officers confirmed that the City of London meets the statutory 20-week timeframe for issuing EHCPs, with 100% of assessments completed within this period.

However, it was noted that 20 weeks was still a long time for children and families.

The issue of exclusions and the link between SEND needs and behaviour was discussed, officers noted that the City of London has very few exclusions, with the last permanent exclusion in June 2023. The focus was on working with schools to provide timely support and resources to prevent exclusions.

#### 11. **\*COST OF LIVING RESPONSE UPDATE**

The Committee received a report of the Executive Director, Community & Children's Services concerning updates on the City of London Corporation's response to cost-of-living pressures experienced by City of London residents.

The following points were noted:

- **Household Support Fund:** Members were informed that the budget for the Household Support Fund had been extended until March 2026.
- **Communication and Awareness:** In response to a question raised by a Member officers confirmed that there was a dedicated web page for cost-of-living support, prominently featured on the City of London website. The housing resident newsletter also focuses on cost-of-living issues, and residents are directed to City Advice for comprehensive support.
- **Effectiveness of Communication:** Concerns were raised about the accessibility and effectiveness of communication efforts. It was suggested that more proactive measures are needed to ensure that those most in need are aware of the available support.
- **Winter Measures:** The need for additional winter measures, similar to those provided in the last two years, was highlighted. Officers were asked to bring back proposals for these measures.
- **Member Support:** Members were encouraged to direct residents to City Advice for holistic support and to help raise awareness of the available services.
- **Independent Review:** It was suggested that an independent review of the effectiveness of communication strategies be conducted, potentially involving digital services or the communications department.

#### 12. **\*VIRTUAL SCHOOL DEVELOPMENT PLAN FOR ACADEMIC YEAR 2024/2025**

The Committee received a report of the Executive Director, Community & Children's Services concerning the virtual school development plan for 2024/25.

The following points were noted:

- **Overview:** The Virtual School Development Plan for the academic year 2024/2025 was presented for information. The plan outlined the strategies and initiatives to support the education of children in care and other vulnerable groups.

- **Cross-Departmental Collaboration:** It was noted that the virtual school works closely with various departments, including open spaces, City of London Boys School, and adult services, to provide enrichment opportunities and support for young people.
- **Ofsted Recognition:** Members praised the department after the recent Ofsted inspection highlighting the virtual school's work as an outstanding area, particularly in supporting young people.

13. **\*VIRTUAL SCHOOL HEADTEACHER ANNUAL REPORT FOR ACADEMIC YEAR 2023/2024**

The Committee received a report of the Executive Director, Community & Children's Services concerning information about the role of The City of London Virtual School for Children with a Social Worker.

The following points were noted.

- **Cross-Departmental Collaboration:** Similar to the development plan, officers noted that the annual report emphasised the importance of collaboration with various departments and external partners to support the education and well-being of children in care and other vulnerable groups.
- **Ofsted Recognition:** The report noted that the virtual school's work was recognised as outstanding in the recent Ofsted inspection, particularly in terms of the support provided to young people.

14. **\*COMMISSIONING UPDATE**

The Committee received a report of the Executive Director, Community & Children's Services concerning highlights of current activities, successes, issues and priorities for the Department of Community and Children's Services commissioning team.

The following points were noted:

- The Head of Commissioning provided an update on the commissioning programs, highlighting the contracts register and progress against the sourcing plan for the financial year. The report included commissioning overview reports for both adults and children's social care services, summarising commissioning and quality assurance arrangements, relevant services, and evidence against inspection criteria.
- It was noted that the commissioning overview reports were used in the recent Ofsted inspection, which highlighted the effectiveness of the commissioning work.
- In response to a question raised by a Member regarding the funding for the City of London Scout Group, officers acknowledged the budgetary pressures and agreed to review the decision and report back to the next meeting in January.

15. **\*DEPARTMENTAL RISK UPDATE**

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

The following points were noted:

- The Assistant Director for Partnerships & Commissioning introduced the departmental risk update, outlining that the risk register was now being presented quarterly to ensure transparency and compliance with internal audit recommendations.
- Members noted the aim to improve the clarity and completeness of the risk register. The risk register included both departmental and service-level risks, with a focus on ensuring that all relevant risks are captured and managed effectively.
- It was noted that the department was working on local guidance and has been offered external training by the corporation's insurance team to enhance risk management practices.
- Members noted that officers would continue to bring the risk register to the committee quarterly for review and updates.

16. **\*BARBICAN AND COMMUNITY LIBRARIES UPDATE 2024**

The Committee received a report of the Executive Director, Community & Children's Services concerning an overview of Barbican and Community Libraries since 2023.

The following points were noted:

- **Service Charges:** Members noted the increased service charge for the library was currently manageable due to lower business rates. Future funding would need to be reviewed within existing resources.
- **Marketing Efforts:** There is a focus on increasing marketing for the Make Space initiative to boost usage.
- **Children and Young People:** In response to a question raised by a Members, officers noted that efforts were being made to engage more school-aged children with the library services, including the Read to Succeed scheme and the upcoming coding club.
- **Income Generation:** Officers informed Members that the library is exploring ways to generate income through hireable spaces and potential partnerships for workspace offers.
- **Future Plans:** The library is working with renowned designers to ensure the new library space meets future needs and community expectations.

17. **\*DCCS HANDBOOK UPDATE**

The Committee received a report of the Executive Director, Community & Children's Services concerning an updated DCCS handbook which sets out the work of the Department, key statistics and relevant financial information.

The following points were noted:

- The Committee discussion focused on the updates to the Department of Community and Children's Services (DCCS) Handbook, highlighting the importance of keeping the handbook current and relevant to support the department's operations and services.



- It was noted that the handbook would serve as a comprehensive guide for staff, outlining policies, procedures, and best practices within the department.
- Officers outlined the latest updates include revisions to existing policies, the introduction of new procedures, and the incorporation of feedback from staff to ensure the handbook remains practical and user-friendly.
- Members noted that the updated handbook will be distributed to all staff, with training sessions planned to ensure everyone is familiar with the changes and how to apply them in their daily work.

18. **\*MODERN SLAVERY STATEMENT 2024-2029**

The Committee received a report of the Deputy Town Clerk, concerning draft of the City Corporation's refreshed Modern Slavery Statement made pursuant to Section 54 of the Modern Slavery Act 2015.

The following points were noted:

- The Committee noted that the report had recently been considered by the Policy & Resources Committee and the recommendations had been approved.
- Officers noted that the City of London Corporation reaffirms its commitment to preventing modern slavery and human trafficking in its operations and supply chains.
- Members noted that the statement outlined the steps taken to combat modern slavery, including risk assessments, due diligence processes, and training for staff.
- Members were informed that the Corporation planned to enhance its efforts by improving supplier engagement, increasing awareness, and strengthening reporting mechanisms.

19. **UPDATES FROM SUB COMMITTEES, ALLOCATED MEMBERS AND PORTFOLIO HOLDERS**

There was no update.

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

There was one question on the adult social care strategy.

- A Member asked when the upcoming adult social care strategy would be open to public consultation. In response, officers noted that the strategy development involves several targeted engagement groups, but not a specific engagement group. This will be monitored. Public consultation began in September and ends in November.

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

There was no urgent business.

22. **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.

23. **NON-PUBLIC MINUTES**

**RESOLVED** – That, the non-public minutes of the meeting held on 20<sup>th</sup> September 2024 be agreed as a correct record.

24. **\*OUTSTANDING ACTIONS**

The Committee received a report of the Director of Community & Children's Services.

25. **\*NON PUBLIC APPENDIX - VIRTUAL SCHOOL HEADTEACHER ANNUAL REPORT FOR ACADEMIC YEAR 2023/2024**

The Committee received a Non-Public appendix to be read in conjunction with item 12.

26. **\*NON-PUBLIC APPENDICES - COMMISSIONING UPDATE**

The Committee received Non-Public appendices to be read in conjunction with item 13.

27. **WINDOWS AND COMMON PARTS REDECORATIONS – GOLDEN LANE ESTATE (PHASES 1 & 2)**

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

28. **36 PROCTOR HOUSE AVONDALE SQUARE ESTATE SE1 5EZ**

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

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

The Committee considered a report of Head of Central Funding & Charity Management Team.

30. **\*MANAGEMENT UPDATE FOR THE CITY OF LONDON COMBINED RELIEF OF POVERTY CHARITY (CHARITY REGISTRATION NUMBER 1073660)**

The Committee received a report of Head of Central Funding & Charity Management Team.

31. **\*CHARITIES REVIEW RECOMMENDATIONS UPDATE - THE CITY OF LONDON ALMSHOUSES (REGISTERED CHARITY NUMBER: 1005857)**

The Committee received a report of Acting Managing Director City Bridge Foundation.

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

There were no questions.

**33. 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 of urgent business.

**33.1 Black Raven Court - City of London Primary Academy Islington (COLPAI)**

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

**The meeting ended at 4.20 pm**

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Chairman

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