

City of London Corporation Committee Report

Committees: Community and Children's Services – for Decision Culture, Heritage and Libraries – For Information	Dated: 19 June 2025 7 July 2025
Subject: Department of Community and Children's Services	Public report: For Decision
This proposal: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• delivers Corporate Plan 2024-29 outcomes• provides statutory duties• provides business enabling functions	Diverse Engaged Communities Delivering Excellent Services Leading Sustainable Environment
Does this proposal require extra revenue and/or capital spending?	No
If so, how much?	N/A
What is the source of Funding?	N/A
Has this Funding Source been agreed with the Chamberlain's Department?	N/A
Report of: Judith Finlay, Director of Community and Children's Services	
Report author: Ellie Ward, Head of Strategy and Performance	

Summary

This report presents for approval the five-year high-level Business Plan for the Community and Children's Services Department for 2025/26 – 2029/30.

Recommendation

Members are asked to:

- Note** the factors taken into consideration in compiling the Community and Children's Services Department Business Plan; and
- Approve**, subject to the incorporation of any changes sought by this Committee, the departmental Business Plan 2025/26 – 2029/30.

Main Report

Background

1. As part of the new framework for corporate and business planning, departments were asked to produce standardised high-level, Business Plans for the first time in 2017 for the 2018/19 year. Members generally welcomed these high-level plans for being brief, concise, focused and consistent statements of the key ambitions and objectives for every department.
2. High-level Business Plans for align to our Corporate Plan 2024-2029. As a high-level plan, this document does not capture the granularity of departmental work but gives the overall picture of departmental activity, customer feedback, trends where applicable and direction of travel.
3. The Community and Children's Services Department is one of the first Departments to produce a five-year business plan.

Draft final five-year high-level Business Plan for 2025/29

4. This report presents, at Appendix 1, the draft final high-level Business Plan for 2025/26 – 2029/30 for the Community and Children's Services Department.
5. All elements of the Business Plan presented are relevant to this committee, apart from reference to libraries which are relevant to the Culture, Heritage and Libraries Committee.
6. The priorities outlined in the Headline Business Plan reflect a range of strategies which are informed by stakeholder engagement and approved by Members, and our statutory requirements.
7. The Department has a wide range of statutory responsibilities and receives a range of government funding and grants to deliver on this. The Housing Revenue Account is ringfenced in terms of how it can be used.
8. The Department produces a range of dashboards to monitor performance, and various sub-committees scrutinise these on a regular basis. Performance is also benchmarked with other relevant organisations through published data and relevant networks run by organisations such as London Councils, and the Association of Directors of Adult Social Care.
9. Feedback from citizens on services is gathered in a variety of ways including a compliments and complaints process, regular feedback surveys undertaken across a range of services, specific consultation, and engagement exercises. Service users are included in our commissioning and monitoring processes.

10. To ensure value of money, the Department utilises sub regional and regional frameworks for some services such as placements and regularly benchmarks itself against other relevant organisations. Organisations such as the Local Government Association also regularly produce analysis of costs of services such as social care, at regional and national levels, to allow value for money to be assessed.

Departmental Operational Property Assets Utilisation Assessment

11. The latest utilisation assessment was undertaken in December 2024.
12. In relation to the assets allocated for the delivery of services, these are broadly fully utilised. Operational space within the Guildhall (North Wing) provides for around 60% of the Department's staff, with others located across the Barbican Estate Office, three community libraries, two community centres and small estate offices on out of area housing estates.
13. At the Guildhall, operations include social care, homeless assessment and rough sleeping outreach where the nature of delivery requires higher rates of attendance. Overall, utilisation does vary and is partly utilised some days but some days nearly 100% utilised. This evaluation was carried out using local electronic data on desk usage.
14. The Barbican Estate Office includes floor space for public receptions and meeting facilities and therefore provides a greater square metre per staff. Following a more detailed occupancy review, the basement area will now be utilised by the City of London Police for storage.
15. The Golden Lane Leisure Centre is integral to the estate providing space for staff to support its operation. The Department leases (at peppercorn rent) the Portsoken Community Centre. The Golden Lane Leisure Centre is leased to the commissioned provider of leisure services.
16. The Department holds the lease on the upper floors of Half Moon Court. The premises are not used for operational purposes and is sublet. The current lease terms mean rent received covers the rent obligations of the department to its landlord.
17. The Aldgate Pavilion is a departmental property asset. It is commercially let with the rental income supporting the operation of the Portsoken Community Centre for which there is no revenue budget.
18. The Department is also exploring the potential for alternative use of under-utilised car park space on the Barbican Residential Estate.

Corporate & Strategic Implications

Strategic implications

The strategic priorities and commitment of the Department are expressed in the headline Business Plan in Appendix 1. These reflect the many statutory responsibilities that the Department has. They contribute to the Corporate Plan priorities but specifically outcomes 1 – 4.

Security implications

None

Financial implications

Business Plan revenue cost priorities will be funded from within existing allocated resources as previously agreed in the Budget Estimate Reports for 2025/26 and the annual budget process going forward. Capital transformation projects are subject to securing the necessary funding through the usual annual Capital Bids process. The scope of the HRA major works on existing homes is also subject to agreeing a suitable funding route to support additional HRA capital works.

Equalities implications

The strategic commitments and actions outlined in the headline business plan are designed to improve outcomes for protected characteristics and deliver our public sector equality duties. Where new services or initiatives are developed, Equality Impact Assessments are carried out as part of the process to inform their development and consider their impact on different groups.

Resourcing implications

There has been some budgetary growth in response to some resourcing pressures. There are also some ongoing resourcing pressures in relation to the delivery of community safety functions.

Climate Implications

The Department is committed to taking action to contribute to the delivery of the Climate Change Action Plan. A major workstream is to deliver a number of housing related projects to reduce the City Corporation's carbon footprint.

Conclusion

This report presents the five-year high-level Business Plan for 2025/26 – 2029/30 for the Community and Children's Services Department for Members to consider and approve.

Appendices

- Appendix 1 – Final high-level five-year Business Plan 2025/26 – 2029/30

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