HOUSING MANAGEMENT AND ALMSHOUSES SUB (COMMUNITY AND CHILDREN'S SERVICES) COMMITTEE
Monday, 14 September 2026

Minutes of the meeting of the Housing Management and Almshouses Sub (Community and Children's Services) Committee held at Committee Rooms, 2nd Floor, West Wing, Guildhall on Monday, 14 September 2026 at 11.00 am

Present

Members:
Steve Goodman OBE (Chairman)
Deputy Anne Corbett
Deputy Helen Fentimen OBE JP
Deputy John Fletcher
John Griffiths
Mercy Haggerty
Adam Hogg
Sandra Jenner
Tim McNally
Deputy James Thomson CBE
Deputy Ceri Wilkins
Philip Woodhouse

In attendance:
Mark Wheatley

Officers:

Judith Finlay	-	Executive Director Community and Children's Services
Peta Caine	-	Community and Children's Services
Michael Gwyther-Jones	-	Community and Children's Services
Mehran Ahmed	-	Community and Children's Services
Bev Andrews	-	Community and Children's Services
Paul Barton	-	Community and Children's Services
Rachel Evans	-	Community and Children's Services
Zoe Gayle	-	Community and Children's Services
Liane Coopey	-	Community and Children's Services
Helen Chantry	-	Community and Children's Services
Greg Wade (online)	-	Community and Children's Services
Kelila Perry	-	Town Clerk's Department

1. **APOLOGIES**
There were no apologies.

2. **MEMBERS' DECLARATIONS UNDER THE CODE OF CONDUCT IN RESPECT OF ITEMS ON THE AGENDA**
There were no declarations.

3. **MINUTES**
RESOLVED – That, the public minutes and non-public summary of the meeting held on 1 July 2026 be approved as a correct record.

Matters Arising
A Member requested an update on the Pets Policy. Officers responded that work was underway to implement internal guidance and procedures, including reviewing template letters. In answer to a question about whether the policy paid sufficient regard to health and wellbeing aspects, officers noted that the updated policy reflected resident feedback, and there would be an opportunity to review the policy again in the future.

A Member asked when the Black Raven Court Lessons Learned session would take place. Officers advised it was planned for 29 September and would be led by City Surveyors.

A Member requested that future reports disaggregate repairs data across each estate. Officers confirmed this work was underway and should be available in the future.

4. **OUTSTANDING ACTIONS**
Members received the outstanding action tracker.

A Member noted that timelines should be kept up to date.

A Member enquired about the vehicle charging points at Middlesex Street and Golden Lane. Officers advised that charging points were free to use, however existing points were not frequently used. Charging and collection arrangements would be considered through the Major Works Programme. Service charging would also be considered as part of the annual plan.

RESOLVED – That, the action tracker be noted.

5. **HOUSING MATTERS REPORT - FOR DECISION**
Members considered a report of the Executive Director Community and Children's Services updating Members on key issues currently being dealt with by the Housing Team.

The following items were discussed.

Tenancy Agreement Review and Tenant Consultation

- A Member noted that residents were concerned that this review was linked to decanting for upcoming major works at the Golden Lane Estate. Officers confirmed this was not the case and residents would be advised.
- A Member asked for clarification as to what was meant by "reasonable standard" in relation to the repair of common parts. Officers answered this

would depend on the estate. While the Tenancy Agreement was intended to be broad, there would be estate-specific communications and service standards, including the Tenants' Handbook and estate-by-estate service agreements.
- A Member enquired about the four weeks' notice period for rent increases. Officers confirmed they would seek to provide a longer period where possible.
- A Member asked about support for tenants with special needs, to which officers confirmed they would be assisted by the Supported Tenants Team.
- A Member asked how officers would manage people refusing or forgetting to sign the new agreement. Officers advised that a notice of variation would be served and any refusals would be managed through existing procedures.
- A Member emphasised the need for repeated communications with tenants on the changes and who to contact with concerns, including through the newsletter, which officers confirmed would take place.
- A Member asked that consideration be given to informing leaseholders which parts of the tenancy agreement were relevant to them.
- A Member requested further detail on the hard flooring guidance. Officers advised that once the revised tenancy agreement was approved, the key points would be communicated to tenants, including through newsletters and direct contact where required.

Officers informed the Sub Committee that further advice was required from the Comptroller's and City Solicitors Department before the new agreement could be finalised. Officers therefore revised the recommendation to the following: Members are asked to agree to delegate authority to the Town Clerk to approve the new Tenancy Agreement in consultation with the Chairman and Deputy Chairman, once finalised after Comptroller and City Solicitors have advice from Counsel.

Disposal of Personal Property Policy Review

- In response to a Member's question about consultation, officers advised that residents had not been consulted as there were no large changes to the policy.

Estate Review Update

- A Member requested improved communications on how to report repairs, noting the decrease in repairs calls performance and continued issues with the Golden Lane Estate notice boards. Officers advised Members about the communication campaign including fridge magnets and newsletter articles, and acknowledged this was a work in progress.
- A Member asked who had done the review. Officers advised it had been undertaken by Housing Management staff, and a review into the Estate Office model was being progressed. A Member noted that the review should explore the management model of estate management. Officers confirmed the review would look at the Housing Management operating structure.
- A Member asked how many performance-related terminations there had been in the last five years and how many staff were on performance management plans. It was agreed that these questions should be raised in the non-public session.

Golden Lane Estate Major Works Renewal Board

- The Chairman confirmed that feedback from the Golden Lane Estate Major Works Renewal Board would be reported to the Sub Committee for transparency and so Members could be assured it was working effectively. However, following the Chair of the Board's concern that the minutes had been published, officers undertook to discuss with the Board how best to report its work to the Sub Committee in future. Members noted that the minutes were difficult to read and suggested a written summary of previous meetings be provided instead, including decisions taken and actions achieved.

Lead Members / Officers Borough Twinning

- There was a discussion about how best to arrange a meeting between Allocated Members and their lead officers. Members supported a joint meeting of Allocated Members and lead officers to review the role, share lessons learnt and good practice, and discuss how best to deliver their roles. A Member noted that the role description was intended as a guide, and Allocated Members' roles should reflect the needs of individual boroughs and estates.
- A Member requested that the Committee be provided with an outline of where the properties and blocks were located, noting that this information had previously been circulated. Officers confirmed that this would be included in the information pack for the joint meeting.

Voids (Empty Homes) and New Build Lettings Update

- A Member asked how many of the 82 voids had since been let. Officers confirmed that eight properties at Black Raven Court remained to be let and agreed to confirm how many belonged to Islington Council or the City Corporation. A further 13 properties had been withheld for the remediation works commencing in January, and they would be returned on a staggered, floor-by-floor basis.
- Officers advised in response to a Member's question that the refusals reported in Appendix 7.1 were Islington properties, and there had been approximately five refusals of City Corporation properties.
- In response to a Member's request, officers confirmed that a future report would include financial information.
- A Member supported a lessons learnt exercise on the previous allocations process. Officers advised there had been lessons learnt discussions with Islington Council, which had identified improvements that would be implemented, including a senior Islington Council officer acting as coordinator and the Islington Council Housing Director as the final point of escalation.
- A Member suggested the Chairman could contact his counterpart at Islington Council to note concerns about their processes. The Chairman responded that Members could engage with counterparts in other boroughs where officers considered this helpful.
- Members sought further detail on the voids recovery programme, contract arrangements, and, more broadly, the ability to scrutinise contracts to ensure KPIs are met. Officers advised that following the pause of voids work due to issues with Chigwell, the Civica system was now live and would

support voids work across a number of teams. Voids work had been separated from responsive repairs work, and two additional void contractors had been mobilised to replace the emergency cover provided by TDK. The Head of Operations was managing this work, supported by a void surveyor responsible for monitoring the programme.

- A Member emphasised that greater coordination was needed between voids work and homelessness work and sought assurance that void properties were being considered for households in temporary accommodation, particularly families with children. Officers confirmed they were coordinating with homelessness officers and some recent lettings had been made to homeless households. While the local lettings policy had previously restricted this approach, properties were now being let more generally, and further use of voids was being explored.

Heat Metering and Billing Update

- Officers advised that residents had been given six months' notice of upcoming changes related to the installation of new boilers and a new way of billing for personal use. Residents would not be billed twice, although some may need to pay service charge costs accrued in the past. Additional resource had been allocated to support residents with the changes.
- A Member asked for an update on the recent open afternoon at Middlesex Street estate where heating was discussed. Officers agreed to report back with feedback. The Member noted that heating would also be discussed at an upcoming Residents' Association meeting.

Guest Room Bookings and Costs

- A Member asked whether residents could book guest rooms for a single night at weekends rather than being required to make block bookings. Officers advised that alternative arrangements, including key safes, could be considered as part of the wider housing management review, taking account of staffing, servicing and cost implications.
- A Member asked about the occupancy rates and financial contribution of the guest rooms. Officers would provide this information but confirmed that costs were not fully covered.

RESOLVED – That, Members:

- Agree to delegate authority to the Town Clerk to approve the new Tenancy Agreement in consultation with the Chairman and Deputy Chairman, once finalised after Comptroller and City Solicitors have advice from Counsel.
- Approve the Access to Homes Policy, noting the outcome of the resident consultation and the amendments made to the policy in response to feedback received.
- Approve the officer reviewed and updated Disposal of Personal Property Policy.
- Note the updates provided on the following matters:
    - Estate Review Update
    - Golden Lane Estate Major Works Renewal Board
    - Lead Members / Officers Borough Twinning
    - Voids (Empty Homes) and New Build Lettings Update

- Heat Metering and Billing Update
- Lease Extension Policy Update / Leasehold and Freehold Reform Act 2024 – Progress Update
- Guest Room Bookings and Costs

6. **HOUSING PERFORMANCE REPORT SUMMARY (APRIL 2026 – JULY 2026)**

Members received a report of the Executive Director Community and Children's Services providing a summary of housing performance for the period April 2026 to July 2026, drawing on the Housing Performance Dashboard and related operational performance updates.

Specific performance scores were discussed:

- A Member queried the 60% target for the "Listens & Acts" Tenant Satisfaction Measures score. Officers acknowledged there was an issue of trust and confidence, and while they aimed for 100%, 60% was a realistic target.
- A Member asked about the Decent Homes target and when the stock condition would be addressed. Officers advised that the target was 100%, however this would not be achieved until completion of the Major Works Programme, which the Regulator of Social Housing was aware of. The Stock Condition Survey analysis was almost complete and could affect the current performance figure. A Member suggested separate targets for before and after completion of the Major Works Programme.
- A Member questioned the reported 91% electrical safety compliance figure, noting their experience of a contractor failing to attend an electrical safety check. Officers apologised and confirmed that the figure was accurate. An electrical safety check was only recorded as complete once the required certificate had been verified as correct and recorded on the system.
- A Member expressed concern that repairs calls performance had fallen to 61%. Officers advised there had been a significant increase in calls in July (consistent with previous years) which resulted in longer pick-up and call times. Officers acknowledged that performance was not where it should be but advised that the Barbican would be separated from the repairs service desk in September, which was expected to improve performance. Other measures being implemented to improve performance included increased call monitoring, including live call listening and individual officer monitoring, and improved visibility of incoming calls, including identifying emergency calls. A Member raised concerns about lack of support to leaseholders, for example in the case of leaks where the issue may be coming from a neighbouring tenanted property. Officers confirmed that leaseholders could contact the repairs desk, and ongoing training and coaching was being provided to improve triaging which would help address this issue.

The Chairman noted a disconnect between reported performance and Members' experiences and stated the need to acknowledge that while there were improvements in some areas, difficult issues were still to be addressed.

Members sought clarity on compliance with Awaab's Law, including whether emergency repairs and damp and mould cases were being measured against its requirements, the 10-day target for damp and mould inspections, and the distinction between emergency and significant hazards. Officers advised in response:

- Current reporting did not enable differentiation between the statutory timescales, but work was underway to enable this.
- The 10-day inspection timeframe applied to significant damp and mould hazards, while emergency hazards required a 24-hour response.
- The definition of emergency and significant hazards was determined by the Housing Health and Safety Rating System. Emergency hazards presented an immediate and significant risk, while significant hazards were urgent but not necessarily immediate. Effective triaging of calls was important for correctly prioritising hazards, and work was underway to improve this process.
- Further Awaab's Law requirements were expected, and officers would provide a separate report on compliance.

Members raised concerns about the arrears amount. Officers responded that additional work was underway to improve income collection and intervene earlier to prevent arrears escalating.

A Member asked when improvements in outcomes, including fire safety, electrical compliance and Decent Homes standards, could be expected. Officers noted improvements had been made despite the pressures caused by Chigwell stopping work. Additional contractor capacity had been brought in to address outstanding repairs while longer-term procurement was being considered. Electrical safety compliance had continued to improve, while work on communal inspections and certificates remained in progress. There had also been improvements in the lift service following changes to the contractor.

A Member asked what had changed from the tenants' perspective since the inspection report. Officers undertook to put this question to the Resident Voice Group to gather feedback on their experience.

A Member highlighted that residents' experience of repairs would impact their perception of the Major Works Programme and sought clear timescales for tangible improvements and disaggregated data. Officers acknowledged that the repairs service affected tenants' perceptions of the wider service and while there had been some progress in improving the repairs service, further work was needed.

A Member requested further benchmarks to contextualise performance. Officers advised that the Tenant Satisfaction Measures provided benchmarking, including comparison with other London authorities. The current performance report lacked trend analysis as it was only in its second year, however this would become available as reporting matured.

A Member commented that the reference to the Housing Service continuing to "maintain a strong performance" should be reworded considering the C3 rating.

RESOLVED – That, the report be noted.

7. **TENANT SATISFACTION MEASURES - BENCHMARKING & ACTION PLAN 25/26**

Members received a report of the Executive Director of Community and Children's Services providing an update on the benchmarking against London peer groups, and the improvement plan and actions put in place to ensure continued improvement.

Officers confirmed that this year's survey would be done geographically to provide more detailed feedback. A Member asked whether the previous survey responses could be broken down by individual estate. Officers advised that this was not possible, but future surveys would provide this level of information.

A Member asked whether performance should be assessed against the City Corporation's own standards rather than its peers. Officers confirmed the benchmarking had been assessed against the City Corporation's service standards, which would inform performance monitoring and identify any adjustments or additional resource requirements.

A Member raised concerns about declining performance. Officers acknowledged that several areas had declined, although complaints and repairs had improved. The most noticeable decline had been in Estate Services due to capacity constraints. However, additional government funding had been secured, and recruitment was underway to increase capacity.

A Member asked whether interim results from the current survey could be shared. Officers confirmed interim results could be reported once available, and noted that surveys, complaints and other feedback had highlighted the need for more focused work on the larger estates. Additional area management resource had therefore been introduced, covering York Way, Middlesex Street, Avondale, and Golden Lane Estate.

RESOLVED – That, the report be noted.

8. **QUARTERLY FIRE SAFETY STATUS REPORT**

Members received a report of the Executive Director Community and Children's Services providing quarterly oversight of the status and outcomes of fire safety management in the Corporation's social housing.

Officers noted that the 447 additional actions were attributable to the completion of new fire risk assessments.

Members noted it was difficult to assess progress and suggested this could be improved by providing a trend analysis and dashboard. Officers acknowledged the need to improve reporting and advised that work was underway to develop

a dashboard, with a specific role in the new staffing structure responsible for its development and management.

A Member raised concerns about the new fire safety consultancy contract and asked for detail on its scope. Officers advised that the contract would support compliance with statutory fire safety and building requirements, including updating building floor plans and undertaking structural assessments of external walls. A Member sought clarification on whether the contract would be funded through the Major Works Programme and recharged to leaseholders. Officers responded that the work had been included in the Major Works Programme to avoid duplication, but some costs were covered by the Fire Safety Works contingency. Officers clarified that proposed fees were less than the contingency ceiling of £1m.

A Member requested a timescale for when the Sub Committee would expect to see a major improvement in outcomes. Officers responded that 30 of the high-priority actions were scheduled to be completed within 12 months.

RESOLVED – That, the report be noted.

9. **STOCK CONDITION SURVEY FINDINGS AND ASSET MANAGEMENT STRATEGY REVIEW**

Members received a report of the Executive Director Community and Children's Services providing an update on the Housing Stock Condition Survey, the key findings emerging from the Survey and supporting analysis.

A Member sought clarification about who did the survey, its scope, and its current status. Officers confirmed the survey was done by surveyors and covered internal aspects of tenants' homes, communal areas, roofs, and heating systems. The survey was nearly complete, and homes not initially included were being accessed to gather further data. A survey of the Almshouses had also been added. The survey was being undertaken alongside wider work programmes, including the Major Works Programme, to ensure a comprehensive approach and these work programmes would collectively inform the update of the Asset Management Strategy.

A Member asked about the expected timeline for receiving outputs from the survey and whether this would include a 25-to-30-year programme for each estate. Officers advised that in the immediate term, the survey was linked to the Climate Action Strategy and the Major Works Programme and headlines were expected by November 2026. A 25-to-30-year programme would require consideration of financial implications as part of longer-term business planning.

A Member welcomed the proposed rolling survey programme. The Member asked whether predictive modelling, as being explored by other councils, could also be considered. Officers responded that they were part of a group across London authorities looking at predictive modelling, however the priority was to get the basics right before engaging further with this work.

RESOLVED – That, Members:

- Note the current status of the Stock Condition Survey programme and its key findings.
- Note the incorporation of survey findings into the review of the Asset Management Strategy.
- Note the emerging priorities relating to investment planning, accessibility, building safety, asset sustainability and decarbonisation.
- Note that a refreshed Asset Management Strategy will be presented to Members following completion of the review process.

10. **HOUSING MATTERS UPDATE - INFORMATION ONLY**

Members received a report of the Executive Director Community and Children's Services providing updates on key issues currently being dealt with by the Housing Team, for information only.

Members discussed the Civica CX Programme Update:

- A Member raised concerns about the time taken to implement the system and asked if digital expertise was being sought to ensure the system was robust. Officers advised that staff were receiving training and support to embed use of the system, and there had been some operational developments, including the implementation of voids and anti-social behaviour modules. A Member welcomed the support being provided to staff and asked that this be highlighted more clearly to the Sub Committee in future.
- A Member asked how the programme was being managed. Officers advised that two specialist Civica consultants were supporting implementation, and progress was reviewed through weekly meetings.
- A Member asked what the cost was to date, and what the total cost would be. Officers would provide full programme costs in the next report.
- A Member asked if the Barbican still used Civica. Officers confirmed the Barbican continued to use parts of Civica and was being supported by the same specialists, although its approach may differ with the rollout of the new repairs service.
- A Member expressed appreciation for previous reports which had highlighted the challenges of implementing Civica and how these challenges had been managed.

RESOLVED – That, the report be noted.

Members agreed to extend the meeting as per standing order 39.

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

Members raised questions related to the following matters.

<u>Water pooling issues at Middlesex Street Estate</u>

A Member raised concerns about surface water pooling on the southeast corner of the Middlesex Street Estate podium and a significant mosquito problem, seeking details about investigations, remedial work identified and carried out, and if the area underneath the paving and decking tiles been

checked for stagnant water and mosquito breeding. In response, officers advised that:

- Investigations involving maintenance contractors, architects and specialist pest control consultants had provided a clearer understanding of the issues and informed immediate remedial actions and long-term solutions.
- Standing water on the perimeter podium was primarily caused by surface level variations and the long-term solution would likely involved repairs, re-levelling and replacement waterproofing. This would require additional funding and officers were preparing a capital funding bid.
- Investigations into the sunken garden were ongoing, with initial findings indicating issues with the drainage outlet. Further technical reviews would confirm the issue and appropriate solution.
- A specialist pest control survey identified a blocked surface water drain near the ball court and standing water beneath the sunken garden decking. Contractors were scheduled to attend the blocked drain that week, and an engineering solution was being progressed to address the standing water beneath the decking.

The Chairman noted this update would be appropriately discussed at the Eastern Base Steering Group, and any matters relevant to funding or to the Sub Committee should be brought back for consideration.

Section 20 Notices

A Member declared they were a leaseholder on Golden Lane Estate. The Member requested that Section 20 notices be accompanied by a covering letter explaining the figures in plain English. The Member also reported letters had been delivered to the wrong homes. Officers apologised for the administrative errors and confirmed that covering letters were being explored, and additional resource had been identified to accelerate this work.

Decant Policy

In relation to the decant policy, a Member commented that three months' notice would not be acceptable for decanting residents.

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

Two items of business were discussed.

Allocated Members report – Middlesex Street Estate

Members received a report from the Allocated Member for Middlesex Street Estate providing an update on issues on the estate, including minor repairs and renewals. The Allocated Member thanked officers and the Residents' Association for their significant contribution to the report, noting that the Residents Association's willingness to contribute reflected the success of the Allocated Members' reports and demonstrated how effective the approach could be. The Allocated Member highlighted that the snagging report of minor repairs and renewals had reduced from 29 jobs in January to seven legacy items.

Leaseholder Service Charges

A Member raised concerns about leaseholder service charges, noting that Members had not seen a budget or outturn report, had not received information about rebates or supplementary payments, and there had not been an audit for at least five years. Officers advised they would provide an outline of the proposed approach to dealing with leaseholder service charges, in collaboration with the Chamberlain's department.

13. **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.

14. **NON-PUBLIC MINUTES**
RESOLVED – That, the non-public minutes of the meeting held on 1 July 2026 be approved as a correct record.

15. **REPAIRS AND MAINTENANCE SERVICE UPDATE**
Members received a report of the Executive Director Community and Children's Services providing an update on Repairs and Maintenance service delivery, including progress in delivering the Repairs Recovery Action Plan and the Compliance Corrective Action Plan during 2025/26, together with the forward plan for 2026/27.

16. **QUESTIONS ON MATTERS RELATING TO THE WORK OF THE SUB COMMITTEE**
Members raised questions related to one matter.

17. **ANY OTHER BUSINESS THAT THE CHAIRMAN CONSIDERS URGENT AND WHICH THE SUB COMMITTEE AGREE SHOULD BE CONSIDERED WHILST THE PUBLIC ARE EXCLUDED**
There was no other business.

The meeting ended at 1.20 pm

Chairman

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