COMMUNITY & CHILDREN'S SERVICES COMMITTEE

Tuesday, 8 September 2026

Minutes of the meeting of the Community & Children's Services Committee held at Committee Rooms, West Wing, Guildhall on Tuesday, 8 September 2026 at 1.45 pm

Present

Members:

Deputy Helen Fentimen OBE JP (Chair)
Steve Goodman OBE (Deputy Chair)
Joanna Tufuo Abeyie
Munsur Ali
Matthew Bell
Simon Burrows
Deputy Anne Corbett
Deputy John Fletcher
John Griffiths
Mercy Haggerty
Adam Hogg
Shravan Joshi MBE
Helen Ladele
Tim McNally
Leyla Ostovar
Deputy Nighat Qureishi
Beverley Ryan (Co-opted Member)
Deputy James Thomson CBE
Deputy Ceri Wilkins
David Williams
Philip Woodhouse

Observed virtually:

Alderman Tim Levene
Sophia Mooney
Mark Wheatley

In Attendance:

Deputy Marianne Fredericks
Gaby Robertshaw

Officers:

Sheena Etches	-	City Bridge Foundation
Mohammed Hussain	-	City Bridge Foundation
Jack Joslin	-	City Bridge Foundation
Dr. Sandra Husbands	-	Director of Public Health, City of London & London Borough of Hackney
Judith Finlay	-	Executive Director, Community and Children's Services
Beverley Andrews	-	Community and Children's Service Department
Paul Barton	-	Community and Children's Services Department
Deborah Bell	-	Community and Children's Services Department
Peta Caine	-	Community and Children's Services Department
Simon Cribbens	-	Community and Children's Services Department
Hannah Dobbin	-	Community and Children's Services Department
Michael Gwyther-Jones	-	Community and Children's Services Department
Greg Knight	-	Community and Children's Services Department
Rachel Levy	-	Community and Children's Services Department
Chris Pelham	-	Community and Children's Services Department
Rachel Talmage	-	Community and Children's Services Department

Elliot Tarling	-	Community and Children's Services Department
Ellie Ward	-	Community and Children's Services Department
Lisa Ward	-	Communications and External Affairs Department
Kevin Colville	-	Comptroller and City Solicitor's Department
Frank Marchione	-	Comptroller and City Solicitor's Department
Mark Jarvis	-	Chamberlain's Department
Amelia Christopher	-	Town Clerk's Department
Polly Dunn	-	Town Clerk's Department

The Chairman thanked departing member Alderman Kawsar Zaman, and thanked Beverley Ryan (Co-opted Member) noting that it was her last meeting.

1. **APOLOGIES**

Apologies for absence were received from Anthony David Fitzpatrick, Dawn Frampton, Sarah Gillinson, Sandra Jenner, Alderman Tim Levene (observed virtually), Sophia Mooney (observed virtually), Stuart Thompson, William Upton KC, Mark Wheatley (observed virtually).

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

Tim McNally declared that he is a governor of The Aldgate School, and has grandchildren of the relevant age but not in attendance at The Aldgate School or in receipt of the City Corporation's subsidy or accessibility scheme.

Beverley Ryan declared that she was Co-Chair of Governors at The Aldgate School.

David Williams declared that his children went to the nursery at The Aldgate School.

3. **MINUTES**

RESOLVED: That the public minutes and non-public summary of the previous meeting held on 30 June 2026 be approved as an accurate record.

4. **OUTSTANDING ACTIONS**

The Committee received the public outstanding actions report.

Officers highlighted that the City & Hackney Safeguarding Children Partnership Annual Report 2025-2026 would not be published in September, but later in the autumn.

RESOLVED: That the report be received, and its contents noted.

5. **SUBSIDY OF 0-2 CHILDCARE FOR THE ALDGATE SCHOOL**

The Committee received the report of the Executive Director, Community and Children's Services. Officers explained that in June 2025, the Committee approved discretionary financial support to sustain the 0-2 childcare provision until August 2027. The City Corporation's statutory duty to ensure sufficient childcare provision was highlighted. Since the Committee's decision in June

2025 and the Committee's consideration of the matter in March 2026, the school provided an alternative financial model which required approximately two thirds less discretionary spend than previously sought. There was also evidence of the impact of the government's extended childcare offer. Should the discretionary subsidy of £60,000 per year be approved along with £66,000 spread over three years for pay protection, a Service Level Agreement (SLA) would be put in place between the City Corporation and the Governing Body of the Aldgate School, which would be reviewed annually.

The Chairman highlighted the earlier Member briefing on the report, which was an opportunity to ask questions but did not replace discussion at the Committee meeting.

Members thanked parents for their engagement in the process and hoped that people felt more heard. A Member highlighted the subsidy to private providers of business rates relief totalling around £50,000, which meant that the subsidy under consideration was not the only one available. However, that relief was not available to The Aldgate School. It was highlighted that a large part of the provision allows nervous babies and parents to progress from a baby room to a reception class in formal schooling and that was a huge benefit. Officers explained that regarding the six childcare providers in the City, three received business rates relief, The Aldgate School business rates were covered by the Dedicated Schools Grant.

A Member and Co-Chair of Governors at The Aldgate School, explained that the governors had explored all possibilities of alternative funding and the conclusion was that it was not viable to offer affordable childcare without the City Corporation's support.

If the Committee did not agree the recommendation to provide the subsidy, a Member asked whether the provision would be stopped and approximately three teachers could be lost, and as the City Corporation would need to provide support for those children that would likely cost more than £60,000. Officers explained that any decision to close the provision would be a decision of the Governing Body and the cost of closure to the City Corporation would include redundancy costs to affected members of staff, and there would be a cost to support families seeking alternative provision. The City Corporation's sufficiency of childcare provision might also be compromised and that could lead to further costs.

A Member emphasised the stark difference in affordability between what was offered at The Aldgate School compared to private providers. The Member sought clarity on the nature and scope of the annual review of the SLA, what circumstances could the subsidy be reduced or withdrawn. Officers explained that the annual review of the SLA would look at whether the governing body and school leadership team's commitment to review the fees annually is met, to ensure that City residents and those with limited means are prioritised for affordable provision; and it must be mindful of the funds available to the City Corporation to sustain the subsidy.

RESOLVED:

1. Noted the report, including further work undertaken with The Aldgate School, and revised childcare sufficiency in the Square Mile.
2. Approved an ongoing discretionary subsidy of up to £60,000 per year to support The Aldgate School's 0-2 (rising 3) childcare provision, plus a one-off pay protection staff cost of £66,070.02 (spread over three years). This would be subject to availability of funding from the City Corporation and uptake of City resident 0-2 (rising 3) year olds at the provision, to be assessed at annual review of the Service Level Agreement by officers and governors.

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

The Committee received the report of the Town Clerk. Officers responded to the Chairman's query that lead officers for each of the City's Housing Estates had been nominated, and meetings between lead officers and lead Members would take place later in the month. The Chairman emphasised that the arrangement was a key part in keeping in touch with residents and the elected Members in each ward.

A Member supported the useful scheme and asked how Allocated Members' reporting to the Housing Management and Almshouses Sub-Committee, would be received by this Committee. The Deputy Chair explained that the sub-committee receives reports jointly from the lead officer and lead Member, providing assurance that any issues would be followed up by the lead officer and escalated to this Committee as appropriate.

RESOLVED: Approved the vacant Allocated Member positions to the City's Housing Estates, as determined by the Housing Management and Almshouses Sub-Committee at and subsequent to its meeting on 1 July 2026:

- Hackney - John Griffiths
- Lambeth - Mercy Haggerty
- Southwark - Deputy Ceri Wilkins
- Tower Hamlets - Deputy John Fletcher

7. **FAMILIES IN THE CITY UPDATE**

The Committee received the report of the Executive Director, Community and Children's Services. Officers explained that as part of the government's reforms, the City Corporation was required to create a Best Start Family Hub. There had been holiday activities over the summer and that included one-to-one support for children with disabilities, feedback was positive. There was a new dedicated workforce development role to improve school readiness and parenting confidence, for example through the Rhyme Time sessions.

A Member queried whether networking was underway for example through London Councils to share best practice concerning the Best Start Family Hubs. Officers explained that there was networking across London, working with both the London Innovation and Improvement Alliance, and London Councils looking at the social care reforms together. The Chairman added that there were various Member meetings to share learning.

RESOLVED: Noted the report.

8. **GOLDEN LANE LEISURE CENTRE UPDATE**

The Committee received the report of the Executive Director, Community and Children's Services. Officers explained that the leisure management contract would be outsourced to a specialist leisure operator, with the tender scheduled to be issued in December 2026. Officers and Members were working with the Golden Lane Leisure Centre (GLLC) Steering Group, which was supportive of the procurement approach, it was informing the design and service priorities. The refurbishment was in the Royal Institute of British Architects (RIBA) Stage 3 and the planning team was finalising design documents, a planning application to be submitted in October 2026.

The Chair of the GLLC Steering Group noted that the steering group had met three times since it was established at the last Committee meeting, trust was being built and it was working collaboratively. The focus had been on finalising the terms of reference and there would be two co-chairs one of whom would be from the community, as well as reviewing the architect's plans to go through the formal planning application process in the autumn, subject to future community consultation. One area of concern was around the changing facility and the proposal was to have a changing village, that would be mixed-use; those concerns were allayed following a visit to a changing village at Britannia Leisure Centre in Shoreditch. The steering group would review the procurement process and there was an opportunity for the leisure centre to be a centre of excellence regarding its inclusivity.

The Deputy-Chair welcomed the good progress made and sought continued reassurance on four areas, to demonstrate that the community was being engaged with fully: any issues concerning the design of the building, any constraints concerning the procurement process, the use of other settings such as the Sir Ralph Perring Centre and the Golden Lane Community Centre, and what progress was being made on the timings. Officers explained that regarding the timings work was on track to submit the technical design for planning in mid-October. Whether that would need to go to a planning committee meeting was factored into the timings. Members would be kept updated on the procurement process and that was currently on track, officers were confident in the genuine interest from quality providers and fulfilling the ambitions of being able to provide services for underrepresented groups. Coordination with other settings was vital, funding was being explored to address the wider signage and accessibility issues.

A Member highlighted the positive approaches taken by the GLLC Steering Group, and the Middlesex Street Steering Group, going forward those lessons learned would be vital to take on board and for future projects to have steering groups at an earlier stage, enabling issues to be addressed earlier. The Chairman added that the Golden Lane Estate Renewal Board was another steering group, and that had been a positive collaborative experience. A Member noted that it would be helpful if the steering group model could be

rolled out to other housing estates outside the square mile, for example York Way.

A Member thanked officers for putting together the leisure programme, more people were now engaged in sports than before and asked when the free subsidy would stop and when the Young at Heart subscription would end. Officers explained that a review was needed of the logistics around the administering of fees and subscriptions, a fully costed proposal would be submitted to planning, the developers could then be held accountable on the timeline and price; certainty to follow once the new provider is in place.

A Member asked about the Adult Exercise on Referral service to be mobilised in October, having understood that was already in place with Nuffield Health and Neaman Practice. Officers explained that an options appraisal had been completed, the services provided by neighbouring authorities had been reviewed, access to Islington Council's Healthwise programme had been agreed and would be mobilised later in the month. Final discussions were underway for an additional offer with Hackney Council to access their programme. The Chairman asked how the mobilisation of those services was highlighted to service users. Officers explained that the mobilisation of the service would be through GPs who would refer people and an update would be provided to service users.

The Chairman asked when a decision would be made around ongoing support to current service users and whether that was scheduled for March 2027. The Chairman noted the optimistic timeline of contract mobilisation from May 2027, and with the Golden Lane Leisure Centre being closed for one year, asked whether that would enable the opening of the new centre in 2028; or would a delay be factored in as the centre closed sooner. Officers explained that two contracts would need to be awarded, one for the future operator, and the other for the provider Alliance Leisure to go into contract for the development - that would provide certainty about the duration of the works and how long interim arrangements were needed. Officers were confident that it would be a twelve-month programme, the planning process would determine the award of contract and start of works on site.

Officers committed to emailing Committee Members regarding the next two public engagement meetings on the GLLC, and work was underway with the Golden Lane Estate Residents' Association (GLERA) to publicise that at the Open House Festival.

RESOLVED:

1. Noted the procurement approach and timeline to award the new leisure management contract for GLLC.
2. Noted the key dates for the GLLC refurbishment programme.
3. Noted the continued engagement with the GLLC Steering Group on both the procurement and refurbishment programmes.

9. **WARDMOTE UPDATES**

The Committee received the report of the Executive Director, Community and Children's Services. Officers explained that the matter had been decided under agenda item 5.

RESOLVED: Noted the resolution from the annual wardmotes 2026 and decided on the matter under agenda item 5: Subsidy of 0-2 childcare for The Aldgate School, that the Committee approved the further discretionary subsidy.

10. **POLICY AND RESOURCES COMMITTEE RESOLUTION**

The resolution from the Policy and Resources Committee was received. Officers highlighted that the Policy and Resources Committee, and Court of Common Council had committed to looking at efficiencies and effectiveness. One way the Committee could enable that would be through assessing the delegations to its sub-committees and officers, being cognisant of that when reviewing the sub-committees' terms of reference in due course.

The Chairman noted that in principle the Committee had three sub-committees: Housing Management and Almshouses Sub-Committee, Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Sub-Committee, Safeguarding & Special Educational Needs Sub-Committee. Additionally, the Integrated Care Sub-Committee (of the City and Hackney Place-based Partnership), due to the NHS changes would fall outside of the Committee's remit and be more relevant to the Health and Wellbeing Board. The Committee's and Board's terms of reference to reflect that in due course, the Health and Wellbeing Board would discuss the item: Next Steps in the City and Hackney Health and Care Partnership, at its September meeting.

RESOLVED: Discussed the Policy and Resources Committee's resolution to the Committee as a Grand Committee which has appointed sub-committees, and considered in earnest the benefits of empowering said sub-committees to take decisions without unnecessary recourse to the Grand Committee, with a view to balance due diligence with efficiency.

11. ***BARBICAN LIBRARY REFRESH WORKS**

The Committee received the report of the Executive Director, Community and Children's Services.

A Member suggested that the engagement earlier discussed earlier - regarding steering groups - could be useful for the refresh works and queried what engagement was underway. The Chairman clarified that the Culture, Heritage and Libraries (CHL) Committee was the responsible committee, Committee Members who also sat on the CHL Committee would follow that up there. Officers provided assurance that the changes were a result of public consultation and there would be further consultation around any library closures. A Member stressed the difference between consultation and the steering group model, for example questionnaires versus regular meetings with community leaders to address issues. Officers agreed that the steering group model would be one for any significant changes to services going forward.

RESOLVED:

1. Noted the principles for possible library closure during the refurbishment works.
2. Noted the principles for a limited Barbican Library provision for the duration of the works.

12. ***CQC ADULT SOCIAL CARE ASSESSMENT OUTCOME REPORT**

The Committee received the report of the Executive Director, Community and Children's Services.

The Chairman thanked staff and acknowledged the Good rating.

A Member welcomed the plans to secure a carers co-ordinator in primary care and asked for detail on that. Officers explained that role was in place, the Primary Care Network received money to tackle health inequalities in Shoreditch Park and City, that money was used to identify new carers through primary care and to provide support. Carers and doctors were provided with the carers co-ordinator's contact details.

13. ***OFSTED FOCUS VISIT INSPECTION OF CHILDREN SOCIAL CARE AND EARLY HELP**

The Committee received the report of the Executive Director, Community and Children's Services.

The Chairman thanked staff and acknowledged the positive feedback from the inspection.

RESOLVED: Noted the report.

14. ***COMMUNITY AND CHILDREN'S SERVICES (NON-HOUSING) REVENUE OUTTURN FORECAST AS AT QUARTER 1, 2026/27**

The Committee received the joint report of the Executive Director, Community and Children's Services; and the Chamberlain and Chief Financial Officer. Officers outlined two main areas of significant overspend which mirrored national trends. Firstly, the local risk budget to support older people, there was a forecast overspend of £658,000, due to an increased number and average cost of care packages; there were mitigating actions but due to the long-term trend of increases, an additional funding growth bid was required. Secondly, the central risk budget for Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND), there was a forecast overspend of £523,000; that was supported by grant funding from the Department for Education, City Corporation had a bespoke formula and sought an increase.

A Member queried what Housing Benefit Administration costing £300,000 was, as people applied for that via Universal Credit; and suggested that the name be changed. Officers explained that it was the difference regarding temporary accommodation, the gap between the government subsidy and local housing allowances placed outside of the City; that had reduced for some and the Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Sub-Committee would receive a report on temporary accommodation. The Chairman noted that a focused approach was

needed to address homelessness and rough sleeping, a meeting was scheduled with that sub-committee's chairman and officers looking at the future plan.

A Member asked what the Older People service concerned. Officers explained that concerned people aged over 65 who had care packages - there was another category for adults aged 18 to 65 with additional needs - and the costs of the commissioned services for example in relation to the domiciliary care provider. The Chairman highlighted that the Member's question concerned the in-house provision of services and packages of care from individual providers, those were bespoke and the rising costs and demand were challenging; similarly that was the case concerning SEND children. The Chairman highlighted the internal process in the Community and Children's Services Department, where services were being reviewed around the value for money and retention of contracts.

RESOLVED: Noted the Q1 projected outturn report for 2026/27.

15. ***HOUSING REVENUE ACCOUNT P4 UPDATE**

The Committee received the joint report of the Executive Director, Community and Children's Services; and the Chamberlain and Chief Financial Officer. Officers explained that the report was to be taken as the first substantive item in the non-public section before item 22: Management Update for the City of London Combined Relief of Poverty Charity.

A Member highlighted that the report was received late and queried why the report would be taken in non-public and did not see how the large figures could be broken down and were commercially sensitive. Officers explained that the report includes allocations of costings for several estates' major works programmes and that might be commercially sensitive. Previous reports on the matter had been in the public domain until it was highlighted that extreme caution was needed going forward. The Member as Chair of the Golden Lane Estate Renewal Board, noted the pressure faced as some members of that board were not allowed to see all the information included in the report.

A Member suggested that going forward there be a public report with as much information included as possible, with figures removed and included in a non-public report or appendix; there was a public interest as the matter concerned public money. The Chairman noted that there had been previous discussions on the matter where Members were not satisfied with a public report and a separate non-public appendix.

The Chairman suggested that the report be taken in non-public and going forward advice be sought from the Town Clerk's Department about future reports.

RESOLVED: That the report be discussed in the non-public section and advice would be sought from the Town Clerk's Department about future reports and what should be included in public and what should be included in non-public.

16. **UPDATES FROM SUB COMMITTEES AND PORTFOLIO HOLDERS**
There were no updates received.

Responding to a Member question, the Chairman clarified that the lead Members were: Adult and Children Safeguarding: Deputy Ceri Wilkins, Young People: Deputy Ceri Wilkins, Carers' and Special Educational Needs Champion: Deputy Anne Corbett.

17. **QUESTIONS ON MATTERS RELATING TO THE WORK OF THE COMMITTEE**
There were no public questions.

18. **ANY OTHER BUSINESS THAT THE CHAIRMAN CONSIDERS URGENT**
There were no public items of urgent business.

19. **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 Part I of Schedule 12A of the Local Government Act.

20. **NON-PUBLIC MINUTES**
RESOLVED: That the non-public minutes of the previous meeting held 30 June 2026 be approved as an accurate record.

21. **NON-PUBLIC OUTSTANDING ACTIONS**
The Committee received the non-public outstanding actions report.

22. ***HOUSING REVENUE ACCOUNT P4 UPDATE**
NOTE: Refer to the debate under item 15, where it was resolved that the item be discussed in the non-public section.

The Committee received the joint report of the Executive Director, Community and Children's Services; and the Chamberlain and Chief Financial Officer.

23. **MANAGEMENT UPDATE FOR THE CITY OF LONDON COMBINED RELIEF OF POVERTY CHARITY**
The Committee received the report of the Managing Director, City Bridge Foundation.

24. **RISK REPORT FOR THE CITY OF LONDON CORPORATION COMBINED RELIEF OF POVERTY CHARITY**
The Committee received the report of the Managing Director, City Bridge Foundation.

25. **FINANCE UPDATE AND DRAFT ACCOUNTS FOR CITY OF LONDON COMBINED RELIEF OF POVERTY**
The Committee received the report of the City Bridge Foundation Finance Director (representing the Chamberlain).

26. ***DECISIONS TAKEN UNDER DELEGATED AUTHORITY OR URGENCY POWERS**
The Committee received the report of Town Clerk.

27. **QUESTIONS ON MATTERS RELATING TO THE WORK OF THE COMMITTEE**
There were no non-public questions.

28. **ANY OTHER BUSINESS THAT THE CHAIRMAN CONSIDERS URGENT AND WHICH THE COMMITTEE AGREE SHOULD BE CONSIDERED WHILST THE PUBLIC ARE EXCLUDED**
There were no non-public items of urgent business.

29. **DIRECTOR OF LONDON PROGRAMMES**
The Committee received the report of the Executive Director, Community and Children's Services.

The meeting ended at 3.43 pm

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Chairman

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