

COMMUNITY & CHILDREN'S SERVICES COMMITTEE

Friday, 12 July 2013

Minutes of the meeting of the Community & Children's Services Committee held at Committee Rooms, West Wing, Guildhall on Friday, 12 July 2013 at 11.30am

Present

Members:

Revd Dr Martin Dudley (Chairman)	Dennis Cotgrove
Angela Starling (Deputy Chairman)	John Fletcher
Deputy Billy Dove	Alderman David Graves
Deputy Bill Fraser	Professor John Lumley
Marianne Fredericks	Alastair Moss
Deputy the Revd Stephen Haines	Judith Pleasance
Ann Holmes	Emma Price
Deputy Catherine McGuinness	Adam Richardson
Gareth Moore	Tom Sleigh
Deputy Joyce Nash	Deputy Henry Jones
Virginia Rounding	Alderman Timothy Hailes
Alderman Nick Anstee	
Deputy John Bennett	

Officers:

Natasha Dogra	- Town Clerk's Department
Ignacio Falcon	- Town Clerk's Department
Ade Adetosoye	- Community and Children's Services
Neal Hounsell	- Community and Children's Services
Gerald Mehrtens	- Community & Children's Services
Chris Pelham	- Community and Children's Services
Pat Dixon	- Community and Children's Services
Davina Lilley	- Community and Children's Services
Philip Saunders	- Remembrancer's Department
Caroline Al-Beyerty	- Chamberlain's Department
Paul Nagle	- Chamberlain's Department

1. APOLOGIES

Apologies were received from Deputy Alex Deane, Alderman Peter Hewitt, Elizabeth Rogula, Clare James, Henrika Priest, Dhruv Patel, Alderman Nick Anstee and Nigel Priest.

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

Deputy Bill Fraser declared a personal interest in item 8 "Support for the Partnership for Young London's Raising the Participation Age conference", as he was the Chair of Trustees of the Partnership.

3. **MINUTES**

RESOLVED - that the minutes of the previous meeting be agreed as an accurate record.

Matters arising:

Deputy Henry Jones requested the list of Portsoken working party achievements which were discussed at the committee's previous meeting, which the Town Clerk agreed to send him.

The Town Clerk assured Members that their thanks to Carla Keegan had been noted in the minutes of the meeting held on 14th of June 2013.

4. **SPECIAL EDUCATIONAL NEEDS AND DISABILITY POLICY AND STRATEGY**

The Committee received the report of the director of community and children services regarding the Special Educational Needs and Disability Policy and Strategy.

Members were informed that the City had a statutory duty to keep its arrangements for Special Educational Needs and Disability (SEND) provision under review and to consult with stakeholders and partners as required for the purposes of co-ordinating this provision.

In January Members gave approval for the City to consult on the development of a new policy and strategy for fulfilling its duties regarding SEND. This was carried out through the development of a consultation document circulated to a list of consultees as well as consulting with partners and stakeholders groups including a Members group.

The report recommended to Members that the resultant draft strategy was approved for a brief second stage consultation to maximise the awareness and involvement of partners and stakeholders and secure their participation in delivering the strategy.. The Members group felt it was very important to emphasise the satisfaction of service users with the City's arrangements for SEND that emerged from the consultation exercise.

The draft strategy will be 'live' subject to Committee approval with the aim that a finalised version was in place before the Children and Families Bill became legislation in 2014. The strategy will provide the City with an effective framework for the introduction of the Government's major reforms to SEND that are contained within the Bill.

Members congratulated officers on a well written vision and requested that the words "with SEND" were removed from the statement. In response to a query from Members officers informed the committee that the children and young person's plan would be considered at a future committee meeting.

Members queried why there had been a poor response rate to the consultation and why health services have not been engaged. Officers informed Members that they were tackling the low response rate and looking at ways to engage with health services.

RESOLVED – That Members noted the update and approved the draft strategy document for further engagement with partners and stakeholders prior to final approval subject to the words “with SEND” being removed from the vision.

5. PAN LONDON PERSONALISATION AND ROUGH SLEEPERS QUARTERLY UPDATE

The Committee received the report of the Chamberlain and the director of community and children's services regarding rough sleepers.

Members were informed that the City continued to be part of a pan London approach to Rough Sleepers and has representation on the Mayors Rough Sleepers Group and the operational leads meeting for Rough Sleepers.

The national count in November 2012 found 21 rough sleepers. However, a recent unofficial count in March 2013 recorded 19 rough sleepers; an indicator that rough sleeping in the City of London continued to decrease, in comparison to other boroughs, where there was a general increase. This figure was a reflection of the hard work that has taken place with partners and projects such as Operation Poncho, Personalised Budgets, The Lodge and Pop Up Hubs.

Members noted that a new partner to the work was the City of London clergy and a Member of the clergy had become a representative on the Rough Sleepers Strategy Group. Based on the successes of Personalisation and The Lodge, The City Personalisation project was expanded to provide a pan London Service and St Mungo's, in partnership with The City, had obtained funding for Lodge II to provide permanent move on accommodation from The Lodge.

In response to query from Members the Director assured the committee that a rough sleepers count would continue to take place every month. Officers informed the Committee that they were working closely with “Look Ahead Housing Association” to find suitable alternative housing options within the London Borough of Tower Hamlets to reduce the impact of the closure of the hostel in Dock Street.

RESOLVED – That Members note the report and agreed the Chairman and Deputy Chairman, and two Members of the Committee would meet with officers to discuss the current strategy and wider political representation. Members were advised to inform the Town Clerk if they were interested in taking part.

6. CORPORATE WIDE AREA NETWORK UPGRADE - REQUIREMENT FOR WAYLEAVE

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

RECEIVED.

7. **SAFEGUARDING ARRANGEMENTS FOR CHILDREN**

The Committee received the report of the Director of Community and Children's Services informing Members of the progress that had been made over the past year in Children's Social Care following the safeguarding and looked after children inspection.

Members were informed of the progress of the children's improvement plan, which included recommendations from the safeguarding and looked after children Ofsted inspection plan. The plan noted that all recommendations from the safeguarding and looked after children inspection, except for one, were now fully implemented. The plan also incorporated the recommendations from the fostering inspection in March 2013.

Members were informed of the progress that had been made in regard to raising the profile of the role and remit of the Local Authorities Designated Officer (LADO). The LADO was responsible for oversight of all allegations made against professionals and volunteers where there may be potential harm to children and young people.

Members queried what responsibility the Committee had with regard to the safeguarding of children within independent education institutions in the city. Officers informed Members that the City had a responsibility to offer support for the safeguarding arrangements in the institutions and monitor their effectiveness.

Members queried whether two annual meetings of the safeguarding Sub Committee were sufficient. The Town Clerk informed the Committee that further meetings could be arranged if and when necessary.

RECEIVED.

8. **SUPPORT FOR PARTNERSHIP FOR YOUNG LONDON'S "RAISING THE PARTICIPATION AGE" CONFERENCE IN SEPTEMBER 2013**

The Committee received the report of the Director of Economic Development. Members were informed that Partnership for Young London had requested the City of London Corporation (CoLC) to host and sponsor a conference on Raising the Participation Age (RPA) in September 2013 in the Livery Hall.

Partnership for Young London (PYL) was the regional youth unit for London. It was a membership organisation whose main aim was to support organisations across London who work with and support young people. It was based in the Guildhall and its chair of trustees was Deputy William Fraser. RPA was the new Government strategy to raise the age to which all young people in England must continue in education or training. The proposed conference aimed to provide an opportunity for policy updates and practice information on Raising the Participation Age; how this new legislation will affect organisations and the young people they work with; and how they

might maximise the opportunities this will present at a local and pan London level.

The conference would offer CoLC an opportunity to enhance its profile in this priority area of education and employability in London. Support in the sum of £12,000 was sought to cover the hire of the Livery Hall for one day (£2,600), catering (£2,500) and project management costs (£6,900).

RESOLVED – That the Committee approve support for the Partnership for Young London Conference on “Raising the Participation Age” at a cost of up to £12,000 to be met from the Policy Initiatives Fund under the “Communities” heading.

9. **CHILDREN AND FAMILIES BILL**

The Committee received the report of the Remembrancer regarding the Care Bill and the Children and Families Bill.

Members were informed that in relation to the Care Bill the main points of interest were:

- requirements on authorities to promote ‘well-being’;
- measures designed to reinforce an individual’s involvement in the care he or she receives;
- changes to charging arrangements and the introduction of a cap on the overall cost of care.

In response to a query from Members, officers informed the Committee that the Care Bill was intended to implement the changes put forward by the Dilnot Commission on the Funding of Care and Support. The Bill was also intended to meet the recommendations of the Law Commission to consolidate and modernise existing care and support law. The Bill implemented 66 of the Commission’s 76 recommendations. The Bill sought to address elements of the Government’s initial response to the Mid Staffordshire NHS Public Inquiry. The majority of the Bill was published in draft form in July 2012 (as the Draft Care and Support Bill) and was scrutinised by a Joint Committee of both Houses.

Officers informed Members that the topics covered in relation to the Children and Families Bill were adoption & ‘looked after’ children and special educational needs.

The Bill, which was intended to reform services for children in the adoption and care systems, and those with special educational needs, was introduced into the Lords by Schools Minister Lord Nash on 2 July 2013. Highlighting delays in the current system, Nash introduced proposals aimed at reducing the current average wait of 21 months to place a child into adoption. The measures would, he asserted, “sweep away barriers that have stood in the way of finding children stable, loving homes earlier” and will require “local authorities to consider a fostering for adoption placement as soon as they are considering adoption for a child. For the Opposition and striking a more partisan approach than seen during debates on the Care Bill, Baroness Hughes nevertheless welcomed “attempts to reduce unnecessary delay in adoptions”. She aired

concerns, however, in relation to the changes to considerations of ethnicity in adoption and regarding children who remain in care.

RECEIVED.

10. **INTERNAL AUDIT REVIEW - COMMUNITY AND CHILDREN'S SERVICES - MANAGEMENT OF CLIENT ACCOUNTS, APPOINTEESHIPS AND DEPUTYSHIPS**

The Committee received the report of the Chamberlain informing Members that two internal audit reviews relating to Community Care arrangements in respect of Management of Client Accounts and Appointeeships and Deputyships had resulted in 'Red' Limited Assurance opinions.

Officers informed the Committee that Finance and Adult Social Care did not follow up on findings in a 2008 audit which resulted in a lack of protocols and understanding of roles and responsibilities between the two teams.

These audits identified a number of significant weaknesses in respect of the management of client accounts. A total of 16 accounts were identified where either a credit or debit balance was held for deceased clients. In addition, accounts were not subject to regular reconciliation nor was there an adequate level of segregation.

As a result of the findings made during the Community Care review, the Adult Social Care team approached Internal Audit to undertake an in-depth review of the management arrangements for the management of client funds via an appointeeship or deputyship. This review identified a number of instances where the assets of clients who have passed away intestate and with no known family members have been transferred to the Adult Services' revenue accounts rather than to the Crown via the Treasury Solicitor as required by the Administration of Estates Act (1925). Further weaknesses include failure to gain access to clients' bank accounts once approval (in the form of court orders for Deputyships) has been received with delays of up to 18 months.

The audit conclusions from this internal audit work was discussed at the 25th June Audit and Risk Management Committee where it was noted that a report be made to this Committee on the audit findings.

In response to a query from Members it was noted that Management had responded quickly to these issues once brought to their attention and the majority of the more significant actions had already been completed. In particular regular meetings now took place to discuss the position of each client account, including appointeeships and deputyships; relevant protocols have been drafted and agreed by both service areas; lead managers from audit would be invited the DCCS Departmental Leadership Meetings to follow-up on audit recommendations and a project management approach to audits will be implemented within DCCS.

A full audit follow-up to confirm implementation of the recommendations is planned for September 2013. The Department of Community and Children Services have been consulted on the content of this report.

RECEIVED.

11. UPDATE REPORT ON CHILD POVERTY

The Committee received the report of the Director of Community and Children's Services regarding Child poverty. Members were informed that the term child poverty referred to growing up in a low income household, defined as below 60% of the median income. Children who grow up in poverty face multiple social and economic disadvantages that may impact upon the rest of their lives, including poor health outcomes; low educational attainment; unemployment; and poverty as an adult.

National child poverty statistics were last taken in August 2010, and there were some methodological issues with the data, which needed to be updated now with data from Census 2011 and the Family Profiling Project.

Members were informed that in August 2010:

- About 21% of children in England were living in poverty.
- About 145 or 19% of children in the City of London were living in poverty.
- 55% of City children in poverty were in lone parent families.
- About 43% of all children living in poverty lived in Lower Super Output Area (LSOA) 001E, which covers Portsoken. These children tended to be in larger families with around half headed by a lone parent; 26% of all children living in poverty lived in LSOA 001C, which corresponds to Cripplegate north (Golden Lane Estate). These children were mostly in small families, with 80% headed by a lone parent.
- The remaining 31% of children living in poverty, who lived in Aldersgate and the Rest of the City, were mostly (67%) in lone parent families.

The City's Health and Wellbeing Board had identified child poverty as a priority and officers were currently creating an action plan around how this would be tackled in a multiagency fashion.

RECEIVED.

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

There were no questions on matters relating to the work of the Committee.

13. ANY OTHER BUSINESS THAT THE CHAIRMAN CONSIDERS URGENT

The Chairman thanked Members for supporting the trip to Finland and agreed to provide the Committee with an update at the subsequent Committee meeting.

Deputy Bill Fraser informed the Committee that he attended the London youth games on 7th July 2013. The City of London received 248 points with the City

of London Girls school rugby tag-team and the Southwark Girls School five aside football team doing very well.

14. 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 as follows:-

Item	Paragraph
15 – 17	3

15. NON-PUBLIC MINUTES

Resolved - That the non-public minutes of the previous meeting be agreed as an accurate record.

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

There were no non-public questions relating to the work of the committee.

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

The Chairman informed Members of the Committee of one urgent non-public item.

The meeting ended at 12.45pm

Chairman

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