

BARBICAN ESTATE RESIDENTS CONSULTATION COMMITTEE
Monday, 5 March 2018

Minutes of the meeting of the Barbican Estate Residents Consultation Committee
held at Guildhall at 6.30 pm

Present

Members:

Christopher Makin - Speed House (Chairman)
Jim Davies - Mountjoy House (Deputy Chairman)
Graham Wallace - Andrewes House (Deputy Chairman)
Gordon Griffiths - Bunyan Court
Fiona Lean - Ben Jonson House
Jane Smith - Barbican Association
Averil Baldwin - Thomas More House
John Tomlinson - Cromwell Tower
Joanne Rodgers - Breton House
David Graves – Seddon House
Natalie Roberson - Andrewes House
Sandy Wilson - Shakespeare Tower
David Kirkby - Defoe House
Professor Michael Swash - Willoughby House
David Lawrence - Lauderdale Tower
Mark Bostock – Frobisher Crescent
Francis Pugh - Gilbert House
Heather Hawker - Speed House
In attendance – Ted Reilly (to take questions on the Underfloor Heating Working Party at agenda item 11)

Officers:

Paul Murtagh	Assistant, Director, Barbican and Property
Helen Davinson	Service, Community and Children's
	Services
Michael Bennett	Community and Children's Services
Anne Mason	Community and Children's Services
Mike Saunders	Community and Children's Services
Julie Mayer	Town Clerk's

In attendance:

Randall Anderson	Ward Member, Aldersgate and BRC
	Member
Mary Durcan	Ward Member, Cripplegate and BRC
	Member

1. APOLOGIES

Apologies were received from Fred Rodgers, represented by Joanna Rodgers and Lorne Whiteway, represented by Francis Pugh and John Taysum. Whilst

not a Member of the RCC, the BRC Chairman, Ann Holmes generally attends as an observer. This evening, Mrs Holmes was attending a Committee of which she was a full Member and therefore had submitted apologies.

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

There were no declarations.

3. **MINUTES**

The minutes of the RCC meeting held on 27 November 2017 were approved as a correct record, subject to Gordon Griffiths' apologies being recorded at this meeting.

The minutes of the RCC's AGM held on 29 January 2018 were approved as a correct record, subject to an amendment stating that a Member had asked for a map or plan of the Barbican Estate to accompany its Terms of Reference.

Matters arising:

Members noted that the information requested in respect of the potential City of London School for Girls project in Thomas Moore car park had been passed to the Chairman of the Barbican Association, who was present at this meeting and agreed to circulate to RCC Members. Members noted that the car park and stores charging report was due at the RCC/BRC, once the stores planning application had been heard, and this would include the impact on the financial position of the accounts. Members of the RCC were keen to be more engaged in this which was currently the remit of the Car Park Charging Working Party.

The Town Clerk agreed to canvass Members for preferred dates, in June this year, for an Extraordinary General Meeting of the RCC. Members favoured holding this on a Monday evening.

4. **'YOU SAID; WE DID' - ACTIONS LIST FEBRUARY 2018**

Members received the 'You Said: We Did' Outstanding Actions List. A question in respect of VFM had been answered in 'questions in advance', which had been circulated before the meeting and tabled for Members.

5. **SERVICE LEVEL AGREEMENTS (SLA) QUARTERLY REVIEW OCTOBER - DECEMBER 2017**

Members received a report of the Director of Community and Children's Services in respect of service level agreements and key performance indicators (KPIs). In response to a question about the lighting at the edge of the podium, Members noted that this was the responsibility of the Department of the Built Environment and in the process of being upgraded

RESOLVED, that the report be noted.

6. **PROGRESS OF SALES AND LETTINGS**

Members received a report of the Director of Community and Children's Services in respect of sales and lettings approved by officers since the last meeting of the RCC. Members noted that this was reported to the BRC as

approval was granted under delegated authority, in accordance with standing orders.

RESOLVED, that the report be noted.

7. FIRE SAFETY UPDATE

Members received a report of the Director of Community and Children's Services which provided Members with an update on progress made in relation to fire safety matters since the last reports submitted in September and November 2017. Members noted that this report was also being scrutinised by the City Corporation's Audit and Risk Management Committee the following day.

Members noted that the City Corporation had conducted more detailed risk assessments at Level 3, rather than 1, although there was no legal requirement to do so. There had been concern expressed at a deficiency notice issued in respect of Willoughby House, but officers reassured Members that they had challenged this as it was incorrect, and the deficiency was no longer valid. Officers agreed to share this reason with the House Group representative, on order for him to share it with Willoughby House Group Members.

RESOLVED, that the report be noted.

8. REPAIRS AND MAINTENANCE TO ROOFS/BALCONIES FOLLOWING WATER PENETRATION

Members received a report of the Director of Community and Children's Services in respect of progress made by the Working Party in relation to the City Corporation's approach to dealing with repairs and maintenance to roofs and balconies to the residential units on the Barbican Estate.

In respect of Mountjoy House's re-roofing project, officers advised that this had been delayed due to last week's adverse weather but works would start this week. Furthermore, leaseholders would not be charged, as the whole roof has failed, and be kept updated on progress.

The barrel roofs at Andrewes House would be cleaned to ascertain their condition and had been graded as 'Condition D', pending the outcome of the cleaning.

Members suggested that the chart at pages 50-52 be assessed by the Service Charges Working Group.

The representative for Frobisher Crescent was concerned about the amount of litter on the roof. Officers advised that, whilst this has not been reported by the Inspector, maintenance workers would resolve this.

Members accepted that there had not been a high degree of expenditure on roof repairs, when compared to the cost of maintaining warranties, but better comparisons were now available.

The Assistant Director agreed to provide Members with a description of the various roof types set out on page 50.

RESOLVED, that the report be noted.

9. **LEASE ENFORCEMENT**

Members received a report of the Director of Community and Children's Services in respect of a protocol to deal with breaches of leases.

Members made the following comments, for consideration by Members of the BRC:

- Noise transfer in the Barbican Estate is not always straightforward so complaint about noise transfer should be interpreted sensibly.
- The Protocol should specify 'non-carpeted' floors, not 'wooden' floors. Members noted that there was no mention of underlay in the Lease.
- There should be no restrictions on the relationship of the complainant to any pet owner(s), as the nuisance could be wider than the immediate neighbours.

RESOLVED, that the report be noted.

10. **CONCRETE REPAIRS TO THE BARBICAN ESTATE**

Members received a report of the Director of Community and Children's Services in respect of concrete repairs to the Barbican Estate which would be presented to various City Corporation Committees over the next month, including the Barbican Residential Committee.

The report was before the various Committees as there had been a programme delay to the requirement to retender works and the tenders had been more than the approved estimates. Members noted that there was some reluctance from contractors to tender for works on the Barbican estate, very possibly on account of its unique design and Listed Building status.

Officers confirmed that there would be proportionate additional costs for those who had purchased car parking bays and, following budget approval, there would be a full consultation on charges.

RESOLVED, that the report be noted.

11. **UPDATE REPORT**

Members received the regular update report of the Director of Community and Children's Services.

Members noted a technical delay to the electronic vehicle charging points pilot and the launch date had slipped from March to May. The Working Party had been updated and was due to meet on 12 April to review the reasoning for the

delays. Some Members expressed disappointment about this delay. Officers agreed to provide information in respect of kw usage for each of the blocks.

Officers were very pleased at the joint working evidenced by the working party reports on this agenda and thanked Members for their co-operation.

Members welcomed the new Chairman of the Underfloor Heating Working Party; Mrs Mary Durcan, who was a Member of the BRC and a Ward Member for Cripplegate. Members noted that many of the quick wins were not reliant on cost and proposed enhancements would give greater control to the engineers and the estate office. A Member suggested that the last email broadcast about underfloor heating was unduly negative. Finally, Members welcomed the introduction of KPI's, once the work of the Underfloor Heating Working Party had delivered.

Officers advised that a survey on possible works to Speed garden was currently being reviewed by the Gardens Advisory Group. Members noted that there had been a wide range of responses which were being analysed.

RESOLVED, that the report be noted.

12. POTENTIAL CONFLICTS OF INTEREST - BARBICAN RESIDENTIAL COMMITTEE

Members received a report of the Comptroller and City Solicitor, in respect of potential conflicts of interest on the Barbican Residential Committee (BRC). Members had been emailed the draft minutes from this meeting, which had been inquorate and minuted as such. The Town Clerk confirmed that this procedure was in order in circumstances where a quorum was almost achieved, and Members had agreed to hold an inquorate meeting. The draft minutes had been shared with RCC Members, in keeping with transparency and to inform this discussion. The report was presented by Alderman David Graves, who is a Member of the RCC and the Standards Committee and Alderman for the Ward of Cripplegate.

During the debate, the following points were noted:

Whilst the current procedures were legal, the report stated that Members (of the Standards Committee) might wish to consider whether current arrangements might give rise to a negative public perception that conflicts of interest could occur. Members of the Standards Committee particularly noted that, at the two most recent quorate meetings of the BRC, the resident Members were in the majority. However, Members of the RCC were reminded that the Barbican Residential Committee had been carrying 5 vacancies for non-resident Members and that (without a dispensation from the Standards Committee) no Members may speak to or vote upon a matter in which they have a pecuniary interest.

Prior to the submission of the Standards Committee report, the City of London Corporation's Policy and Resources Committee had requested a strategic

review of housing governance in the City of London Corporation affecting both the Corporation's Housing Revenue Account Estates in Central London and the Barbican. Members noted that the City Corporation had an ambition to more than double the size of its HRA stock by 2025. This ambition, combined with the concerns expressed by the Standards Committee, meant (in the Alderman's opinion) that Members should proceed on the assumption that a change in current arrangements was likely over the next 2-3 years.

Members discussed the context for the creation of the RCC in 2003, which was decided by ballot, concerning the future management of the Barbican Estate with options which included management of the Estate by the residents themselves; no change; and the establishment of the RCC. Members asked if they could see any supporting documentation. A Member recalled that residents had also petitioned the House of Commons to enable resident Members to sit on a Committee overseeing the affairs of the Barbican Estate. Members asked for clarity as to whether the Localism Act of 2011 and the Standards Regime had overridden this? It was suggested that London Boroughs, in which many of the elected Members are residents of the Borough, are presumably able to address any perceptions of conflict of interest when making decisions. The Assistant Director agreed to check the position at the London Borough of Islington and whether there were any comparisons.

RCC Members felt very strongly that they would be disenfranchised if elected Members on the BRC could not vote and urged them to seek dispensation to speak and/or vote wherever possible.

There was a perception that recent issues; i.e. car park charges and, more recently, the proposed expansion of the City of London School for Girls were damaging residents' relationship with the City Corporation.

The Ward Member for Aldersgate, who is also the Chairman of the City Corporation's Housing Management and Almshouses Sub Committee, advised that elected Members, who are also residents/leaseholders of the City's housing estates, served on this sub committee without compromising governance.

RCC Members were concerned at the uncertainty which now surrounded well established and valued governance arrangements. The RCC asked to be kept informed and consulted on any proposed changes and they would like the opportunity to respond formally to the City Corporation, as and when any proposals were being considered.

RESOLVED, that the report be noted.

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

There were no questions.

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

Officers tabled a revised staged process for the Home Improvements Pack which had originally been approved by the Residents Consultation Committee in 2016. Members noted that a 6-month trial would commence in April; with a focus on safety and the integrity of the buildings. Further communications would follow in the coming weeks and would include long leaseholders not living on the Estate.

The representative from Andrewes House complained about the excessive works from the former contractor's house and asked for it to be investigated.

Members asked if a representative from Blake Tower could attend as an observer, pending the block formally joining the Barbican Estate.

A Member had observed that the roof of the Guildhall School was very untidy.

A skip outside Blake Tower had been overflowing but Members noted that the delay in removing it was due to the adverse weather the previous week.

The Chairman suggested that the Barbican Estate should hold an open meeting at Guildhall, like the Barbican Association's AGM, and suggested that this could be an agenda item at the Extraordinary General Meeting in June, as referred to in 'matters arising' at item 3.

The meeting ended at 8.20pm

Chairman

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