

BARBICAN ESTATE RESIDENTS CONSULTATION COMMITTEE

Monday, 2nd March 2020

Minutes of the meeting held at Guildhall at 6.30 pm

Present

Members:

Christopher Makin (Chairman)	Mark Bostock - Frobisher Crescent
Ted Reilly (Deputy Chairman)	Heather Hawker - Speed House
Adam Hogg (Deputy Chairman)	Jane Samsworth - Defoe House
Derek Penney - Bunyan Court	Fiona Lean - Ben Jonson House
Jane Smith - Barbican Association	Rodney Jagelman - Thomas More House
John Tomlinson - Cromwell Tower	Mike Cribb - Andrewes House
Fred Rodgers - Breton House	Nadia Bouzidi – Gilbert house
Sandy Wilson - Shakespeare Tower	James Ball - Brandon Mews
Prof. Michael Swash - Willoughby House	Joe Reeves - Mountjoy House
David Lawrence - Lauderdale Tower	Tim Hollaway - Lambert Jones Mews

In Attendance

Michael Hudson – Chairman, Barbican Residential Committee
Mary Durcan – BRC Member
William Pimlott – BRC Member
Helen Fentimen – BRC Member

Officers:

Paul Murtagh	- Assistant Director, Barbican and Property Services, Community and Children's Services
Helen Davinson	- Community and Children's Services
Michael Bennett	- Community and Children's Services
Jason Hayes	- Community and Children's Services
Barry Ashton	- Community and Children's Services
Julie Mayer	- Town Clerks

1. APOLOGIES

Apologies were received from Gordon Griffiths (Bunyan Court), who was represented by Derek Penney and David Graves (Seddon House).

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

There were no declarations.

3. MINUTES AND MATTERS ARISING

3.1 Meeting of the Barbican RCC on 2 December 2019

RESOLVED, that – the minutes of the meeting held on 2 December 2019 be approved.

3.2 Annual General Meeting of the RCC on 20 January 2020

RESOLVED, that – the minutes of the AGM held on 20 January 2020 be approved.

Matters arising

Proposal to increase Barbican garden funding

A member of the Gardens Advisory Group confirmed that funding for the proposal for 1 full time equivalent (FTE) post, for 2 years at £25,000 per annum, was available from the Department of Open Spaces, in line with monitoring the amended Internal Service Level Agreement. At the RCC's AGM, Members had commended the work of the Gardens Advisory Group. The proposal was therefore moved and seconded and, on being put to a vote, it was carried with 3 abstentions. Some Members stated that they would have liked more time to consult their respective House Groups and that the proposal should have been a separate item on this agenda.

Barbican Future Strategy

In response to a challenge to the draft minutes, there was a consensus that they were a true reflection of the discussion, pending the approval of the Terms of Reference. The Deputy Chairman confirmed that they had now been amended, following a suggestion from Brandon Mews House, and were ready for circulating to RCC Members, ahead of formal approval at the next meeting. Members also noted that the Terms of Reference had been approved by the Barbican Association General Council (BAGC).

Barbican Residential Committee (BRC) Minutes from 16th December 2019

Members noted the draft BRC Minutes from 16th December. The draft public minutes from the Corporate Asset and Procurement Sub Committees had also been circulated with these minutes. Members were reminded that these Sub Committees has received Resolutions from the BRC in respect of; (1) The budget for maintenance of the highwalks and; (2) Energy saving initiatives.

Members noted with disappointment that the RCC resolution on managing expenditure had not been accepted.

4. 'YOU SAID; WE DID' - ACTIONS LIST

Members received the 'You Said; We Did' outstanding actions list.

There was some discussion about anti-social behaviour and Members noted that the Police were likely to take action only if the behaviour escalated to criminal activity. Some residents were particularly concerned about parkour cyclists and free skaters in those areas without CCTV. Members challenged

whether the City of London Corporation's documents which promoted a '*well managed and safe public realm*' were actually fulfilling this aspiration?

The Assistant Director stressed that concierges and car parking attendants were not security guards. Members noted that one member of staff had been verbally attacked after challenging anti-social behaviour. The Assistant Director reminded Members of his duty of care to staff and could not put them at risk. Members also noted that this matter was a high priority for the Barbican Association Security Committee, which is chaired by a local Ward Member and Member of the BRC.

RESOLVED, that – the report be noted.

5. SERVICE LEVEL AGREEMENTS QUARTERLY REVIEW OCTOBER - DECEMBER 2019

Members received a report of the Director of Community and Children's Services in respect of Service Level Agreements and Key Performance Measures for October to December 2019.

RESOLVED, that – the report be noted.

6. FIRE SAFETY UPDATE

Members received a report of the Director of Community and Children's Service which updated Members on the progress made in relation to fire safety matters since the last update report in September 2019.

In respect of the additional Arup survey, the Assistant Director felt that this would provide completeness in respect of ventilation systems and works done by residents to their door sets. Additionally, the desk top reviews would include information on previous fires on the estate and consider the various construction drawings. Whilst there were other factors to consider; i.e. – compartmentation, which would be the subject of a non-public report to the BRC, the Assistant Director stressed that works to the doors could not be delayed. Members noted the recent decision of the Court of Common Council, in respect of the 60 minutes burn time for social housing doors in the City, would also apply to the Barbican Estate.

In respect of funding, the Assistant Director advised that Counsel's opinion had been sought and fire safety works to doors would be an improvement. Therefore, the City of London Corporation would be liable and not Leaseholders.

In concluding, Members commented a comprehensive report and thanked the Chairman of the BRC, Mr Michael Hudson, for his tenacity in this matter.

RESOLVED, that – the report be noted.

7. PROGRESS OF SALES AND LETTINGS

Members received a report of the Director of Community and Children's Services which advised them of the sales and lettings, approved under delegated authority, since the last meeting of the Committee.

RESOLVED, that – the report be noted.

8. **THE BARBICAN STRATEGY FOR THE NEXT 50 YEARS - MARCH UPDATE**
Members received a report of the Deputy Chairman of the RCC which provided an update on the report presented to the RCC in December 2019; recommending that a strategy for the maintenance of, and improvements to, the Barbican Estate be developed. Members noted that a Steering Group had been established and the Terms of Reference agreed, as referred to in 3.2 above. Members noted that the Group would continue to report to the RCC and Barbican Association (BAGC) on their respective areas of responsibility.

RESOLVED, That – the report be noted.

9. **BLAKE TOWER**
The Assistant Director, Barbican and Property Services had recently met with the Blake Tower Residents Association and Members noted that the position with Redrow had reached an impasse. Members also noted that the City Surveyor continued to survey the communal areas to ensure they were fit for purpose. Whilst the residents and the City Corporation were two separate legal entities, a further meeting was planned to see whether there were any common areas.
10. **BARBICAN ESTATE REDECORATION PROGRAMME 2020-25 - GATEWAY 4 - ISSUE REPORT**
Members received a report of the Director of Community and Children's Services in respect of the Barbican Estate Redecorations Programme for 2020-25. Members had submitted a number of questions in advance of this meeting, which had been responded to and emailed to RCC Members this afternoon, with copies laid around the table. The following questions were raised during the meeting and, whilst some had been covered in the tabled document, the others would be responded to before the BRC Meeting on 16th March 2020.

- The main concerns had been in respect of the 30% difference in price between the first and second bidders. Members were reminded that this contractor had been appointed before and residents had been very pleased with the quality of their work. The Assistant Director felt that there was still scope for a discussion with the Contractors, in time for the BRC on 16th December, as to why the price had increased significantly since they last tendered.
- Members were assured that procurement regulations had been followed and noted that the City of London Corporation did not just accept the lowest tenderer; in this case it had been 60% quality and 40% price.

However, whilst it was possible to provide a qualitative score, this would require longer and more detailed reports.

- Gilbert House had made some representations directly with the report author; their main concerns had been in respect of overdue works.
- Frobisher Crescent had queried which items had not been included; i.e. scaffolding and shutters.
- Calculations in respect of Thomas More House had been re-issued and further details would be included in letters to residents of all blocks.
- Defoe House would be discussing the report at their forthcoming AGM, as they felt that the economies of scale achieved had been to their detriment. The Assistant Director stressed that there were 21 blocks on the Estate and it would have been impossible to undertake 21 different tender processes. The City of London Corporation had sought a holistic approach to achieving best value for the Estate.
- Following a query from a Member; Officers have subsequently confirmed that charges will be made in the year that the works are due to take place as part of the Estimated and Actual Service Charges.

In concluding, the Chairman asked Members to consider the Q&A document and contact the Deputy Chairman with their feedback that he will consolidate for the BRC.

RESOLVED, That – the report be noted.

11. FROBISHER CRESCENT BALCONY DRAINAGE SCHEME - GATEWAY 6 - SUMMARISED OUTCOME REPORT

Members received a report of the Director of Community and Children's Services in respect of the Frobisher Crescent balcony drainage scheme. The Frobisher Crescent Member stressed that the water ingress issue had first been reported in 2014 and concluded in 2019. Therefore, he felt that the 'lessons learnt' section in the report should have contained a sharper analysis of what had gone wrong. Members noted that the Assistant Director had inherited this situation. Furthermore, the City Corporation's Project Sub Committee had recently granted an 'amnesty' in order to formally close down outstanding projects; resulting in this and similar reports being presented to Members. Whilst accepting that there had been some issues in the past in respect of record keeping, the Assistant Director reminded Members that a robust asset register was now in place.

RESOLVED, That – the report be noted.

12. WORKING PARTY UPDATES

Members received updates from the Asset Maintenance, Leaseholder Service Charge and Underfloor heating Working Parties.

Asset Maintenance

- In respect of the Condition Survey, Members noted that, so far, only Mountjoy House had been completed.
- The City Corporation confirmed it would support the removal of the Garchey system at tribunal if the economic case was made.
- It was confirmed that should they be removed the space would be made good.
- The Assistant Director agreed to investigate the timeframe for the House Groups to receive the Tower Block lift review reports.

Underfloor Heating Working Party

In respect of the load shift from mid-winter to the 'shoulder' months, Members noted that the questionnaire was ready for circulation and the daily temperature charts would be available shortly. Members noted that, for technical reasons, until the loadshift is completed no other modifications would be made.

Further to the discussion at the City Corporation's Procurement Sub Committee, referred to in 3 above, Members of the Working Party would be consulted on the future procurement of electricity.

Leaseholder Service Charge Working Party

- Member asked for a comparator between the cost of resident engineers and Metwins when attending emergency call outs. Whilst Members felt that the retention of institution knowledge was very important, it was also noted that Arups had demonstrated considerable knowledge of the Estate, as set out in 6 above. Officers confirmed that all incidents of floods and leaks were fully recorded.
- In respect of self-reading electricity meters, Members noted that some were installed within electrical cupboards that are only accessible by the Resident Engineers.

13. UPDATE REPORT

Members received the Director of Community and Children's Services regular update report on issues raised by the RCC and BRC at their meetings in December 2019. It also provided updates on other issues on the Estate.

Members noted that the City Corporation's Port Health and Planning and Transportation Committees were due to receive reports this week on Electrical Vehicle charging. Both reports were public and available on the City Corporation's Web site.

RESOLVED, That – the report be noted.

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

There were no questions.

15. ANY OTHER BUSINESS THAT THE CHAIRMAN CONSIDERS URGENT

There were two items of urgent business:

Vacated Police Station at the foot of Shakespeare Tower

The following was moved and seconded and it was RESOLVED, that – given the lack of community space on the Barbican Estate, the RCC would like to explore the feasibility of the vacated police office at the foot of Shakespeare Tower being used as a community space. The RCC would therefore request that the BRC ask Barbican Estate officers to explore the feasibility of this proposal, in consultation with the RCC and the BA, and report back to Members.

Play facilities in the Thomas More Garden

Some residents had expressed concerns about inconsiderate use of the play facilities in the Thomas More Garden. The residents of Seddon and Thomas More Houses would like to present a report to the next meeting of the RCC, seeking to limit the use of the facilities to 8am to 8pm. The residents drafting the report were asked to send this to the Chairman for circulating to RCC Members for comment.

In response to a query about idling vehicles, Members were advised to report such incidents to the City Corporation's Environmental Health Team.

The meeting ended at 8.35 pm

Chairman

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