

BARBICAN ESTATE RESIDENTS CONSULTATION COMMITTEE
Monday, 25 March 2024

Minutes of the meeting held at Guildhall at 6.30 pm

Present

Members:

Sandra Jenner - Defoe House (Chair)	
Jim Durcan - Andrewes House (Deputy Chair)	Andrew Tong - Brandon Mews
Lucy Sisman - Cromwell Tower (Deputy Chair)	Helen Hudson - Defoe House
Liz Simpson - Seddon House	Andy Hope - Breton House
Sandy Wilson - Shakespeare Tower	Dave Taylor - Gilbert House
David Lawrence - Lauderdale Tower	Monique Long - Mountjoy House
Adam Hogg - Chair, Barbican Association	Petre Reid – Willoughby House
Fiona Lean - Ben Jonson House	Claire Hersey – Lambert Mews
Sally Spensley – Frobisher Crescent	Gordon Griffiths – Bunyan Court
Fritz van Kempen – Speed House	

In Attendance:

Tam Pollard – Chair of the Asset Maintenance Working Party
Helen Fentimen – Deputy Chair of Community and Children’s Services and Member of the Barbican Residential Committee
Mary Durcan – Chair of the Health and Wellbeing Board
Deputy Anne Corbett – Deputy Chair of the Barbican Residential Committee
Steve Goodman – Member of the Barbican Residential Committee
Jacqui Webster – Cripplegate Ward Member

Officers:

Judith Finlay	- Executive Director, Community and Children’s Services (CCS)
Pam Wharfe	- Interim Assistant Director of Housing, CCS
Dan Sanders	- Assistant Director, Barbican Residential Estate, CCS
Damon Ellis	- Interim Contracts Manager, CCS
Jason Hayes	- Community and Children's Services
Anne Mason	- Community and Children's Services
Helen Davinson	- Community and Children’s Services
Julie Mayer	- Town Clerks

Chair’s opening comments:

The Chair welcomed Dan Sanders - Assistant Director, Barbican Residential Estate and Damon Ellis - Interim Contracts Manager. The Chair was looking forward to a positive working relationship and implementing the Transformation Programme. In response, Dan endorsed this by saying that he was looking forward to helping to restore an historic London landmark.

The Chair then said farewell to the following officers and thanked them for their hard work over a number of years:

- Anne Mason – Revenues Manager
- Rosalind Ugwu – Interim Estate Office manager
- Pam Wharfe – Interim Assistant Director, Housing
- Jason Hayes – Senior Surveyor

1. **APOLOGIES**

Apologies were received from Mark Wheatley, Chair of the Barbican Residential Committee (BRC) and Ted Reilly, Chair of the Climate and Zero Carbon Working Party.

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

There were no declarations.

3. **MINUTES**

RESOLVED, that :

- a) The minutes of the meeting of the Barbican Residents Consultation Committee (RCC) on 27th November 2023 be approved.
- b) The minutes of the Special Meeting of the RCC held on 17th January 2024 be approved. (See item 5 below* – Report of Action Taken).

Matters arising:

Members noted that there had been a considerable amount of progress since the last meeting of the Committee in November 2023. Therefore, some of the points raised under ‘matters arising’ from the minutes and in the actions list might have been covered during the intervening working parties/officer meetings. However, as the BRCC is the formal meeting, it would be necessary to record them in the minutes.

The following points were noted:

- a) **Energy Audit** – the Energy and Carbon Manager would be contacting residents tomorrow with a date for an inaugural meeting.
- b) **Deferred Payments Scheme for Leaseholders** – a report and set of options had been considered at the last meeting of the Community and Children’s Services Committee. The Interim Assistant Director suggested that this might form the basis of further discussions with the Service Charge Working Party.
- c) **Civica** – the upgrade had solved some issues but caused some new ones and, therefore, a software resource would be engaged to resolve it. The Interim Assistant Director agreed to share the Consultant’s report with the Service Level Agreement Working Party.
- d) **K&M Window Survey results** - the officer agreed to circulate this after the meeting.

- e) **Asbestos and installation of smart meters** – residents remained frustrated at a perceived lack of institutional knowledge amongst various sub-contractors. The new Assistant Director felt strongly that knowledge of the Estate's unique status should out-live officers and would be creating new standard operating procedures to share with contractors and sub-contractors. Residents who would like a smart meter were asked to contact house officers in the first instance. The Interim Contacts Manager was looking at supply chains generally and this would include asbestos removal when installing meters.
- f) **Agency costs** – the officer agreed to circulate this after the meeting.
- g) **Consultants fees and fire safety review** – the City of London Corporation would be covering the cost.
- h) **A breakdown by block on day-to-day works** - this information would be available at the next Asset Maintenance Working Party meeting. Major and project works were still being defined and should be ready by the next meeting of the BRCC.
- i) **£50,000 allocated to the podium** – the Executive Director agreed to investigate where this had been allocated and report back to the next meeting.

4. **ACTIONS TRACKER**

The Committee received the actions tracker.

5. **REPORT OF ACTION TAKEN (BUDGET REPORTS) ***

The Committee received a report of the Town Clerk in respect of the following Decision taken under Delegated Authority, since the last meeting of the Committee.

The Town Clerk, in consultation with the Chair and Deputy Chair of the BRC, and having noted the comments from the Informal Meeting of the BRC on 29 January 2024 (appended to this report) agreed to:

REVENUE & CAPITAL BUDGETS - LATEST APPROVED BUDGET 2023/24 AND ORIGINAL 2024/25 - EXCLUDING DWELLINGS SERVICE CHARGE INCOME & EXPENDITURE

1. Approve the provisional 2024/25 revenue budget for submission to the Finance Committee.
2. Approve the draft Capital Budget.
3. Authorise the Chamberlain to revise the revenue and capital budgets to allow for further implications arising from departmental re-organisations and other reviews including corporate projects.

SERVICE CHARGE EXPENDITURE & INCOME ACCOUNT – LATEST APPROVED BUDGET 2023/24 & ORIGINAL BUDGET 2024/25

4. Approve the provisional 2024/25 net £Nil revenue budget and its recommendation for submission to the Finance Committee.
5. Note the request of Members of the BRCC that the City Corporation undertake a root and branch review of the way the Service charge budgets are compiled, justified, managed, monitored and presented, sufficient that RCC and BRC can make timely and insightful comments, appropriately challenge, generally ensure that they bear scrutiny and that they are more easily understandable.

RESOLVED, that – the report be noted.

6. UPDATES FROM THE VARIOUS WORKING PARTIES

The Committee received the following updates:

- **The Service Charge Working Party** would be meeting next in mid-April to discuss the detail of the 2024/25 Budget and the split between major and ad-hoc works. The Interim Contract Manager was working on the division between ad hoc repairs and Major Works/Projects and the output would be available next week.
- **The Service Level Agreement Working Party** asked to see the new cleaning software. The Chair was confident in that, once residents became aware of proposals for programmed works covering the main areas of concern, the number of complaints would fall. The Department were putting extra resources into processing complaints, in order to bring the response rate back to the 90% target. The two contractors, who had been given extensions, would also be bringing in extra resources to deal with complaints.
- **The Gardens Advisory Group** had been very pleased at the appearance of the gardens and lopping of high trees by specialists. The group would receive an officer report in June, in respect of long-term plans for the gardens, noting that they are part of the Grade 2* listing of the Estate.

The Interim Assistant Director confirmed that resident engineers would be given accommodation on the Estate.

7. TRANSFORMATION BOARD

The Committee received a report of the Executive Director, Community and Children's Services which provided an update on the operation, achievements and challenges for the Barbican Transformation Board.

It was proposed by Sandra Jenner (Chair of the BRCC), Seconded by Graham Wallace (Andrewes House Representative and past BRCC Chair) and RESOLVED, unanimously, that:

'The Barbican Residents' Consultation Committee propose that the term of office of the Chair of the Barbican Residential Committee be extended by a year, because the Barbican Residential Committee is at a critical stage in overseeing the Barbican Estate Office Transformation Programme and related projects, and that continuity of leadership on the Committee is crucial for the successful delivery of the recommendation by Independent Consultants, Altair.'

Members noted that the current round of recruitment would be for permanent appointments and an organisation chart would be produced once new officers were in post.

The Interim Assistant Director advised that a report on Access to Information would be presented to the BRC on 8th April, setting out options to enable residents to understand where works had taken place but without compromising data protection.

RESOLVED, that – the report be noted.

8. **MAJOR WORKS**

The Committee received a report of the Executive Director, Community and Children's Services which provided an update on progress with major works on the Barbican Estate and advised Members of issues affecting progress on individual schemes.

During the discussion, the following points were noted:

- a) The staffing costs update would be refreshed and shared with the Service Charges Working Party. The Working Party also asked to see management charges for the Major Works, once they are available.
- b) The Committee felt that the report did not give an accurate update of the status of the contract delivery as there continued to be dissatisfaction and outstanding issues with many Houses which were not mentioned. Willoughby House had raised a formal complaint and asked for this to go on record. The officer advised of the process in respect of signing off snagging for redecorations; i.e. Clerk of Works; Project Manager and Residents and agreed to add more clarity to future reports. The officer had visited areas of concern and arranged sample testing but residents across several blocks remained dissatisfied. The Director offered to produce an addendum to the report to the BRC, providing an update on these issues. It was noted that it had been agreed that the Interim Contract Manager would review the cost and delivery of the Redecorations contract.

- c) Contracts coming up for renewal, including redecorations, would be looked at by the Interim Contract Manager; in terms of quality, timelines, delivery and costs.
- d) There was a suggestion that works should be scheduled in a more reasoned way to avoid issuing several Section 20 Notices at the same time and avoid major works which could affect recent redecorations.
- e) The Shakespeare Tower Representative reported that the fire escape is dirty and unkempt.
- f) Following a suggestion from the Chair, the AD agreed to undertake a formal 'lessons learnt' exercise covering the above points.
- g) The handover to the new Assistant Director would include the elimination of duplications across the Asset Maintenance Working Party and the Programme Board.
- h) The Interim Contracts Manager was looking at the urgent repairs and the best route to procurement. Residents would receive further information in the bulletin after the Easter holiday.
- i) The final costing for the Lambert Jones Mews roofs was requested and residents had agreed to be accommodating in terms of access.
- j) Vacuum glazing and other enhancements were welcomed as a longer term strategy and the officer gave assurance that urgent repairs would not be delayed. The officer agreed to obtain more details on frameless panes. Window repairs and their warranties would be recorded, tracked and monitored, in the event of a claim.
- k) Residents' repairs charges would be reviewed and refunded where appropriate.
- l) FENSA Listed Building Accreditation is desirable but would not exclude specialist contractors who might not be accredited but still have the necessary skills and competence.
- m) Project Managers were working jointly on preventing and treating water penetration, noting that it might be necessary to review the frequency of assessing windows, particularly on the upper floors.
- n) Soft market testing for the lift works had been positive following residents' agreement to extend working hours. The officer explained that this would be a 18-month/2-year contract. Whilst it is difficult to accurately predict budget deviations, it is possible to look across wider market fluctuations in labour and materials.
- o) The officer agreed to review the 2017 Langham Report on Roof conditions and share with the Asset Maintenance Working Party, noting that this would need to align with the newer stock condition survey.

RESOLVED, that – the report be noted.

9. WINDOW CLEANING CONTRACT (RE-TENDER)

The Committee received a report of the Executive Director, Community and Children's Services which advised of the outcome of the process to select a new service provider for the window cleaning contract across the Barbican Residential Estate. Members noted that the contract would commence, subject to BRC approval and a 35-day consultation period prior to the issue of the contract, which would include initial involvement with residents as part of a Mobilisation Panel in selecting a new provider. The officer advised that the first meeting of the Mobilisation Panel had been arranged for 18 April.

The Chair asked if consideration could be given to using more than one provider if it would achieve savings and improve quality. It was also suggested that windows cleaners remain vigilant for signs of wear and damage.

RESOLVED, that – the report be noted and recommended to the BRC for approval.

10. LEASE ENFORCEMENT

The Committee received a report of the Executive Director, Community and Children's Services which set out the issues encountered with the previously approved procedure for dealing with breaches of lease on the Barbican Estate and to offer amendments to the process.

RESOLVED, that – the report be noted and the amended Barbican Estate Office Protocol for dealing with breaches of lease, as set out in Appendix 1 to the report, be recommended to the BRC.

11. BRANDON MEWS CANOPY

The Committee received a report of the Executive Director, Community and Children's Services which provided an update on officer investigations into the financial responsibility for the replacement and maintenance of the canopy installed in Brandon Mews in 1987. The report noted that the canopy had been installed due to structural defects causing significant leaks into leaseholders' homes.

Whilst the House Group was very grateful for the amount of work that had gone into the report, they felt that it should not inform a final decision as yet as there were still issues to be determined in this matter. The new Assistant Director gave assurance of his commitment to continuing this work and would confirm the position in respect of the appointment of a specialist consultant (or contractor) after the meeting. Brandon Mews residents maintained their position that this is an important piece of listed architecture, an open space on the Barbican Estate and wayfinding for the Art Centre, which could have an impact on future decisions in other parts of the Estate.

RESOLVED, that – the report be noted.

12. BARBICAN POSTERN ROOF RENEWAL

The Committee received a 'Gateway 2' Project Proposal Report of the Executive Director, Community and Children's Services in respect of the roof renewal for The Postern and a garden balcony for No2 Wallside in order remedy continual water leaks. Members noted that the Barbican Residential Committee (BRC) Meeting on 8th April 2024 would be asked to :

- Approve a budget of £24,000 to reach the next Gateway
- Note the total estimated cost of the project at £230,000 (excluding risks)
- Approve a Costed Risk Provision of £105,000 (to be drawn down via delegation to the Chief Officer.

The Asset Maintenance Working Party Chair asked for the Working Party to see reports of this nature at an earlier stage. The officer gave this assurance, noting that there would be a further report on Frobisher Crescent balconies water proofing.

RESOLVED, that – the report be noted and recommended to the BRC for approval.

13. **CITY OF LONDON ANTI-SOCIAL BEHAVIOUR POLICY**

The Committee received a report of the Executive Director, Community and Children's Services in respect of the City of London Corporation's Anti-Social Behaviour Policy, which had been approved by the Community and Children's Services Committee on 11th March 2024, and was being presented to the RCC and BRC for information.

The Executive Director agreed to investigate whether the policy for HRA properties could be applied to the Barbican Estate. Members also asked if they could receive a chart showing who should be contacted in the event of any issues.

RESOLVED, that – the report be noted.

14. **SALES AND LETTINGS**

The Committee received a report of the Executive Director, Community and Children's Services, which advised members of the sales and lettings approved by officers, under delegated authority, since your last meeting. The report also provides information on surrenders of tenancies received and the number of flat sales to date.

RESOLVED, that – the report be noted.

15. **VERBAL UPDATES**

The Committee received the following verbal updates:

Thomas Moore Playground had been closed due to health and safety issues but was now back in use. The cricket area and football pitch were still closed pending reports. Remedial works to Speed House playground were due to commence but it would remain open. A Members asked if anything could be done about noise nuisance caused by balls bouncing against metal surfaces.

An improvement notice had been issued to Redrow in respect of Blake Tower; they were now co-operating and resident meetings were continuing. Savills had been commissioned to conduct a survey of non-fire related issues. An empty flat, which had been severely affected by damp and water ingress, would be helpful in terms of understanding of the building. The Chair of Policy and Resources had written to Michael Gove about the situation and there are no legal implications in respect a proposed takeover in the next few months.

Police colleagues had asked for storage facilities in the Barbican Car Park and residents would be updated once officers had discussed their requirements.

Barbican Salvage now has work streams and advice from City Solicitors had been sought in taking this forward.

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

In response to a question about fire doors, Members noted that final designs were expected shortly for a 'mock up' and burn testing at the appropriate facility, with the aim of reaching a 60 minute fire rating. The letter box issue had been resolved, enabling the original design to be retained, and a detailed update would be provided at the next meeting of the Asset Maintenance Working Party. The officer also confirmed that the specification had been clear in that the paintwork must be non-flammable.

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

There were no items.

The meeting ended at 8.15 pm

Chairman

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