

TO: **BARBICAN RESIDENTIAL COMMITTEE**
8TH OCTOBER 2021

FROM: **BARBICAN RESIDENTS CONSULTATION COMMITTEE**
27TH SEPTEMBER 2021

THE FUTURE OF THE CONCIERGE SERVICE IN THE CAR PARKS ON THE BARBICAN ESTATE

The Chair agreed to admit an item of urgent business and asked that it be considered before moving on with the business on the published agenda. Members noted that the Assistant Director and Officers had been working with residents, in a Task and Finish Group, in order to seek a mutually agreeable solution in respect of the future concierge service in the car parks. Elected Members and Chief Officers had received a number of emails from residents on this matter, and this meeting of the Residents' Consultation Committee (RCC) was the first public forum for RCC Members to share the views of their House Groups. Furthermore, time was now of the essence as the Barbican Residential Committee was due to meet on 8th October 2021 and was not scheduled to meet again until 27th January 2022.

The Committee noted that the Task and Finish Group had produced a report, which had been circulated to all House Groups, encouraging them to meet and share views. The report contained a broadly written proposal for a way forward, which had been refined into a proposed Resolution from the RCC to the Barbican Residential Committee (BRC). The RCC had drafted an alternative resolution, which was similar but more specific.

The Town Clerk then read out both draft resolutions and the representatives of the T&FG and the RCC; i.e. – Mike Cribb (Deputy Chair of the RCC) on behalf of the T&FG, and Mary Bonar (Wallside representative of the RCC) were invited to expand on their content and invite comments. Members noted that the T&FG had been party to exempt information, as defined by the local Government Act. As the wider RCC had not been sighted on this, they had produced a more detailed resolution; asking the BRC to give consideration to a number of bullet points.

Mary Bonar felt that the RCC had been placed in a difficult position, without having being sighted on the full set of non-public documents, as their proposed resolution was seeking to impose significant costs. It was suggested that this might facilitate a future discussion about how the RCC is constituted. Mike Cribb defended a perceived vagueness in the T&FG's resolution, acknowledging that it was not specific in terms of negotiations, but the Group had acknowledged that they would follow.

The Chairman asked Members to give consideration to both, with a view to presenting a unified Resolution to the BRC, who would ultimately take the decision.

Following an extensive debate, the following Resolution to the BRC was agreed, with a caveat that the BRC be asked to consider the following bullet points during subsequent negotiations :

1. Work flexibly and imaginatively and in good faith; i.e. – the proper disclosure of service charge accounts with service charge payers and the RCC, to find a longer term solution to this issue within the structure of the current lease and freehold transfers;
2. in carrying out this work, identify specifically what services are provided by the Estate Concierges, how much they cost and who receives them;
3. to assist an RCC Working Party in finding ways to significantly reduce service charges, without materially affecting the level or quality of front-line services offered by the Barbican Estate Office.

RESOLVED, that – *The Barbican Residents' Consultation Committee are asked to note that the terrace block representatives on the Barbican Residents' Consultation Committee (RCC) have voted in favour of retaining the current number of Estate Concierges.*

'We will support the City of London Corporation in levying a one-off surcharge on terrace block leaseholders, to cover the pro-rata share (for the remainder of the 2021/2022 financial year) of the direct costs of employment of the 6 Estate Concierge roles scheduled to be removed, pending more detailed negotiations between service charge payers and the City Corporation. These costs were estimated by the Barbican Estate Office to be approximately £232,000 per year.

This is being offered as a matter of goodwill and is not an acceptance that the City Corporation would be entitled to reduce services in this way, or of the calculation of the terrace block car park inputs and outputs used to arrive at service charges. If an agreement is reached with the City Corporation, service charge payers will ask for a commitment (from the City Corporation) to that agreement in writing.

In consideration of accepting the one-off surcharge, service charge payers would ask City Officers to work flexibly and imaginatively with the RCC to find a longer term solution to this issue, within the structure of the current lease and freehold transfers, and to assist the RCC Service Charge Working Party in finding ways to significantly reduce service charges, without materially affecting the level or quality of front line services offered by the Barbican Estate Office'.

The representatives from Cromwell, Shakespeare and Lauderdale Towers asked for their abstentions to be recorded.

In concluding, the Chairs of both the RCC and the BRC thanked officers and residents for their hard work in seeking to achieve a mutually satisfactory solution. The Chair of the BRC gave assurance that, going forward, he would seek to share as much information as possible with residents.