

BARBICAN ESTATE RESIDENTS CONSULTATION COMMITTEE

Monday, 2 March 2015

Minutes of the meeting of the Barbican Estate Residents Consultation Committee held at Guildhall on Monday, 2 March 2015 at 7.30 pm

Present

Members:

Tim Macer (Chairman)	Gillian Laidlaw - Mountjoy House
Robert Barker (Deputy Chairman)	Fiona Lean - Ben Jonson House
Randall Anderson - Shakespeare Tower	Jane Smith - Barbican Association
Averil Baldwin - Thomas More House	Michael Swash - Willoughby House
Mark Bostock - Frobisher Crescent	John Taysum - Bryer Court
Dr Gianetta Corley - Gilbert House	Graham Wallace - Andrewes House
Robin Gough - Defoe House	Janet Wells - John Trundle Court
Gordon Griffiths - Bunyan Court	Helen Wilkinson – Speed House Group

In Attendance

Gareth Moore	Chairman, Barbican Residential Committee (BRC)
Prof. John Lumley	Barbican Residential Committee

Officers:

Helen Davinson	Community and Children's Services
Anne Mason	Community and Children's Services
Karen Tarbox	Community and Children's Services
Barry Ashton	Community and Children's Services
Mike Saunders	Community and Children's Services
Amy Carter	Community and Children's Services
Julie Mayer	Town Clerk's

1. APOLOGIES

Apologies were received from John Tomlinson (Cromwell Tower) and David Graves (Seddon House).

The Chairman welcomed John Whitehead, the new representative for Breton House. Mr Whitehead had submitted apologies for this evening.

The Chairman then welcomed Trevor Kavanagh, who is replacing Helen Wilkinson, representing Speed House. The Chairman and Members thanked Ms Wilkinson for her service to the RCC.

2. DECLARATIONS BY MEMBERS IN RESPECT OF ITEMS ON THE AGENDA

There were no declarations.

3. MINUTES

- The Minutes of the Barbican Residents' Consultation Committee (RCC) held on 24th November 2014 were approved.

- The Minutes of the RCC's Annual General Meeting held on 9th February 2015 were approved.

4. **SERVICE LEVEL AGREEMENT REVIEW**

The Committee received a report of the Director of Community and Children's Services which updated Members on the review of the Estate Wide implementation of Service Level Agreements (SLA's) and Key Performance Indicators (KPI's) for the quarter October to December 2014.

A Member noted the recent work to the gravestone plinths in St Giles' Terrace and asked if there would be an on-going maintenance plan. It was noted that advice would be sought as to what maintenance should be carried out and at what frequency.

RESOLVED, that: the Service Level Agreement Review be noted.

5. **PROVISION OF BICYCLE STORAGE**

The Committee considered a report of the Director of Community and Children's Services in respect of the provision of Bicycle Storage. During the discussion on this item the following matters were raised/noted:

- Officers advised that there had been consultation with Planning from the outset of the project.
- Generally there was a preference for individual storage facilities, rather than pods but it was accepted that the pods had been gifted and it had not been possible to finance individual lockers.
- The key deposit charges were comparable with other neighbouring London boroughs
- There were currently no charging facilities for electric vehicles but there might be more funding available.
- The pods already installed in the Defoe car park were only visible from the podium through a grille.
- Notice would be given prior to installation and this had been delayed to ensure adequate consultation with residents.

RESOLVED, that:

The Barbican Residential Committee be recommended to:

1. Introduce an annual residential licence of £30.00, with a key deposit of £25.00, to be introduced with immediate effect (for all bicycles housed within the communal Bicycle Cage Storage Areas), to be reviewed annually from December 2015.

2. Incorporate the bicycle storage pods into the car parking charging policy, to be reviewed in December 2015 in relation to RPI.

6. **WATER TESTING AND ASSOCIATED SAFETY WORKS**

The Committee received a report of the Director of Community and Children's Services in respect of Water Testing and Associated Safety Works, which sought to address questions raised at the last meeting about the structure of the contract. Members were informed that the contract would be for the Barbican Estate and the contract for the City's other housing would be tendered separately.

A specific concern had been raised at the previous meeting regarding a potential conflict of interest; i.e. if the same contractor were to recommend remedial work and then perform that remedial work. This would be addressed by a working protocol whereby the BEO would review any recommendation received from a contractor. The works would be allocated to the repairs and maintenance contractor, if appropriate, or where specialist works were required, they would be commissioned.

Members also noted that the Section 20 Notices had been sent out before the Meeting of the BRC on 16th March 2015, owing to the timescale required to procure a new contract by June 2015.

The results of the recent water tests were also available from the Barbican Estate Office.

RESOLVED, that:

1. Procurement proceeds for a 2 year testing contract, in order for the Barbican Residential Estate to ensure statutory compliance.
2. Procurement proceeds for a risk assessment contract to meet requirements and confirm any major works that need to be carried out.
3. The RCC and BRC receive further reports and a works programme, following completion of the risk assessments, in order to seek approval prior to procurement for a contractor to complete the works.

7. **PROGRESS OF SALES AND LETTINGS**

The Committee received a report of the Director of Community and Children's Services in respect of the sales and lettings which had been approved by officers since the last meeting.

RESOLVED, that: the sales and lettings report be noted.

8. **UPDATE REPORT**

The Committee receive the regular update report of the Director of Community and Children's Services. During the discussion, the following matters were raised/noted:

- Advice had been sought from the Landscape Agency in respect of the paths flooding through Thomas More Garden, where there is no drainage.
- The spreadsheets in respect of the roof apportionments had been circulated today and the Chairman and Secretary of the Barbican Association would be meeting shortly to review them. Officers expected any adjustments to show in the September service charge accounts. Members also noted an outstanding question: *Could you also please let me have the original tender figure and the final account figure. It is a fair assumption that the related sum has been sitting in an account for the last 10/11 years. In view of this, it is reasonable to expect that any amount owed to the residents be repaid with interest, say 5% pa.*
- Officers advised that they did not envisage paying interest.
- In respect of the TV installation, the problem with conduit at Andrewes House had now been resolved and the solution would be replicated in the other tenant blocks. Members noted that cable boxes could be installed in other rooms, with the arrangement of the lease holder. Members asked for an estate-wide update in respect of the delay following the Andrewes House installation and the deadline date for applying for the free upgrade. Officers advised that the engineers were likely to be on site for 2 months after the installation.
- The Beech Gardens Project Board was due to meet on 4th March.
- Frobisher Crescent - planning for the redecoration project is progressing.
- In respect of the podium re-tiling, workers would still be on site in April on account of the delays caused by poor weather. Any residual works would not affect the soft landscaping.
- Mountjoy residents were frustrated at having to park at Thomas Moore House, as it had leaks and the Barbican Association Chairman offered to raise this with the City Surveyor.
- The Barbican Association also offered to chase a completion date for the Girls' school
- The new church light was extremely bright and the Assistant Director offered to raise this with the City Surveyor.

RESOLVED: that, the Update report and comments, as set out above, be noted:

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

Following the suggestion at the AGM that a later start time might be more convenient for working/commuting residents, residents had found the start time of this meeting more convenient and asked if a later start time could be trialled

until the end of the year, with the aim of being able to attract Members that otherwise would not be able to attend.

10. ANY OTHER BUSINESS THAT THE CHAIRMAN CONSIDERS URGENT

- The residents of Bunyan House asked how long their car washing bay would be unavailable. Whilst noting that they could use Breton House's area, using this location would fall within the congestion charging zone. Officers explained that the area was required for storage during the Beach Gardens project and was the safest option. A representative from Bunyan House was invited to join officers on a site survey to consider alternatives.
- Members noted that all tiling to all the staircases would be replaced over the next year and the contrasting edging would be made high-visibility.
- The residents of Bunyan Court and John Trundle Court advised that the noise problem from Virgin Active had intensified. Environmental Health had visited the blocks to carry out noise testing. Whilst emphasising that this issue fell within the remit of the Environmental Health Team, the Assistant Director was concerned that residents had not been given monitoring equipment and offered to investigate this. The Bunyan Court House Group representative agreed to provide the email correspondence trail.
- Red and White banners had been installed near the Girls' School, following a recent school inspection, in order to mitigate the water hazard. Residents were concerned about the visual impact this had on the listed terraces and gardens. The Assistant Director offered to investigate whether this would be permanent.
- Residents were reminded that they were not permitted to install permanent screens or trellises on their balconies but there was nothing to prevent them from using tall plants to achieve additional privacy.
- Officers advised that there had recently been a spate of sign thefts from the Estate and new signage was on order. Members noted that wayfinding and signage on the Estate was now being considered as a part of the Barbican Area Strategy.

The meeting ended at 8.45pm

Chairman

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Pre RCC Member QUESTIONS

For 2 March 2015 RCC

ITEM 4

1. In The Appendix 6 of The latest RCC papers the latest comment is : “ Stair edging alternatives have now been sourced and agreed by Planning. To Rollout across the Estate following The Beech Street Gardens Project” -

This statement is very vague and considering that Defoe RTA has been asking that the poor and dangerous condition of the risers be rectified for over 12 months now we would like a more specific update. Currently the risers constitute a hazard.

The edging tiles have now been successfully installed within the Beech Gardens Project area and tiles have been ordered for the rest of the Estate. Where tiles edges are currently missing, they have been concreted temporarily and painted white.

ITEM 5

2. Bicycle facilities – On p45, question 8 seems to show that people don't want pods. But p43 says that we're going to spend some of the funding on pods. Why is that? Are we assuming that people didn't choose pods in question 8 because they didn't know what they were?

The survey was to assist in preparation for the allocation of monies for next for financial year – if successful in receiving further funding from TfL.

3. Why not select a colour that matches one on the "approved palette"? Why not have the galvanised-iron ends (of poor quality galvanising) painted to match as above? Ditto for main frame of BIKEHANGAR?

The facilities we have received are a gift from funding via TfL and the products discussed with Planning.

4. When the Listed Building Consent Officer was consulted, was he or she informed that these rack are permanently bolted down?

Yes

5. Was the officer, referred to above, told that the installed racks are visible from above, from Defoe Place?

Yes as it was an onsite meeting.

6. At what stage in the process did BEO officers consult the guidelines?

BEO officers reviewed the guidelines and decided to involve Planning Officers.

ITEM 8 (APPENDIX 2)

7. With reference to Beech Gardens Project updates, the location of the reservoir tank, which is to replace the previous intensive irrigation system, has not been reported.

I understand that it is currently being installed at 03 level at the southeast corner of Bryer Court within the residential lift and stairs structure. I understand that whereas the previous irrigation system drew water from mains supplies locally all over the northwest Barbican podium, the replacement nine cubic metre tank concentrates its replenishment by tapping into the mains supply to Bryer Court only, and then pumping this on demand to hosepipes in the raised beds all over the northwest Barbican podium. I understand that a tank of this size full of water weighs at least nine tonnes. Apparently this does not require planning consent.

Would the Estate Officers, City Surveyors and Building Control responsible for this installation confirm the situation to us because there has been no written statement?

The above is correct. The draw from the supply can be set at the same rate (or less) as the original tank –therefore water pressure will not be affected.

8. Would they assure Bryer Court residents that their residential water supplies are not to be adversely affected and in particular their priority to the mains supply, water pressure requirement and safeguards against back contamination from the new reservoir tank and its pipe runs?

WRAS regs will be met in regard to the risk of back contamination. Bryer Court supply is also shared with John Trundle Court and Bunyan Court and would have supplied the original irrigation system and tank underneath Bunyan Court

9. Would the officers also assure Bryer Court residents that the installation, its pipe runs, pumps, valves and associated machinery are specified so as not to transmit noise or vibration to their dwellings, nor add to the pre-existing noise levels in the adjacent residential common parts and the 03 level vicinity?

Yes

10. Would the officers assure us that the adjacent structures and services are able to bear the weight of this installation and that it conforms to building regulations for residential locations and the listed building management guidelines for these parts?

Building Control and a Structural Engineer have deemed it to be a suitable location.

11. It is unclear how the ongoing water service charges and maintenance costs associated with this installation are to be accounted for and whether other areas of the podium are intended to be added to its load. It is also unclear whether the proximity of the installation to Bryer Court poses a new risk requiring increased water testing service charges for the residents' supply. Would officers be able to clarify these points?

This would have been the same as the original Bunyan Court tank

12. The Beech Gardens Project is a pilot for waterproofing all podium areas and the new planting has been designed to support this objective without the previous intensive irrigation system. The success of this replacement and the planting it sustains can only be meaningfully assessed if the amount of water being used is reported over the coming years and weather conditions. Would the officers confirm that the supply to the tank is going to be metered from the start and the readings reported periodically to RCC/BRC?

Supply to the tank will be metered.

ITEM 8 (APPENDIX 2)

13. Benjo/Breton roof apportionment. If the Consultants practice has been able to supply you with the costs of the small number of contract instructions, which are needed before a decision on the final apportionment can be made? If not, what actions are being taken/can be taken to acquire full details of the difference between the original tender figure and the final account figure?

Officers are working towards a satisfactory conclusion on the outstanding contract instructions. These have been entered onto the agreed standard apportionment template for review by the BA's Roof Sub-Committee. Only after the outcome of the review by the Sub-Committee will we be in a position to confirm the final breakdown of the percentages between the City and Long Leaseholders

14. Could you also please let me have the original tender figure and the final account figure. It is a fair assumption that the related sum has been sitting in an account for the last 10/11 years. In view of this, it is reasonable to expect that any amount owed to the residents be repaid with interest, say 5% pa.

It is not envisaged that interest would be paid.

ITEM 8 (APPENDIX 3)

15. Given the installed communal heating system for the 69 Frobisher Crescent flats, why has the CSD allowed the developer, United House, to forgo attending 'to repairs within individual flats' before they have been offered the heating system by the developer? The system remains unreliable. There have been been at least two outages in the first two months of 2015.

The outages have occurred as a result of faults within individual flats not from the primary system. Until recently UH's contractor (part of the UH Group) were attending repairs under the defects liability period they had through their works contract

16. As the BEO has just started the procurement process for appointing an appropriate maintenance contractor, can we be assured by the CSD Department that the handover of the heating system will not be accepted by them until after this contractor is in place?

Yes

17. We have previously requested that the annual heating/hot water health checks now due be undertaken before CSD accepts the system. Can the CSD Department advise the progress on this issue?

UH carried out a health check on each flat completed last year offered free of charge. Any subsequent annual checks would not be free and would have to be commissioned by BE/Residents.

GENERAL

18. We appreciate that much thought and care has gone into planning how to restore the Thomas More north beds to being once again a handsome feature of that garden. We can see that new plantings are in place but we ask if there is an overall Landscape Vision for those beds which residents could know about, and possibly see, together with an estimate of when the new plantings are likely to restore beauty to those beds.

Whilst a great deal of work has gone into the northern bed of Thomas More House, the Gardens Advisory Group, BEO and Open Spaces Officers are conscious that the borders of both gardens (Thomas More lawn and Speed Garden) have not had significant investment or wholesale replanting for many years, rather more of a piecemeal exercise. This is something the GAG will be considering over the next few months and will report back with proposals

GENERAL

19. An additional question is to ask if the Directional signage at this end of the Estate could be improved particularly close to staircase 2 as on a number of occasions people looking for an exit from the podium have tried to access the car park from staircase 2 and in frustration

Signage is reviewed annually across the estate. The BEO checks that signage is current and in good condition. Where funds allow, old and tattered signs are replaced. A more comprehensive signage project would be the responsibility of the Department of the Built Environment (DBE). The stairs leading down from the podium by Defoe House (and also by Speed House) have small signs indicating that there is no access to street level. The BEO is aware that the map box by Staircase 1 of Defoe House is still missing and has been chasing this with colleagues in DBE.