

BARBICAN RESIDENTIAL COMMITTEE

Friday, 9 December 2022

Minutes of the meeting held at Guildhall at 1.45 pm

Present

Members:

Mark Wheatley (Chair) *
Anne Corbett (Deputy Chairman) *
Deputy Mark Bostock
John Foley *
Steve Goodman OBE
Elizabeth Anne King
Andrew McMurtrie*

Ruby Sayed (Ex-Officio)*

**indicates non-resident Members.*

The Town Clerk advised of an error on the agenda front page, showing Elizabeth King as a non-resident of the Barbican Estate.

In attendance:

Sandra Jenner – Chair of the Barbican Residents' Consultation Committee (RCC)
Jim Durcan – Deputy Chair of the RCC
Christopher Makin – Deputy Chair of the RCC
Mary Durcan – Vice Chair of Policy and Resources Committee

Officers:

Paul Murtagh	- Assistant Director, Barbican and Property Services,
Helen Davinson	Community and Children's Services
Jason Hayes	- Community and Children's Services
Andrew Fothergill	- Comptroller and City Solicitors
Anne Mason	- Community and Children's Services
Rosalind Ugwu	- Community and Children's Services
Graeme Lowe	- City Surveyors
Julie Mayer	- Town Clerks

1. APOLOGIES

Apologies were received from Helen Fentimen and John Fletcher.

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

There were no declarations.

3. MINUTES

RESOLVED, that – the public minutes and non-public summary of the meeting held on 30th November 2022 be approved.

Residents Consultation Committee (RCC) Minutes – 30th November 2022

As this meeting had been held just one week before today's BRC meeting, the draft minutes had been circulated to Members earlier in the week commencing 5th December.

RESOLVED, that – the draft minutes of the RCC meeting held on 30th November 2022 be received.

4. **ACTIONS TRACKER**

The Committee received the actions tracker, formerly known to as: '*You Said: We Did*' and noted the following:

Highwalks – this had been raised at the RCC meeting on 30.11.22, where Members expressed frustration at the number of committees it had been considered by. The Assistant Director explained that, although it had been the subject of a Resolution from a Ward Mote before the pandemic, and agreed by several committees, additional funding had not been agreed. However, in conjunction with the Chamberlain, an initial budget of £50k has been identified from the landlords budget for reactive repairs, and this could be used to start the work. Members noted that a survey would follow, to gauge whether this amount would be adequate and for what it could be used and no charge would fall to residents. Members also noted the wider podium works, which fall outside of this funding, and thanked the Assistant Director for seeking a practical solution.

Brandon Mews – the Assistant Director had met with the House Group, on 1st November 2023, and agreed to continue with research, assisted by the residents, on the background to the installation of the GRP roof to the block. Members noted that the next step would be an options appraisal, which would be shared with the House Group within the next 4 to 6 months.

Arup webinar – some 20 residents had dialled into this last week and shared some interesting views. The outcome from the webinar would be analysed and the next RCC/BRC meetings, in March 2023, would receive a further fire safety update, incorporating practical suggestions.

Energy Doctor – this had been included in the resident bulletin last week and would feature again this week.

Energy prices – the subject of a report later on the agenda. The Head of Energy and Sustainability advised that the meter operators had resolved 70% of the outstanding queries and were undertaking a fundamental review into the discrepancies between buildings. Members expressed concern that this situation had been allowed to develop.

Stock Condition Survey – this was being scoped by the Head of Major Projects and had been presented to the RCC, BRC and Asset Maintenance Working Party (AMWP) on 16th November 2022. The draft programme was being fine-tuned, an internal review would follow, and this would be subject to consultation. A team for delivery would be sourced, applying lessons learnt from Housing Revenue Account (HRA) projects.

5. **UPDATE REPORT**

The Committee received a report of the Executive Director, Community and Children's Services. In response to a question about redecorations, Members noted that Bryer, Bunyan and John Trundle were currently undergoing external decorations, with internal works scheduled for later in the programme.

RESOLVED, that – the report be noted.

6. **ANNUAL REVIEW OF THE COMMITTEE'S TERMS OF REFERENCE**

The Committee considered a report of the Town Clerk in respect of the Annual Review of the Committee's Terms of Reference. Members noted that this report is generally presented at the last meeting of the Calendar year, so as to incorporate any recommendations in good time for the Annual Meeting of the Court of Common Council, which is generally held in April.

The Town Clerk reminded Members of pending recommendations from the Lisvane Governance Review, in terms of a new Housing Grand Committee, which were likely to come into effect at the Annual Meeting of the Court in April 2023. The Barbican Residential Committee, as currently constituted, was scheduled to meet again on 20th March 2023.

RESOLVED, that - the current terms of Reference and frequency of meetings be approved, noting the recommendations pending from the Lisvane Governance Review, in respect of a new Housing Grand Committee, which are likely to come into effect from April 2023.

7. **RESIDENTS' SURVEY**

Members received a report of the Executive Director, Community and Children's Services, which provided the results of the Residents' Satisfaction Survey undertaken in October 2022. The Interim Head of Barbican Estates (BE) advised that an action plan would be produced and rolled out over the next couple of months. Members of the RCC would receive the action plan ahead of the next scheduled meetings of the RCC/BRC in March 2023. Members expressed concern at the poor findings from the Survey. The Head of BE explained that meetings were underway with service providers, and the raw data would be analysed by the independent Consultants and fed into the BEO review.

RESOLVED, that – the report be noted.

8. **SERVICE CHARGE EXPENDITURE AND INCOME ACCOUNT - LATEST APPROVED BUDGET 2022/23 AND ORIGINAL BUDGET 2023/24**

The Committee considered a report of the Chamberlain and the Executive, Director, Community and Children's Services, which set out the original budget for 2022/23 and 2023/24 for revenue expenditure included within the service charge in respect of dwellings.

RESOLVED, that :

1. The provisional 2023/24 net £Nil revenue budget be approved for submission to the Finance Committee.
2. The Chamberlain be authorised to revise these budgets to allow for further implications arising from departmental re-organisations and other reviews, and corporate projects.

9. **REVENUE AND CAPITAL BUDGETS - LATEST APPROVED BUDGET 2022/23 AND ORIGINAL 2023/24 - EXCLUDING DWELLINGS SERVICE CHARGE INCOME AND EXPENDITURE**

The Committee considered a report of the Chamberlain and the Executive, Director, Community and Children's Services, which presented the annual submission of the revenue and capital budgets overseen by the BRC. It also sought approval to the provisional revenue budget for 2023/24, for subsequent presentation to the Finance Committee.

The Assistant Director, Barbican and Property Services, reminded Members that the Estate is almost 60 years old and expensive window and roof repairs are inevitable. Members noted that the next meetings of the RCC and BRC would receive an action plan in respect of the works identified by the Stock Condition Survey. The Assistant Director also reminded Members of the need to identify and realise 12% savings next year, from the landlord's budget, under the terms of the Target Operating Model (TOM).

In response to a question about the installation of fire stopping and compartmentation in corridors and apartments at Frobisher Crescent, the Assistant Director advised that, given the complexity of this project, the overall cost would be approximately £1.1m. This report showed the approved expenditure to date.

RESOLVED, that:

1. The provisional 2023/24 revenue budget be approved for submission to the Finance Committee.
2. The draft capital budget be approved.
3. The Chamberlain be authorised to revise these budgets to allow for further implications arising from departmental reorganisations and other reviews including corporate projects.

10. **2022/23 ELECTRICITY PRICE FORECAST UPDATE**

The Committee received a report of the City Surveyor, which presented the anticipated electricity costs for the Barbican Estate. Members noted that prices are still to be finalised for the full year and are contingent on the Power Purchase Agreement (PPA), which is expected to commence in January 2023. Once the PPA is live, unit rates are expected to remain below the published price cap.

Members noted that half-hourly metering is in place across the Barbican, and this enables officers to look at trends. However, there had been an issue, over the past year, in respect of communication failures to some meters. The Head of Energy and Sustainability advised that 'Team Sigma', who are market leaders, had been reviewing the data and confirmed that residents would not be liable for reconciliation costs.

RESOLVED, that – the report be noted.

11. **VERBAL UPDATES**

The Head of Major Works and Interim Head of Barbican Estates were heard in respect of the following:

11.1 **Stock Condition Survey**

Members noted that Savills would be delivering a presentation on 16th December, which would also be available on the residents' bulletin. The Head of Major Works advised that the initial plans presented to the Asset Maintenance Working Party (AMWP) had included costs per annum, over the next 30 years, broken down into various elements. A short internal review would follow in respect of patterns, trends, repair histories, the capital programme and consultation with residents. This would also provide an opportunity to review resources; looking at where projects could be combined, any lessons learnt, and where legislation might have an impact in future years. Officers always looked to modern, sustainable equivalents, wherever possible and within Listed Building Guidelines.

Members felt that the City Corporation was reaching an important point in the Barbican's legacy and suggested the Arup Survey, Savills' Survey, Climate Change Strategy and Barbican Renewal be considered holistically across the 30-year timeframe. The Chair reminded Members that some of these projects might be beyond the remit of the BRC. The Head of Major Works advised that the Programme would be subject to periodic reviews and more granular details would emerge. The Assistant Director stressed that officers did not work in silos on projects of this nature, quoting the 'Podium Water Proofing Programme Group' as an exemplar of cross working in the City Corporation.

Members felt that in considering the implementation of these reports over a thirty-year period there was a need for the programme to be drawn up holistically with discussions on how best to deliver the programme on a timely and integrated basis.

In the meantime and within the context of the City's post Lisvane light touch review it was Proposed by Mark Bostock, Seconded by Ruby Sayed and RESOLVED unanimously, that - the Policy and Resources Committee be asked to consider setting up a Barbican Strategy Group, comprising all stakeholders, to facilitate a joined up approach to the future of the Grade 11 listed the Barbican Estate.

11.2 Barbican Estate Office Review

Members noted that the Project Board had been meeting on a 2-weekly basis and included the Chair of the RCC, the Interim Head of Barbican Estates and the independent Consultant.

The discovery stage of the project had included surveys, focus groups and drop in centres for both staff and residents. Although this stage had now closed, 1-1 meetings were still taking place with residents and staff. Members noted that the report was expected in February 2023, for presentation to the March RCC and BRC Meetings. An interim report was expected before the end of this calendar year, setting out immediate actions and observations, and this would be shared with RCC and BRC Members. Members stressed that those officers highly valued by residents; i.e. – the former car park attendants, be taken into consideration as part of the review.

In concluding, the Chair welcomed the review and the opportunity to build a new interactive structure, which would involve residents in the services being offered by the Estate Office. The Chair and Deputy Chair had also met with the Consultant to emphasise the importance of communications as, historically, this had been the biggest point of failure.

12. BLAKE TOWER UPDATE

The Committee received a report of the Executive Director, Community and Children's Services, which provided Members with an update on matters relating to Blake Tower, and progress towards the reversion of the management of the building to the City of London Corporation.

Members noted that the Corporation, through its legal advisers, has written formally to Redrow, under the terms of the Development Agreement, setting out concerns about fire safety. Redrow has been given until 21st December 2022 to respond and had acknowledged receipt. Members would receive a more detailed update in the non-public part of today's meeting, and the Chair thanked the Assistant Director and his team for their tenacity in supporting Blake Tower residents and seeking a resolution in this matter.

RESOLVED, that – the report be noted.

13. BARBICAN RESIDENTIAL ARREARS

The Committee received a report of the Executive Director, Community and Children's Services, which advised Members of current arrears in respect of tenants and leaseholders on the Barbican Estate. Members noted a more detailed appendix on the closed part of the agenda at item 19.

Members noted that residents have a statutory right to a loan in respect of major works. Where residents are experiencing financial difficulties, particularly as a result of the large balancing charges issued in September, flexible terms were available. The Chair stressed that any resident with concerns should approach the Estate Office as soon as possible to seek assistance.

RESOLVED, that – the report be noted.

14. BARBICAN COMMERCIAL ARREARS

The Committee received a report of the Executive Director, Community and Children's Services, which is presented annually, and advised Members of current arrears in respect of commercial property tenants on the Barbican Estate. Members noted a more detailed appendix on the closed part of the agenda at item 20.

RESOLVED, that – the report be noted.

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

The Chair had received a question in respect of drainage and door set works to Lambert Jones Mews. The Head of Major Works advised that the standard of work from the original contractor had been below the City Corporation's expectations. Subsequently, a new contractor had been appointed, once the first part of the works were complete.

The scope of the works had also changed at this point and the new methods used, with less joints in the pipework, would reduce the risk of further leaks. The drains had been cleaned and the next steps would include a preventative maintenance programme, which would be discussed with residents. The Head of Major Works advised that this would include annual cleaning and a roof coating, which would prevent mineral damage to the pipework. Contractors had recently been on site to repair door sets and make good decorations, both internally and externally, including holes left by scaffolding. Residents were thanked for their patience in this matter, particularly a Lambert Jones resident who had been very helpful in co-ordinating access. It was expected that the remedial works would be completed before Christmas, weather permitting, and the roof coating early in the New Year.

Residents had received a detailed breakdown, up to the point where the original contract had been terminated, and a quotation for the remaining works, up to completion and remedial. The Head of Major Works confirmed that, at this point, the only expected additional cost would be for the roof coating, as this fell outside the scope of the original works. Members were assured that residents would not bear any additional costs in terms of delays.

16. ANY OTHER BUSINESS THAT THE CHAIRMAN CONSIDERS URGENT

Anti-social behaviour (ASB)

The Head of Barbican Estates advised that the Police Security Committee had set up a Task and Finish Group in respect of ASB, including all relevant City Corporation Departments, with a view to more collaborative working. The Group had welcomed the data and intelligence provided by the Chair of the Barbican Security Committee. The Safer Neighbourhoods Team would produce a historical timeline, and options for consideration in terms of police responses and byelaws; noting that the latter were not being enforced. The future of the Museum site, following its closure, had been discussed at a Task and Finish Group Meeting and an action point noted in respect of the cleaning contract and future use of the bridge.

Balancing charges

A resident had written to the BRC Chair requesting a formal review process, with resident representatives, when balancing charges exceed 10% of the quarterly estimates. It was suggested that this would encourage the Estate Office to improve their estimates and help residents with financial planning.

The Revenues Manager explained that this year's large increases had been due to rising energy and repair costs, compounded by high inflation. Furthermore, they do not generally become apparent until halfway through the year. For example, Mountjoy House suddenly jumped to £60,000, having stayed at around £28,000 for a number of years. Whilst one-off items are likely to create large balancing charges, it would not be appropriate to inflate the cost at the outset. However, if essential works to roofs and windows are not carried out, then this is likely to result in water ingress and more damage and repairs.

The Revenues Manager agreed to present 6-monthly, rather than annual forecasts, covering the main areas of expenditure: i.e. repairs, energy and employees, noting how this year's pay award came in after the budget setting process. The half-yearly report would also provide a breakdown, similar to that provided to the Leasehold Service Charges Working Party. There was a further request for the summary of repair expenditure to be presented in a simplified format, with percentage levels of increases and a narrative. In addition to the 6-monthly reporting, Members also stressed that early warnings of high balancing charges should be communicated.

Members noted that an independent survey was underway in respect of the most exposed windows across the Estate, which are likely to need urgent replacement. Once the survey is complete, a competitive tendering process would follow. Members noted that social housing projects are generally more likely to receive decarbonisation funding, than leaseholder estates, as projects have to be ready for delivery when grants are applied for. It was suggested that communal areas might be more successful; i.e. - lifts, from a DDA perspective, and the possibility of Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) funding could be explored.

In concluding, the Chair asked if the above points could be presented in a report to the next RCC/BRC meetings, ahead of the revised reporting schedule, and following further engagement with residents.

17. **EXCLUSION OF THE PUBLIC**

RESOLVED – That under Section 100(A) of the Local Government Act 1972, the public be excluded from the meeting for the following items on the grounds that they involve the likely disclosure of exempt information as defined in Part I of Schedule 12A of the Local Government Act.

Item no	Paragraph no
18-23	2,3
24	2,3 & 5

18. **NON-PUBLIC MINUTES**

RESOLVED, that – the public minutes and non-public summary of the meeting held on 30th September 2022 be approved.

19. **BARBICAN RESIDENTIAL ARREARS- NON-PUBLIC APPENDIX**

20. **COMMERCIAL ARREARS - NON-PUBLIC APPENDIX**

21. **BARBICAN ESTATE RESIDENTIAL TENANCY RENEWALS**

The Committee considered and approved a report of the Executive Director, Community and Children's Services.

22. **BARBICAN TURRET JOHN WESLEY HIGH WALK - GATEWAY 6 - OUTCOME REPORT**

The Committee considered and approved a report of the Executive Director, Community and Children's Services.

23. **NON-PUBLIC QUESTIONS ON MATTERS RELATING TO THE WORK OF THE COMMITTEE**

A question was asked whilst the public were excluded.

24. **ANY OTHER BUSINESS THAT THE CHAIRMAN CONSIDERS URGENT AND WHICH THE COMMITTEE AGREES SHOULD BE CONSIDERED WHILST THE PUBLIC ARE EXCLUDED**

There was one item of urgent business whilst the public were excluded.

The meeting ended at 3.30 pm

Chairman

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