

BARBICAN ESTATE RESIDENTS CONSULTATION COMMITTEE
Monday, 6 June 2022

Minutes of the meeting held at Guildhall at 6.30 pm

Present

Members:

Christopher Makin - Chair	Ted Reilly - Barbican Association
Sandra Jenner - Deputy Chair	Fiona Lean - Ben Jonson House
Jim Durcan - Deputy Chair	Rodney Jagelman - Thomas More
Gordon Griffiths - Bunyan Court	Andrew Tong - Brandon Mews
David Graves - Seddon House	Tim Hollaway - Lambert Jones Mews
John Taysum - Bryer Court	Guy Nisbett - Speed House
John Tomlinson - Cromwell	Helen Hudson - John Trundle House
Mary Bonar - Wallside	Andy Hope - Breton House
Sandy Wilson - Shakespeare	<i>vacancy</i> - Andrewes House
David Lawrence - Lauderdale	Dave Taylor - Gilbert House
Mark Bostock - Frobisher	<i>vacancy</i> - Defoe House
	Monique Long - Mountjoy House

In attendance:

Aldersgate

Helen Fentimen
Randall Anderson
Deborah Oliver
Annet Rideg

Cripplegate

Susan Pearson
Paul Singh

Ruby Sayed – Chair of the Community and Children’s Services Committee
Mark Wheatley – Chair of the Barbican Residential Committee (BRC)

Officers:

Paul Murtagh	- Assistant Director, Barbican and Property Services, Community and Children’s Services
Helen Davinson	- Community and Children’s Services
Rosalind Ugwu	- Community and Children’s Services
Anne Mason	- Community and Children’s Services
Barry Ashton	- Community and Children’s Services
Julie Mayer	- Town Clerk’s

1. **APOLOGIES**

Apologies were received from James Ball (Brandon Mews) and Andrew Tong represented him. Fionnuala Hogan and Petre Reid would be the new joint representatives for Willoughby House and had given apologies. Adam Hogg, Chair of the Barbican Association had given apologies and was represented by Ted Reilly.

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

There were no declarations.

3. **MINUTES**

RESOLVED, that – the minutes of the meeting held on 17th January 2022 be approved, subject to the following amendment under item (5) Task and Finish Group Concierge Service – Oral Update:

The Leaseholder Service Charges Working Party (LSCWP) is seeking to identify cost savings in the provision of the car park service that does not affect the service itself. The wider remit of the LSCWP to seek reductions in service charges, without compromising services, continues.

Amend to :

As an offset to the car park levy the Leaseholder Service Charge Working Party (LSCWP) is seeking to identify cost savings in the provision of service charges, without compromising services.

4. **WORKING PARTY UPDATES**

The Committee received the following Working Party Updates:

4.1 **Service Level Agreement**

During the discussion on this item, the following points were noted:

- A Request for KPI's to be provided as percentages as well as absolutes.
- KPI's were not collected during the lockdowns, as block inspections were not taking place due to the government directive to Work from Home.
- A new data set was provided at the request of one House Group, which has since been created for the whole estate and the Working Party would be analysing this. Going forward, it would be provided quarterly but it would be very resource intensive to provide retrospectively.
- Civica is currently being tested and will be replacing the Orchard repairs system at the end of June/July. The Keystone system is used for Asset Maintenance.

4.2 Gardens Advisory

In respect of the fountains being out of service for the past three years, officers explained that responsibility for the infrastructure supporting the lakes comes under the remit of the Barbican Arts Centre. Members asked if City Corporation Members could raise this with Barbican Centre Board Members.

Officers further clarified that the cost of works to the plant in respect of the fountains on the lakeside, lower lake and the waterfall, would be charged to the Barbican Centre, and not residents. The Lease provides that leaseholders contribute 85% of cost of the maintaining of the lakes, the same proportion as for garden maintenance.

However, in the past the cost of works such as de-silting have been shared between the Estate and the Centre; i.e. at 42.5% to the Estate, as set out in the working party report. Officers stressed that statutory consultation would apply if spend were to go over the prescribed limit. They would seek also expert advice on any proposed works, in order to gain a perspective on priorities. Members noted that the majority of works to the garden works is covered by the service charge, and this includes cutting the rushes on the lake.

There was a challenge to the 42.5% contribution in that it might be inequitable. Officers clarified that major works falling under the lease have always been shared with the Barbican Centre in this way. A former Chair of the City Corporation's Finance Committee was in attendance, and the Chair permitted him to speak. He expressed a view in that this might be an ideal opportunity for the RCC Members to be consulted on the Barbican Renewal Project and, whilst it might be difficult to avoid a revenue share, it seemed unfair that capital costs might fall to residents.

Finally, Members noted the small uplift in gardening agreed 2 years ago, at just approximately 50p per flat, which had resulted in a considerable improvement to the appearance of the gardens.

4.3 Asset Management

In response to questions about the cost of window frame replacement, the Assistant Director advised that replacements carried out in isolation would always be more expensive than if they formed part of a programme. Members also noted that Saville's Condition Survey had identified window replacements works in several years' time. However, the team would be putting out a schedule of rates to procurement, so that when the window frames come up for replacement, the works will be at previously agreed prices, which would have been competitively tendered to achieve economies of scale.

The Assistant Director further advised that regulations covering glazing must conform to British Standards and Building Regulations. Therefore, if residents are in any doubt as to the condition or safety of a window, then they should advise the Estate Office. When they are replaced as part of the Stock

Condition Survey, it will be to modern safety standards, in line with the limitations of a listed estate.

In response to a question about the redecorations at Frobisher Crescent and the debit to the service charge account, the Assistant Director reminded Members about extensive discussions before the pandemic. A decision had been taken by the Barbican Residential Committee (BRC) and there had been two stages of Section 20 Consultation with Frobisher residents. At the time, the House Group stated that they would be: '*happy to award on the basis of tender submitted and subsequent clarifications*'. Members noted that there would be a third stage of the Section 20 Consultation later this month for the blocks scheduled to be redecorated in the coming months. The Assistant Director advised that he had met with the Arts Centre in terms of integrating works and would be speaking to them further in terms of the redecorations.

Finally, officers recognised that the detail in Section 20 Notices is somewhat lacking as they are required to fulfil a legal formality. Therefore, the Estate Office always adds further details when they are sent to residents, and the Assistant Director agreed to investigate where this had not been done.

4.4 **Underfloor Heating**

The report was received.

4.5 **Leaseholder Service Charge**

There had been good progress in drafting the job description for the new Head of the Barbican Estate; which covered accountability and management of the service charge budget, seeking efficiencies and value for money. The Deputy Chair, Sandra Jenner, who has considerable expertise in this field, was happy with the content and waiting on clarity on a couple of final points. There was a concern raised about interdependencies with the City Corporation but the Assistant Director explained that the role would be a single point of contact, working within the City's financial framework and controls.

4.6 **Electric Vehicle**

Members noted a point of clarity in that some residents might need to charge their vehicles in car parks where they do not live. However, they would be able to leave them overnight, with no need to return at 10 or 11 pm to remove them.

5. **CONCIERGE/CPA AND BARBICAN ESTATE OFFICE SERVICE UPDATE**

The Assistant Director was heard and advised that a Special Meeting would be convened, before the September cycle of RCC/ BRC meetings, in order to consider this further. Members noted that there would be an independent review of the structure of the Estate Office in terms of staff, processes and procedures, ahead of a proposal to the BRC, and an early draft of the report would be shared with the Chairs and Deputy Chairs at the end of this week. The Assistant Director estimated that the meeting would take place in the next 4-6 weeks, noting the City of London Corporation's recess period from 25th July to 5th September 2022 when only essential meetings are permitted. The

Assistant Director noted comments about the last round of consultations being out of sync and confirmed that consultation with the respective chairs and residents would take place first before the project moves forward.

6. UPDATE REPORT - BEECH GARDENS (NORTH WEST PODIUM) WATERPROOFING PROJECT

The Committee received a report of the Director of Community and Children's Services, which updated members on the Beech Gardens (North West Podium) Waterproofing Project, the subsequent issues and the outcome of steps taken to facilitate completion.

Members noted that they would receive the close-down (Gateway 6) report at the September 2022 meeting, as there were no further legal grounds on which to withhold payments to the Contractor. Members were reminded of the discussions at various committees in respect of the drainage works, which were being looked at retrospectively. The Assistant Director stressed that lessons had been learnt and Phase 2 of the works would be approached differently. The Assistant Director gave further assurance that the areas would be kept safe in the interim period.

RESOLVED, that - the report be noted.

7. EWS1 FORMS FOR THE BARBICAN ESTATE

The Committee received a report of the Director of Community and Children's Services which sought guidance and instruction on the City Corporation's approach to the provision/non provision of EWS1 forms across the Barbican Estate.

Members noted that a similar report had been considered by the Housing Management and Almshouses Sub (of the Community and Children's Services Committee). The Assistant Director advised that producing EWS1 forms is expensive and, given that they are not essential, he had been providing 'comfort letters' for mortgage providers. An example was provided in the appendix to the report. The Assistant Director had provided 10 letters across Housing and Barbican, which had been accepted by mortgage lenders. Members noted that they applied to buildings over 18m high, not on a floor-by-floor basis. The Assistant Director had also taken advice from Legal Services in respect of floors at sub-podium level.

RESOLVED, that - the report be noted.

8. FIRE SAFETY - AN UPDATE ON THE WORK OF OVE ARUP

The Assistant Director was heard and advised that the BRC would receive a report at its meeting on 17th June 2022, including an option in respect of retrofitting of sprinklers in the towers and the cost implications. The Assistant Director stressed that, before any further action was taken, there would be full resident consultation.

Members noted that, whilst the buildings had been fully compliant at the time of construction, some 50 years ago, the Arup Survey had made a number of

recommendations to bring them up to a modern standard, noting that some might not be feasible. The Estate Office were looking at possible mitigations; one of them being the retro-fitting of sprinklers, which had been recommended to Members some time ago but had been controversial. Arup had also proposed some interim and immediate solutions; i.e. - identifying vulnerable people in the blocks, along the lines of 'Personal Evacuation Plans' and this was being actioned.

The decision not to fit sprinklers had been taken due to the general low fire risk at the Barbican and its compartmentation. However, Arup has raised concerns in that the compartmentation might have been disrupted during residents' improvement works and officers, therefore, have a duty to bring this to Members' attention. The Chair of the BRC was in attendance and advised that the recommendations in the report would include a feasibility and design study, to which residents would have input, ahead of a final decision. RCC Members would receive a redacted version of the report as soon as possible and the Town Clerk advised that the Special Meeting requested under item 5 above could include this item, if necessary.

9. **BLAKE TOWER - ORAL UPDATE**

The Assistant Director was heard and advised that the Estate Office was still unable to take over the building. The Chairman of the BRC was thanked for his intervention and support in this matter. As the City Corporation is not managing the building, there are limitations as to how far it can intervene, but Redrow tends to respond quicker to correspondence from the City than from individuals. Redrow had also responded to recommendations in the Saville's Survey, which had been instigated by the City. A recent Fire Brigade Inspection, also instigated by the City, had raised a couple of minor concerns.

10. **BARBICAN ESTATE TOWER LIFT REFURBISHMENT - GATEWAY 1-4: PROJECT PROPOSAL AND OPTIONS APPRAISAL**

The Committee received a report of the Director of Community and Children's Services in respect of a programme of works to replace all lifts in Shakespeare, Cromwell and Lauderdale Towers on the Barbican Estate. Members noted there are 9 lifts in total, three serving each Tower.

In response to a question about the options in the report; i.e., repair or replacement, the Assistant Director advised that the City's Gateway Projects Procedure requires options to be set out and discounted where not viable. It was suggested that this might be perceived as misleading, and the report should emphasise that repair is not an option in this case. The Assistant Director also advised that this was a GW1-4 report, seeking fee approval and resident consultation to inform the specification. The representative for Shakespeare Tower was invited to speak to the team, outside of the meeting, to share ideas and concerns about the works and interim lift performance.

Members noted that, for consistency, a single contractor would be appointed and, as the team do not have expertise in house for a lift replacement; the project management aspects might need to be

externalised. The Assistant Director further explained that the project presented an opportunity to make the lift system more sustainable and efficient; with the possibility of tapping into green external funding streams rather than recovering costs entirely from leaseholders.

RESOLVED, that - the report be noted.

11. 'YOU SAID; WE DID' - OUTSTANDING ACTIONS LIST

The Committee received the Outstanding actions list. Members noted the items which would be covered on this agenda, together with the following updates:

- The Assistant Director had met with the Chamberlain in respect of a funding stream for maintenance of the Highwalks for the current year. There would also be a survey to identify longer term funding strategies.
- In respect of play areas, officers were awaiting a quotation.
- In respect of the canopy cleaning for Brandon Mews, a report would be presented to the September 2022 meetings of the RCC and BRC.

RESOLVED, that - the report be noted.

12. UPDATE REPORT

The Committee received an update report of the Director of Community and Children's Services

RESOLVED, that - the report be noted.

13. PROGRESS OF SALES AND LETTINGS

The Committee received a report of the Director of Community and Children's Services which advised Members of sales and lettings approved since the last meeting, under delegated authority and in accordance with standing orders. The report also provided information on surrenders of tenancies received and the number of flat sales to date.

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

The Chair advised the Committee of his recent election as Alderman for Aldersgate Ward. Given that this would take up a considerable amount of his time, and there could be a potential conflict of interest, he would be standing down as Chair of the RCC. The Chair had served for 5 years, and it was noted that the City Corporations Governance Review had recommended that

Chairmen should serve a maximum of 4 years. The Chair would stay in post until the September 2022 meeting, when there will be an election for a new Chair. If helpful, and if the Committee were agreeable, he would be happy to take up a Deputy Chair position for the following year. In concluding, the Chair thanked the officers and the Deputy Chairs that had served over the past 5 years. Members congratulated the Chair on his election and thanked him for his dedicated service.

The meeting ended at 8.15 pm

Chairman

Contact Officer: Julie.Mayer@cityoflondon.gov.uk