

BARBICAN ESTATE RESIDENTS CONSULTATION COMMITTEE
Monday, 5 June 2023

Minutes of the meeting of the Barbican Estate Residents Consultation Committee
held at Committee Rooms, 2nd Floor, West Wing, Guildhall on Monday, 5 June 2023
at 6.30 pm

Present

Members:

Sandra Jenner - Chair	Deputy Mark Bostock - Frobisher Crescent
Jim Durcan - Deputy Chair	Miranda Quinney - John Trundle Court
Alderman Christopher Makin – Deputy Chair	David Lawrence - Lauderdale Tower
Adam Hogg - Chair, Barbican Association	Monique Long - Mountjoy House
Graham Wallace- Andrewes House	Jane Smith - Seddon House
Fiona Lean - Ben Jonson House	Guy Nisbett – Speed House
Andrew Tong - Brandon Mews	Rodney Jagelman - Thomas More House
John Taysum – Bryer Court	Petre Reid - Willoughby House
Helen Hudson – Defoe	

Officers:

Emma Bushell	- City Surveyor's Dept.
Stephanie Robertson	- City Surveyor's Dept.
Barry Ashton	- Community and Children's Services Dept.
Paul Murtagh	- Community and Children's Services Dept.
Jason Hayes	- Community and Children's Services Dept.
Anne Mason	- Community and Children's Services Dept.
Helen Davinson	- Community and Children's Services Dept.
Matthew Stickley	- Town Clerk's Dept.

1. APOLOGIES

Apologies for absence were received from Andy Hope of Breton House, for whom Deputy Randall Anderson attended as a substitute, and from Sandy Wilson, for whom Ted Reilly attended as a substitute. Frances Calman attended the meeting as a substitute for Alan Budgen of Cromwell Tower.

Apologies for absence were also received from Dave Taylor of Gilbert House.

Helen Hudson and Monique Long joined the meeting remotely.

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

There were no declarations of interest.

3. **MINUTES**

RESOLVED – That the minutes of the meeting held on 6 March 2023 be agreed as an accurate record.

4. **UPDATE REPORT**

The committee received a report of the Executive Director of Community and Children's Services.

The committee discussed the redecoration works, following which officers confirmed that there was no reason residents could not meet with the Clerk of Works, including for snagging meetings, and that this would be confirmed to the Clerk of Works following the meeting.

In response to a request for a finalised financial summary of redecoration works, officers agreed to provide such a report, along with a Clerk of Works report for all remaining residential blocks on the estate once they had been received, to the members of the committee before its next meeting.

In response to questions regarding the accuracy of data within the report, the Town Clerk advised that reports were required to be prepared several weeks in advance of the meeting to allow for their publication in compliance with statutory deadlines.

The committee discussed the levying of service charges prior to lift refurbishment works commencing. Officers confirmed that charges would not be levied prior to works beginning. The committee discussed the offer of a service charge loan, which would be available in September 2024 once finalised accounts had been received, with officers confirming that an explanatory note would be provided to residents setting out the offer in further detail.

5. **YOU SAID/WE DID - OUTSTANDING ACTIONS**

The committee discussed the accuracy of dates by which items had been added to the document. It was confirmed by officers that one action had been revised since the last meeting but that the listed actions would be reviewed following the meeting.

Officers agreed to share anonymised staff feedback with the Barbican Estate Residents Consultation Committee as listed as a previous action. The committee discussed the deferral of actions, including the response to the Residents' Survey and the revised Communications Strategy, to allow for completion of the Barbican Estate Office review.

6. **CAR PARK CHARGING POLICY**

The committee received a report of the Executive Director of Community and Children's Services.

The committee discussed the proposal to increase car parking charges in line with Consumer Price Inflation, the number of rate freezes implemented in previous years, the valuation of the Barbican Estate spaces as compared to other local car parks, and the proposed expenditure earmarked for management and supervision costs. The committee further discussed the staffing of the estate's car parks and whether the recent addition of part-time staff would reduce the need for overtime payments. The committee discussed the charging of £1,564 per annum for Barbican Estate car parks as compared to approximately £800 per annum for other local car parks.

The committee discussed the decline in occupancy rates since 2006 and whether increases in charges had caused or exacerbated this; and whether charges indexed to occupancy rates might mitigate this decline in occupancy.

The committee welcomed the proposal to re-establish the Car Parking Charging Working Party and noted the recommendations which would be put to the Barbican Residential Committee.

7. BARBICAN ESTATE ELECTRIC VEHICLE CHARGING POINTS

The committee received a report of the Executive Director of Community and Children's Services.

The committee welcomed the proposal for an Electric Vehicle Charging Point Working Party to be re-established to review the electric vehicle charging point offer across the estate but expressed concerns about the proposed increase to charges, with concerns raised that demand for estate charging would be lessened because of local, on-street charging points being less expensive.

The committee discussed the use of the charging bays, recognising they seemed to be underutilised but that electric vehicle ownership rates were increasing annually and that use of the spaces was likely to increase over time.

In response to questions, it was confirmed that the current charges would remain in place if the Barbican Residential Committee did not agree to their increase at its next meeting.

It was proposed that the Barbican Estate Residents Consultation Committee recommend to the Barbican Residential Committee that it defer any decision on electric vehicle charging fees until such time as the Electric Vehicle Working Party could meet to further investigate the proposals. This was put to the committee and agreed.

8. WINDOW CLEANING CONTRACT

The committee received a report of the Executive Director of Community and Children's Services.

The committee discussed the involvement of residents in the procurement of estate contracts, with officers apologising that residents had not been involved in the procurement under consideration. It was clarified that resident involvement in procurement exercises was valued by the City of London Corporation, had been useful to previous procurement exercises, and that it would continue to be sought in future. Involvement in procurement exercises for services paid for by Barbican Estate residents was welcomed by the committee.

The committee welcomed the news that the proposed contract included works not covered in previous contracts and discussed the structuring of charges across the blocks in the estate. It was clarified by officers that this was due to different blocks having different requirements for window cleaning.

The committee noted that the specification for the contractor included a requirement to report repair and maintenance issues identified when cleaning and discussed the importance of contract management in ensuring the works were completed to a suitable standard. It was confirmed that the cleaning method for the different classes of buildings would be reviewed and discussed with the contractor as part of the new specification.

The committee discussed the possibility of tendering contracts by lot to allow multiple suppliers to provide bespoke services.

The committee noted the recommendations which would be put to the Barbican Residential Committee.

9. **FINAL RECONCILIATION REPORT OF BARBICAN ESTATE METERING AND BILLING ISSUES**

The committee received a report of the City Surveyor.

The committee discussed the forecasted energy price for future years, noting that the City of London Corporation's energy supplier had purchased 52% of energy requirements for the coming year. It was confirmed that metering issues had now been resolved. The committee noted the credit of charges from previous years but noted that they would not be reimbursed to residents as they had not been included in charges over previous years.

The committee discussed the variation of standing charges, the amount of available capacity purchased, and requested clear information on the reconciliation of metering and billing. It was noted that estate residents were eligible for HM Government's Energy Bill Relief Scheme and that these discounts had been added to residents' energy bills.

The committee discussed the need to be presented with the outcome of the reconciliation exercise and for clear information which set out the charges, both actual and forecasted, for each residential block for the financial years affected by the incorrect billing.

RESOLVED:

- To note incorrect billing of usage due to estimated data has been rebilled on actual data with the exception of Speed House data, which will be rebilled by June 2023.
- To note the actions taken by City of London Corporation Energy Team and vendors to rectify and prevent incorrect billing.
- To note the analysis of some blocks for agreed available capacity that is now with the sites for review.

10. PROGRESS OF SALES AND LETTINGS

The committee received a report of the Executive Director of Community and Children's Services.

RESOLVED – To note the report.

11. BRANDON MEWS CANOPY

The committee received a verbal update from Community and Children's Services department staff.

The committee noted the work undertaken to establish a record of works on the roof canopy over previous years, and that future decisions would require expert advice.

Officers confirmed that a report providing an update on the work would be brought to the next meeting of the Barbican Estate Residents Consultation Committee.

12. FIRE SAFETY

The committee received a verbal update from Community and Children's Services department staff.

It was noted that the majority of remedial works had been completed in Frobisher Crescent. The committee praised the work undertaken and the communication between officers, residents, and the contractor.

13. BLAKE TOWER

The committee received a verbal update from Community and Children's Services department staff.

Officers confirmed that the City of London Corporation continued to face challenges in engaging Redrow PLC and was close to taking legal action. The committee noted that Redrow PLC would be completing investigation surveys but that the City of London Corporation would be present at these surveys, including attendance from officers working in the areas of fire safety and building control.

14. WORKING PARTY UPDATES

The committee received updates from working parties of the Barbican Estate.

With regard to the Leaseholder Service Charge Working Party update, the committee noted that errors in repairs and maintenance estimate charges for four estate blocks had led to confusion for residents and not been clearly explained.

With regard to the Asset Management Working Party update, the committee discussed the need for proper project management of the stock condition survey and that the stock condition should be considered in the long-term.

With regard to the Underfloor Heating Working Party update, the committee noted that the Comptroller and City Solicitor's Department had provided advice on lease amendments to allow for individual controls. Officers agreed to take up the matter further with the Comptroller and City Solicitor's Department to seek a resolution to the issue.

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

A question was asked about the circulation of minutes of the meeting, to which the Town Clerk confirmed that the draft minutes of the meeting would be circulated shortly after the meeting to allow for submission to the Barbican Residential Committee meeting of 19 June 2023. The Chair advised that she and the Town Clerk were to meet in the coming days to discuss the scheduling of meetings and coordination between the Barbican Estate Residents Consultation Committee and Barbican Residential Committee more generally.

A question was asked regarding the necessity of maintenance and redecoration works to be undertaken in the coming weeks and the inadequate communication to residents to prepare for these works. In response, officers confirmed that they would be meeting with residents in the coming days to discuss the works but that the coming weeks would see the contractor undertake pre-work surveys rather than the works themselves. It was confirmed that the contractor was aware of a local population of falcons and that their surveys and works would not disturb their habitat.

The Chair confirmed that, as discussed at the last meeting of the committee, the Barbican Estate Residents Consultation Committee nominees to support the procurement for a general repairs contract would be Ted Reilly and Jane Northcote.

16. ANY OTHER BUSINESS THAT THE CHAIRMAN CONSIDERS URGENT

There was no urgent business.

The meeting ended at 8.45 pm

Chairman

**Contact Officer: Matthew Stickley, Governance and Member Services Manager
Matthew.Stickley@cityoflondon.gov.uk**