

BARBICAN RESIDENTIAL COMMITTEE
Monday, 8 April 2024

Minutes of the meeting held at Guildhall at 1.45 pm

Present

Members:

Mark Wheatley, Non-resident (Chair)
Helen Fentimen, Aldersgate - Resident
John Foley, Non-resident
Dawn Frampton, Cripplegate - Resident
Steve Goodman OBE, Aldersgate - Resident
Timothy James McNally, Non-resident

In attendance:

Sandra Jenner – Chair of the Barbican Residents Consultation Committee (BRCC)
Jim Durcan – Deputy Chair of the BRCC

Officers:

Judith Finlay	- Executive Director, Community and Children's Service
Mark Jarvis	- Chamberlains
Polly Dunn	- Assistant Town Clerk
Pam Wharfe	- Interim Assistant Director, Housing
Dan Sanders	- Assistant Director, Barbican Residential Estate
Damon Ellis	- Interim Contract Manager
Jason Hayes	- Community and Children's Services
Anne Mason	- Community and Children's Services
Michael Gwyther-Jones	- Community and Children's Services
Helen Davinson	- Community and Children's Services
Julie Mayer	- Town Clerk's Department
Emma Bushell	- City Surveyors

Opening comments from the Chair

The Chair said thank you and farewell to Rosalind Ugwu, Interim Head of the Barbican Estate Office and Jason Hayes, for his work on major projects. Two colleagues were retiring after 25 years of service; Anne Mason (Revenues Manager), who had steered the Committee through some very challenging times and Alan Bennetts, who had provided invaluable counsel in his role as the Estate's City Solicitor.

Dan Sanders, the new Head of the Barbican Estate was welcomed to his first meeting of the Barbican Residential Committee. Dan had also attended the Barbican Residents Consultation Committee (BRCC) on 25th March and shared his aspirations for making the Estate a thriving place to live, work and enjoy.

1. **APOLOGIES**

Apologies were received from Anne Corbett*, Deputy Madush Gupta, Frances Leach, Andrew McMurtrie*, Alderwoman Susan Pearson, Ruby Sayed, Paul Singh and Ceri Wilkins.

**Members joining remotely*

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

There were no declarations.

The Assistant Town Clerk reminded Barbican residents that, provided their Declarable Pecuniary Interests (DPIs) and Dispensations were up to date, then they need not make separate declarations at this point.

3. **MINUTES**

RESOLVED, that – the public minutes and non-public summary of the meeting held on 22nd January 2024 be approved.

4. **BARBICAN RESIDENTS CONSULTATION COMMITTEE (BRCC) MINUTES**

Members received the draft minutes of the BRCC held on 25th March 2024. The Chair of the BRCC, Sandra Jenner, was invited to set out the key points, as follows:

- a) The closing months of 2023 had seen a high degree of resident dissatisfaction but the new cohort of energetic, focussed officers was promoting confidence, as evidenced by the spirit of joint working at the last meeting of the BRCC.
- b) The BRCC are anticipating a productive discussion on deferred leaseholder payments.
- c) Whilst residents understand that asbestos is fine if undisturbed, energy companies are actively promoting smart meters. The new Assistant Director agreed that this needs a planned approach and robust communications, noting that some meter cupboards will need replacing as part of the new door sets.
- d) The 'Report of Action Taken' in respect of the budgets, which appeared later on the agenda, was noted and the 'root and branch' review of service charge budgets welcomed.
- e) The Service Level Agreement Working Party had reported difficulties following the Civica System upgrade, which were being resolved.
- f) There had been considerable major works activity, particularly in respect of water penetration. The BRCC had been encouraged to note that a diagnosis was being sought; beyond just treating the symptoms. The importance of good communications was stressed, particularly for those residents suffering water ingress to their flats.

- g) Redecorations continue to be problematic and the BRCC had noted an outstanding formal complaint. The Committee suggested a lessons learnt exercise.
- h) An outstanding issue with Brandon Mews Canopy, which appears later on the agenda, in respect of financial liability.

5. RESOLUTION FROM THE BRCC HELD ON 25TH MARCH 2024

At its last meeting on 25th March 2025, the Barbican Residents Consultation Committee (BRCC) received a report of the Executive Director, Community and Children's Services which provided an update on the operation, achievements and challenges for the Barbican Transformation Board.

In concluding the discussion it was proposed by Sandra Jenner (Chair of the BRCC), Seconded by Graham Wallace (Andrewes House Representative and past BRCC Chair) and RESOLVED, unanimously, that:

'The Barbican Residents' Consultation Committee propose that the term of office of the Chair of the Barbican Residential Committee (BRC) be extended by a year because the Barbican Residential Committee is at a critical stage in overseeing the Barbican Estate Office Transformation Programme and related projects, and that continuity of leadership on the Committee is crucial for the successful delivery of the recommendation by Independent Consultants, Altair.'

The above Motion was put to BRC Members for their consideration.

- a) The incumbent Chair, Mark Wheatley, was asked to leave the room so as to not fetter discussion but this made the meeting temporarily inquorate. Whilst the meeting was still quorate, the Town Clerk suggested that this part of the agenda should continue as an *'informal session'* with the live stream continuing. This would allow Members joining on-line to contribute to the discussion and the decision would be signed off under the urgency procedure. The Committee agreed with this approach and the Chair confirmed that he was happy for the discussion to be held in public.
- b) The Chair of the BRCC was then invited to speak on the Resolution and stressed residents' concerns in that the appointment of a new Chair, at such a crucial stage, could be detrimental to the work of the Transformation Board. The Town Clerk noted that the vast majority of BRC Members had joined the Committee within last 2 years and this too might have compromised succession planning.
- c) The Town Clerk then explained the governance process; i.e. - Standing Order 29(2) (Appointment of Committee Chairs) dictates that the Chairs of Grand Committees (of which the BRC is one) may only serve in the role for a maximum of three years. There are a few exceptions (Policy, Police,

Finance, Barbican Centre and City Bridge Foundation Chairmen) agreed by the Court of Common Council, based on service need and industry practice. The Deputy Town Clerk further explained that similar waivers (to Standing Order 29(2)) had been agreed for other Committees in similar circumstances, so there was precedence for such a request. Members noted that any decision taken on the Resolution would be subject to confirmation by the Policy and Resources Committee and the Court of Common Council. Members also noted that, should this be approved by the Court, they would be permitting the current Chair to stand for another year but the decision would not prevent another Member from standing in the usual manner.

d) The Members present and those joining on-line agreed with the Resolution and commended Mark Wheatley's Chairmanship over a very difficult period for the Committee and Barbican Estate Office. Those present in the room and online that supported the motion included:

- Deputy Anne Corbett (Deputy Chair of the BRC)
- Helen Fentimen
- Timothy McNally
- Steve Goodman
- Dawn Frampton
- John Foley
- Andrew McMurtrie

In concluding the discussion, Members noted that the Town Clerk, in consultation with Deputy Chair of the Barbican Residential Committee, and the Most Senior Member of the Committee, would be asked to agree the above Resolution (Under Urgency) and propose, to the Policy & Resources Committee and Court of Common Council, that Standing Order 29(2) be waived for the Barbican Residential Committee for the 2024/25 civic year, on the basis that the Barbican Residential Committee is at a critical stage in overseeing the Barbican Estate Office Transformation Programme and related projects, and that continuity of leadership on the Committee is crucial for the successful delivery of the recommendation by Independent Consultants, Altair.

6. **ACTIONS TRACKER**

The Committee received the actions tracker and noted the following updates since publication of the agenda:

- a) A challenge from the BRCC in respect of purchasing plans from Arup for the Barbican Highwalk, which officers had agreed to review.
- b) The City would be appointing PCMG to undertake the Energy Audit. The supplier had agreed to an initial meeting with the residents on Friday 12th April.
- c) A leaflet on Anti-Social Behaviour had been produced, specific to the Estate, in consultation with the Barbican Security Committee. The Security

Committee were thanked for their contribution and hard work in these matters.

- d) Tenders for agency staff contracts would not be subject to a BRC decision but the Estate Office would ensure appropriate communications, whilst noting the sensitivities.
- e) The last meeting of the Climate Action Team had suggested a briefing for Members across all Committees charged with housing matters. The Chair noted the residual recommendation from the Lisvane Governance Review in terms of the City of London Corporation having a separate Housing Committee.

7. **TRANSFORMATION BOARD**

The Committee received a report of the Executive Director, Community and Children's Services, which provided information about the operation, achievements and challenges for the Barbican Transformation Board.

The Executive Director accepted that some timescales had slipped but a number of workstreams and their actions were dependant on a successful recruitment campaign. Members noted that a new Assistant Director for Housing would be starting at the end of May 2023 and interviews were underway for a new Revenues Manager and a Head of Property Services

RESOLVED, that – the report be noted.

8. **REPORT OF ACTION TAKEN (BUDGET REPORTS)**

The Committee received a report of the Town Clerk, in respect of the following reports, which had been agreed under delegated authority by the Town Clerk, in consultation with the Chair and Deputy Chair of the BRC, since the last meeting of the Committee. Members noted that, as part of the consultation on the reports, they had been the subject of Special Meetings of both the BRCC and the BRC in January 2024.

(1) REVENUE AND CAPITAL BUDGETS - latest approved budget 2023/24 and original 2024/25 - excluding dwellings service charge income and expenditure

(2) SERVICE CHARGE EXPENDITURE AND INCOME ACCOUNT – latest approved budget 2023/24 and original budget 2024/25

The Assistant Director recognised the need for improvements to communications and language concerning the budget and gave assurance of the work underway in achieving this. Members noted the impact from some aspects of the Transformation Board's work and asked for these to be factored into the budget setting process as early as possible and for more clarity on 'best estimates'. The Executive Director also gave assurance of a more rigorous budget going forward, learning from the various audits and driving best value for money.

The Executive Director agreed to report back after the meeting about any potential leeway with TFL in respect of the railway line, given the issues below Brandon Mews.

RESOLVED, that – the report be noted.

9. **MAJOR WORKS**

The Committee received a report of the Executive Director, Community and Children's Services which updated the Committee on progress with Major Works on the Barbican Estate and issues affecting progress on individual schemes.

During the discussion, the following points were noted:

- a) FENSA accreditation is desirable but not necessary and does not affect warranties.
- b) Prolonged scaffolding will be avoided and used for consecutive jobs when timescales permit.
- c) Officers were following up on internal and external redecoration works, following comments at the last BRCC meeting.
- d) The longer-term aspirations for window repairs, with a schedule of rates and maintenance programme / inspection regime. The frequency of meetings would be reviewed as necessary.
- e) The Assistant Director agreed to follow up a query about lift faults, particularly at Shakespeare Tower, and report back to the Committee.
- f) There might be some 2000 cases of water penetration issues but some are repetitions. Officers need to assess the data and ensure that works resolve the issues in the long-term.
- g) The scale of issues across the City Corporation's housing stock is considerable; hence the need for more robust communications about timescales, impact and costs.

RESOLVED, that – the report be noted.

8. **WINDOW CLEANING CONTRACT (RE-TENDER)**

The Committee received a report of the Executive Director, Community and Children's Services which advised Members of the outcome of the process to select a new service provider for window cleaning across the Barbican Residential Estate. Members noted the intention to start the contract, subject to this Committee's approval, and a 35-day consultation period prior to issue of contract.

RESOLVED, that:

- 1) The window cleaning contract at the Barbican Estate be re-tendered.
- 2) Initial involvement with residents in selecting a new provider be facilitated by a Mobilisation Panel.

11. **LEASE ENFORCEMENT**

The Committee agreed to defer this report to the next meeting, pending further legal advice about the definition of 'vexatious' and 'nuisance' complaints.

DEFERRED.

12. **BRANDON MEWS CANOPY**

The Committee received a report of the Executive Director, Community and Children's Services which provided an update on officer investigations into the future financial responsibility for the replacement and maintenance of the canopy installed at Brandon Mews in 1987. Members noted that the canopy was installed due to structural defects causing significant leaks into leaseholder homes. The Assistant Director advised that the next iteration of the report would seek a decision on the points of debate raised by the House Group.

RESOLVED, that – the report be noted.

13. **BARBICAN POSTERN ROOF RENEWAL**

The Committee considered a Gateway 2 Project Report of the Executive Director, Community and Children's Services in respect of the Roof Renewal to The Postern and a garden balcony for No.2 Wallside, due to continual water leaks.

RESOLVED, that –

- 1) That budget of £24,000 be approved for reaching the next Gateway 3-4
- 2) The total estimated cost of the project at £230,000 (excluding risk) be noted.
- 3) The Costed Risk Provision of £105,000 be approved (to be drawn down via delegation to Chief Officer).

14. **ACCESS TO INFORMATION FOR BARBICAN WORKS**

The Committee considered a report of the Executive Director, Community and Children's Services which explained how the Barbican Estate Office (BEO) could share information with House Groups about repairs data. Whilst a decision on this matter falls within the Officer Scheme of Delegation, the BEO had produced a public Committee Report to enable all parties to be aware of the discussions and options available.

RESOLVED, that – Option 1 be favoured but Members asked for more information in respect of the resource implications for Option 2.

15. **VERBAL UPDATES**

The Committee received the following updates:

a) Barbican Salvage

Members noted that this is a resident volunteer group which curates original fixtures and fittings following refurbishments. They are running low on stock and officers have been assisting the group in sourcing new artefacts.

b) Blake Tower

Members noted the improvement notice issued (to Redrow) by the City of London Corporation in December 2023. The Chair of the Policy and Resources (CPR) had written to the Minister and received a positive response.

c) Car Parking/Police Storage

The Police's requirements would be scoped and reported to residents.

d) Playgrounds

A playground had been closed during a recent survey but since re-opened. All playgrounds had been inspected and some low-level repairs undertaken.

16. CITY OF LONDON ANTI-SOCIAL BEHAVIOUR POLICY

The Committee received a report of the Executive Director, Community and Children's Services which presented the City of London Corporation's Anti-Social Behaviour Policy. Members noted that the report had been approved by the Community and Children's Services Committee and was being presented to the BRC for information. The Executive Director agreed to emphasise the needs of those who are vulnerable and/or victims, when the report is presented to the Policy and Resources Committee.

RESOLVED, that – the report be noted.

17. SALES AND LETTINGS

The Committee received a report of the Executive Director, Community and Children's Services, which advised Members of sales and lettings been approved by officers since the last meeting. The report also provided information on surrenders of tenancies received and the number of flat sales to date

RESOLVED, that – the report be noted.

18. ARREARS

The Committee received a report of the Executive Director, Community and Children's Services, which advised Members of tenant and leaseholder arrears on the Barbican Estate.

RESOLVED, that – the report be noted.

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

A Member asked about poor communications concerning the installation of a generator in Silk Street and its impact on residents. Whilst it would no longer run during the night, and operate with a vegetable based fuel, concern was expressed at this having been permitted in the first instance. The Assistant Director advised that there had been an update in the Residents' Bulletin last week. An investigation was underway in respect of the original approval and future use and the Assistant Director agreed to report back after the meeting.

20. **ANY OTHER BUSINESS THAT THE CHAIRMAN CONSIDERS URGENT**

The Committee noted the following:

- a) A report to the next meeting of the Policy and Resources Committee (P&R) about a Resolution passed last year by the Barbican Residential Committee in respect of a more joined up approach for the Barbican Estate. The Executive Director advised that P&R on 11th April 2024 would be asked to consider an enhancement to the Barbican Area Advisory Committee, which would seek to improve resident engagement and avoid duplications with other workstreams.
- b) The Chair asked about the memorials columbarium in St Giles Church, which is in need of refurbishment. The City Solicitor advised that the Lease granted by the City of London Corporation states that the Church is responsible for repair and maintenance. The Church had approached the City Corporation for a grant in the past for waterproofing and the Chair suggested that they be invited to approach the City again for assistance in this matter.

21. **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 item(s) on the grounds that they involve the likely disclosure of exempt information as defined in Part 1 of the Schedule 12A of the Local Government Act

Item no (s)	Para no (s)
22 - 24	1, 2 & 3

22. **NON-PUBLIC MINUTES**

RESOLVED, that – the non-public minutes of the meeting held on 22nd January 2024 be approved.

23. **ARREARS**

The Committee received a non-public appendix in respect of agenda item 18. The Revenues Manager agreed to share the bad debt provision with Members after the meeting.

24. **RESIDENTIAL RENT REVIEW**

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

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

There was one question whilst the public were excluded.

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

There were no items whilst the public were excluded.

The meeting ended at 3.30 pm

Chairman

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