

Working Party Updates

Residents Consultation Committee 10 June 2019

Gardens Advisory Group

Report to RCC from GAG meeting held 21st May 2019

Members of GAG started the May meeting with a walk around the gardens in bright sunshine, some were even hardy enough to wear summer frocks.

Residents are to be asked if they support a ring fenced increase on their management charge to pay for improvements to the estate's private gardens. And if so, how much? It was decided that, with the RCC's approval, the BEO should add the question to its annual survey of residents which takes place in late June. The need to consult residents was suggested by RCC chair Christopher Makin, attending as an observer.

A discussion followed on whether including participation in long term Strategic Aims for the gardens in the Terms of Reference for GAG (sent to RCC in 2017) was still relevant, bearing in mind the lack of resources available to undertake the creation of an overall Strategic Aims document.

It was agreed that smaller, specific aspects like grass maintenance and protecting the trees were achievable as smaller, stand-alone strategic aims, until the financial situation improves. A comprehensive Strategic Aims document for the gardens remains an aspirational long term project and will therefore still be maintained within GAG's Terms of Reference.

The estate walk around revealed the cut down box plants in Speed Gardens are being monitored for any further caterpillar infestation ... A newly planted but very badly pruned mimosa in Thomas More Gardens (the replacement for the tree cut down in 2018) is to be replaced by a smaller, unpruned, tree which will very quickly establish and grow to form a naturally shaped tree.... There was some concern over shrubs/trees creeping over the grass in front of Brandon Mews. Agreed that pruning to bring them back from the lawn edge should take place in the autumn. ... Two holly trees too close to the palms in front of Speed House to be relocated next winter.

Mark Mallandine has resigned from GAG due to work commitments:

Jim Durcan, Chair of Friends of City Gardens, is to be invited to replace him. Natalie Robinson has also resigned: RCC are invited to nominate a new representative on GAG. The new members will attend as observers until the next time that the GAG membership list is submitted to RCC for approval.

Next meeting of GAG: 9.30am 15th August.

Leaseholders Service Charge Working Party

Report to RCC June 2019

Members

Anne Mason - Chair (BEO), Michael Bennett (BEO), Helen Davinson (BEO), Jim Davies, Helen Wilkinson, Jane Northcote, Phillip Burgess, David Lawrence, David Graves, Adam Hogg, Nadia Bouzidi (Dave Taylor)

Meeting - 21 May 2019

Update on working party activity

Following the recent presentation to the BA AGM it was considered a suitable time to consider the position of the working party regarding the key objective of assessing Value for Money.

The group agreed that the three major categories of expense are Staff costs, Repairs / Maintenance and Electricity, principally underfloor heating.

Staff Costs

The key drivers of staff costs are the level of services provided and the price for those services.

Since the price of the services is set by Local Government whether staff grading, rate per hour, pensions or National Insurance there is little opportunity to control these factors.

An exception to this is staffing arrangements for sickness / holiday cover where options are already being discussed but potential savings require further examination within the BEO, and are relatively small.

Since the working party has no mandate to consider altering service levels this option has not been examined. However it is worth noting that service levels have been changed from time to time to reflect local conditions e.g. additional cleaning at weekends.

Overall it was noted that staff costs can be a significant factor, with costs rising above inflation. In previous years there have, for example, been adjustments to pension costs as employer contributions have risen from 17% of salaries to 21%; the introduction of auto enrolment for pension schemes; or changes to holiday entitlements. This year cleaning staff grades have been changed with the elimination of the lowest grade and the introduction of a new higher grade.

Repairs and Maintenance

With regard to repairs and maintenance there are again two principal factors involved being the costs of provision and the degree of repairs or maintenance activity required.

In this area there is increased use of tendering to establish fixed prices for repairs and a member of the working party has been involved in the tendering process for general repairs. This was considered to follow standard Local Authority practice.

The BEO review, in more detail, 15% of the work charged to general repairs and for larger repair projects a clerk of works is used to monitor the project.

However, it was noted that several instances have occurred where individuals had queried work undertaken.

Two issues were therefore raised which need further consideration.

1 The primary source of feedback to the BEO on the satisfactory completion of work is by the return of a questionnaire sent to residents when the original request for repair is acknowledged and the work is set in train. However responses in this process are very low. This may be because the time gap between the resident receiving the questionnaire and the eventual work taking place can be several weeks. The group therefore felt that the feedback process and the level of understanding of this process by the resident, including that the block will be charged through the service charge for work requested, could be improved. An improved process could build greater resident awareness and satisfaction regarding costs as well as greater trust that the BEO was exerting control over costs.

2 In addition it is not clear that there are sufficient visible controls over the monitoring of repairs and the RCC was asked to consider whether this was an area where the Service Level Agreement group could provide a more satisfactory answer about the monitoring of repairs and whether an appropriate KPI existed in this area. Such a KPI would help build trust between leaseholders and the BEO that monitoring is visible and reported.

ACTION RCC

Underfloor heating

Whilst it was agreed that this area was being addressed by another working party, the RCC may wish to consider whether the opportunities to deliver cost savings from an approach to load shedding should be raised with the BRC and other local councillors as these are potentially so significant.

ACTION RCC

Comparison of Service Charges between 2017/18 actual and 2019/20 estimates

The working party reviewed the comparisons between 2017/18 actuals, the last reported full year figures and estimates for 2019/20.

The overall increase in annually recurring items between the two years is 6.15%.

Larger increases were seen as follows

Electricity	15% over 2 years	Cost from providers
Furniture / fittings	45%	Block specific replacement of lobby carpets etc., but total costs at £42,000 is very small
Estate cleaners	13%	Changes in staff grading

Supervision	12%	Introduction of additional survey time to assess residents flat changes for fire safety
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Reductions are seen in the following areas

Lift maintenance	(3%) over 2 years	Very high costs in 2017/18. Overall less than 3% annually since 2013/14
Cleaning equipment	(38%)	Insignificant circa £10,000
Weekend cleaning	(27%)	Changes to full time staff with Saturday overtime now used and cheaper
Garden maintenance	(2%)	2017/18 a high figure. Overall just over 3% annually since 2013/14
House Officers	(10%)	More time allocated to management

Other work

The working party continues to look at comparisons to other estates service charges as well as awaiting answers from procurement in respect of value for money.

Asset Maintenance

A meeting took place on 8th May and minutes are attached

Asset Maintenance Working Party Meeting 8th May 2019, 6:00PM Lilac Room, Barbican Estate

Attendee	Organisation
Mike Saunders	Chair - CoL Housing Property Services
Shaunna McFarlane	CoL Housing Property Services
David Downing	CoL Housing Property Services
Ted Reilly	Resident
Paula Ridley	Resident
Christopher Makin	Resident
Fiona Lean	Resident

Apologies: Michael Bennett, Randall Anderson, Mike Greensmith, Graham Wallace

Minutes

Item	Key discussion & action points	Who
1/2	<p>Introductions/Review of Minutes from Preceding Meeting:</p> <p>Introductions were done around the table and members welcome Paula Ridley from Thomas Moore House as a new member.</p> <p><u>Garchey review</u> It is confirmed this discussion will be picked up later in the year.</p> <p><u>Beech Gardens Phase II</u> We are looking to use off street parking reserves funding for this project. Consultants and architects are currently looking at the scope of works. It is confirmed project will be managed in house by Property Services.</p>	
3	<p>Conditions Survey Update:</p> <p>A fusion 21 framework route will now be used, this went out to Tender last week and will be live for the next 2 weeks.</p> <p>It is confirmed that Savilles do have access to this route and are the preferred contractors as we have used them in the past.</p>	

Item	Key discussion & action points	Who
4	<p>Repairs & Maintenance Contract:</p> <p>The contract start date was April 1st.</p> <p>We have had a few prestart meetings with the contractors and resident reps which was positively received.</p> <p>Follow up meetings have been booked in, (next 1 booked for July) these meetings will focus on KPI's, resident reps have been invited to attend.</p> <p>It is confirmed that we have a reactive repairs team who raise orders and that they are able to request 'recalls' on jobs that are believed to have not been done properly.</p>	
5	<p>Tower Block Lift Maintenance:</p> <p>Butler & Young now have an active order from us and are carrying out surveys on the lifts.</p> <p>Once done we will be able to identify any needed maintenance works or replacements.</p>	
6	<p>Fire Safety/Fire Risk Assessment</p> <p>The fire door samples that were sent from Thomas Moore and Shakespeare have now come back.</p> <p>Issues have been raised around the glazing and the letter boxes which were found to be letting in smoke.</p> <p>We are currently trying to obtain a door sample from Breton, the VOID flat in which we were hoping to use has recently been sold, so we are now in discussions with the new leaseholder.</p> <p>The next stage of Fire Risk Assessments has gone out to Tender, the contract will be more intrusive and will focus on signage and compartmentation.</p> <p>Update will be given at next RCC.</p>	
7	<p>Barbican Redecorations 2020/25:</p> <p>5-year contract was approved.</p>	

Item	Key discussion & action points	Who
	S20 Consultation is due to start imminently, during this period leaseholders can nominate contractors.	
8	<p data-bbox="328 353 395 387">AOB:</p> <p data-bbox="328 434 587 468"><u>Underfloor Heating</u></p> <p data-bbox="328 472 1233 544">Discussions were brought to the AGM and residents were asked the below questions.</p> <ol data-bbox="376 548 1283 779" style="list-style-type: none"> <li data-bbox="376 548 1283 586">1. How do you feel about the seasonal shift switching to Oct/May? <li data-bbox="376 627 1090 665">2. Would you like to spend more money on heating? <li data-bbox="376 705 1236 779">3. Do you want to extend the Terms of Reference for the WP to look at energy efficiency? i.e. carbon footprint <p data-bbox="328 824 1198 936">It is noted that the only issue would be spending more money, residents are happy to look at options that fall within the current budget.</p> <p data-bbox="328 981 679 1014"><u>Working Party Action Plan</u></p> <p data-bbox="328 1019 1279 1090">MS advised that the layout of the Action Plan may change, changes will come back to the WP for review.</p> <p data-bbox="328 1095 1240 1167">CM advises that he is happy for a new layout if we keep the detailed history information from previous meetings.</p> <p data-bbox="328 1211 595 1245"><u>Estate Maintenance</u></p> <p data-bbox="328 1249 1291 1402">TR advises he will be compiling a report to RCC regarding the rising issue of general maintenance works across the whole estate and getting funding. MS advises we are happy to provide any technical data needed.</p> <p data-bbox="328 1447 1286 1599">CM also advises that members of the RCC wish to investigate the lease more' regarding 'improvements' and works across the estate the lease does not provide a lot of room for things to be approved. Report to also go to RCC.</p> <p data-bbox="328 1644 1265 1796">An issue was raised by Mike Greensmith in regard to film crews on Level 5 Ben Jonson, it is noted that this issue will be passed to the SLA working party; however since the party just met and the next meeting is next quarter a written question will go to the RCC for discussion.</p> <p data-bbox="328 1841 1256 1912">It is confirmed that nay fire safety issues with regards to residents blocking hallways should be raised with the relevant housing officers.</p> <p data-bbox="328 1957 523 1991"><u>New members</u></p>	

Item	Key discussion & action points	Who
	<p data-bbox="328 237 1273 309">Rob Barker has now stepped down from the working party invite to go to RCC for any resident volunteers.</p> <p data-bbox="328 394 584 430"><u>Next meeting date:</u></p> <p data-bbox="328 472 683 508">Wednesday 4th September</p>	

Electric Vehicle Charging

The BRC approved the following at its meeting in March (with updates in italics as of 17 May):

1. The EV Charging users' quarterly charge of £25 cease when individual charging is implemented on 1st April 2019 and, from this point forward, EV Charging users would pay only for the electricity they use. *This commenced for the current 19 users with the exception of 4 users in Breton car Park (see below).*
2. With effect from 1st April 2019, EV Charging users be directly billed per kWh of electricity at 25p/kW (14p/kW domestic rate + 11p management levy/kW). *As above.*
3. All EV Charging users be assigned a dedicated EV bay, in line with the Car Parking Licence. *This is current practice.*
4. Officers progress the additional LEN funding of £17,000 to provide Breton House car park with charging facilities and connections via Smart Technology. *These works were completed in May and EV users in Breton Car Park are now charged for the electricity they use.*
5. Officers continue to update the Electrical Vehicle Working Party (EVWP), which will carry out a review in respect of usage and the pricing structure and report back to the BRC in September 2019. *A report is included in the agenda plan for September.*