

To RCC members
From: resident members of LSCWP

LSCWP Report

Background

The last six months have seen extensive work undertaken at all levels with the BEO and DCCS Officers, as well as Councillors, on issues of costs, value for money and accountability in relation to the Service Charge and Car Park Concierges.

The original objective was “*to identify efficiencies that will not reduce service but should provide some offset against additional costs we are asked to pay by the City Corporation to maintain our current concierge/CPA service*”. Frequently referred to as “opportunities for quick wins”.

As we approached the end of March we agreed that we needed a major checkpoint not only because we were reaching the end of the financial year but also because residents should be informed of progress. We therefore reported back to the instigators of this piece of work, the BA/RCC Chairs and Vice Chairs. We noted that there were no quick wins although there appeared to be significant savings opportunities without any reduction in services which have been raised with officers and need further follow up. These will be discussed at the RCC meeting.

We also noted that there were a number of other points for follow up, including alternative options for the operation of the Car Parks, although these may be better reviewed by other working parties with a remit for service delivery.

It is important to note that from the start we envisaged that any savings delivered through the Service Charge account should be a suitable offset for any increased Car Park charges to maintain the level of service in the Car parks.

Whilst this work on costs was undertaken there were numerous discussions on the issue of accountability. This issue is well documented in previous LSCWP reports but marks the distinction between the City’s requirement and focus on the full recovery of costs incurred in the Service Charge account and the Leaseholders requirement to have fuller engagement on the costs incurred within the Service Charge with particular regard to value for money.

It is therefore pleasing to note that following our input, the revised Job Description for the new Head of the Barbican Estate now includes the following within the main duties and responsibilities

- Provide strategic direction and pro-active leadership to managers and front-line staff of the Barbican Residential Estate Office, having accountability and responsibility for all services (and associated budgets) to leaseholders and tenants (including commercial tenants).

We would expect this to be part of a review the interim Head of the Barbican Estate will be undertaking on the operation of the BEO.

David Lawrence