

BARBICAN ESTATE RESIDENTS CONSULTATION COMMITTEE
Monday, 4 September 2023

Minutes of the meeting of the Barbican Estate Residents Consultation Committee
held at Committee Rooms, 2nd Floor, West Wing, Guildhall on Monday, 4
September 2023 at 6.30 pm

Present

Members:

Sandra Jenner - Defoe House (Chair)	Rodney Jagelman - Thomas More House
Jim Durcan - Andrewes House (Deputy Chair)	Andrew Tong - Brandon Mews
Christopher Makin (Alderman) (Deputy Chair)	Claire Hersey - Lambert Jones Mews
Gordon Griffiths - Bunyan Court	Helen Hudson - Defoe House
Jane Smith - Seddon House	Dave Taylor - Gilbert House
Mary Bonar – Wallside	Petre Reid - Willoughby House
David Lawrence - Lauderdale Tower	Miranda Quinney - John Trundle House
Adam Hogg - Chairman of the Barbican Association	Graham Wallace - Andrewes House
	Alan Budgen - Cromwell Tower

Officers:

Emma Bushell	- City Surveyor's Dept.
Helen Davinson	- Community and Children's Dept.
Judith Finlay	- Community and Children's Dept.
Michael Gwyther-Jones	- Community and Children's Dept.
Jason Hayes	- Community and Children's Dept.
Anne Mason	- Community and Children's Dept.
Paul Murtagh	- Community and Children's Dept.
Anne Mason	- Community and Children's Dept.
Matthew Stickley	- Town Clerk' Dept.

1. **APOLOGIES**

Prior to the consideration of the items listed on the agenda, the Chair remarked on the recent death of Mark Bostock, Common Councillor since 2017 and Deputy since 2022, and invited the committee to mark a moment's silence in his memory.

Apologies for absence were received from Monique Long, Sandy Wilson, Andy Hope, and Fiona Lean, for whom Anne Toovey, Ted Reilly, Fred Rodgers, and Stephen Chapman substituted respectively.

Apologies for absence were also received from John Taysum.

Jenny Nesbit attended the meeting online as the representative of Frobisher Crescent.

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

There were no declarations of interest.

3. **MINUTES**

The committee welcomed feedback that the first meeting of the Car Park Working Group had been productive and had a clear sense of purpose. It was noted that the working group was not a decision-making body but that proposals on car parking arrangements would be brought to the Barbican Estate Residents Consultation Committee and ultimately the Barbican Residential Committee in due course.

In response to a question related to an item discussed at the August meeting of the committee, officers agreed that a summary of the roles and responsibilities of resident engineers would be shared with the committee following the meeting.

RESOLVED: To agree the minutes of the Barbican Estate Residents Consultation Committee meeting held on 5 June 2023.

4. **ACTION TRACKER**

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

The Chair agreed to meet with officers to review the outstanding actions and determine their prioritisation, and the methods through which outstanding actions were reported to the committee and seen through to completion.

5. **2022-23 ELECTRICITY UPDATE**

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

The committee noted that the City of London Corporation had agreed to commission and pay for an audit to be undertaken by external consultants regarding the reconciliation of the two years where usage energy charges had been inaccurate, and to ensure that these issues had been remedied. The committee noted that a positive meeting between officers and residents had taken place on the morning of 4 September to discuss all aspects of the commissioning of the energy audit. It was agreed that the two resident nominees would be involved in all phases of the audit.

RESOLVED: To note the report.

6. **2022-23 REVENUE OUTTURN FOR DWELLINGS SERVICE CHARGE ACCOUNT**

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

In response to questions, officers agreed that future reports could be presented in the format used for service charge reports and that the report in question could be shared with the committee outside following the meeting in this style. Officers agreed to share a table of variances following the meeting.

The committee noted that an independent audit was to be commissioned of service charges, paid for by the City of London Corporation, and that two residents had been nominated to be involved in the commissioning and ongoing reporting of the audit.

Residents reported that their own surveying of other residents within Ben Jonson House suggested that there were approximately 70% of dwellings which had reported water ingress issues with a number of these issues continuing. Officers agreed to meet with residents of Ben Jonson House to discuss the matter further.

It was further noted that balcony repairs were a significant element of the repairs spend and it was confirmed that a survey was being commissioned to determine the extent of the problem with a view to undertaking such work on a programmatic basis to achieve economies of scale and other associated benefits.

RESOLVED: To note the report.

7. **BARBICAN ESTATE WINDOW REPAIRS/REPLACEMENT REPORT**

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

The committee noted that a weblink which would provide access to the completed surveys would be provided in the coming weeks.

The committee expressed its frustration at the delay in effecting a programme of work to achieve economies of scale and associated other benefits. The committee expressed frustration that the work was originally committed to in June 2021 and that the report made no mention of this.

RESOLVED: To note the report.

8. **2022-23 REVENUE OUTTURN (EXCLUDING THE RESIDENTIAL CHARGES ACCOUNT)**

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

RESOLVED: To note the report.

9. **BARBICAN ESTATE REDECORATION PROGRAMME 2020-25**

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

The committee discussed the data within the report and discussed how and when redecorations were logged as completed. It was noted that Gilbert House and Willoughby House had logged formal complaints with the City of London Corporation regarding the quality and poor management of the works and it was understood that another House had made an application to the First-tier Tribunal. The committee discussed the delay between works being completed and inspections being undertaken. The committee considered that the report, as written, had presented a more positive overview of the programme than it warranted and asked officers to be more candid in future.

In response to questions, officers agreed to share a breakdown of the costs per block of the programme following the meeting. The committee discussed the need for a cyclical works programme to ensure the estate remained well maintained. In response to questions, officers confirmed that in remedying the works the priority for the Corporation would be for the contractor to remedy works at their own costs and that a report on the possibilities for payment for said works could be brought to the next meeting of the committee. It was clarified by officers that where issues were identified with the quality of works that the costs of corrections would not be borne by residents.

RESOLVED: To note the report.

10. **BARBICAN ESTATE MAJOR WORKS FIVE-YEAR ASSET MANAGEMENT PROGRAMME**

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

The committee expressed disappointment that a series of outstanding questions and comments from the Asset Maintenance Working Party had not been answered nor referred to in the report as presented. The questions and comments were tabled by the Chair, to which officers agreed to provide written responses following the meeting:

Process and management approach

1. Greater detail is required on the City's proposed approach to managing this programme of potential works, including:
2. Who will be responsible for delivery? Is the intention to recruit a programme director? And if not, why not?
3. What is the proposed governance structure? We presume there would be a programme board, including key stakeholders and resident representatives.
4. What is the intended programme and project reporting cycle and approach?
5. Who is the programme sponsor?
6. What project and programme management methodology will be applied? E.g. Prince2, MSP.
7. What is the proposed approach to ensuring lessons are captured, learn, and applied through the programme and through phases from one block to the next?
8. What other specialist project and programme resource requirements have been identified?
9. Has a gap analysis been carried out to identify what capabilities are present within the City's current resources and what additional resources will need to be brought in?
10. What is the proposed project gate approach? We note reference to the City's gateway process but understand this is primarily financial, rather than a project governance methodology.
11. We note the City's gateway process is currently under review. When is this review expected to complete and when will updated processes be shared?
12. Can details of the current process that applies in the meantime be shared?
13. Has engagement has been carried out with the Arts Centre to understand any lessons from their renewal works?
14. Section 13 notes recruitment challenges. How does the City propose to address these and ensure that the right resources are in place to manage this programme effectively?
15. Please provide a diagram showing proposed governance and team structures.

Finance

1. At all points it should be made clear what year figures were calculated as well as whether or not inflation adjustment has been applied.
2. Section 5 includes £4.3m for lifts. Does this include allowance for standardisation of components and reuse of work already carried out on the Tower Lifts? If not, why not?

3. The figures include no allowance for professional fees and project costs. Can the City update the figures to provide an estimate for this?
4. What is the proposed approach to managing financial risk, particularly in light of rising construction costs?
5. Section 9 states that there are areas where the City has high confidence in the costs presented and other areas where confidence is lower. While examples are given, we would like a full list of areas of scope, categorised or RAG'd (red / amber / green) by confidence.
6. Section 11 notes the estate's listed status is expected to impact on estimates. Has this been accounted for in the figures presented? If not, why not?

Scope

1. The report makes repeated reference to like for like replacement, e.g. section 10 which states that modernisation isn't accounted for in costs. This seems unlikely to apply universally, i.e. it is hard to believe that Savills costed like for like replacement of 50 year old electrical equipment rather than modern equivalents. What will the approach be to modernisation in the following scenarios and has this been accounted for:
 - a. Situations (potentially electrics) where modernisation is legally required.
 - b. Situations where modernisation is cheaper due to the age of items in scope for replacement and the extent to which industry and best practice have moved on.
 - c. Situations where modernisation is desirable to address the climate crisis, e.g. single vs double glazing.
2. Underfloor heating is excluded (section 17). While we agree the current system is largely maintainable there are isolated instances where this is not the case. As with the windows, the City needs to have an adequate strategy for addressing such edge cases which can scale if more widespread renewal becomes necessary. (i.e. not repeating the approach that has been used to manage the windows issues.)

Other

1. Section 3 notes that there has been consultation with the AMWP. While there is some truth to this and we have been discussing and giving feedback on the outline plan for years 1-5, the report was presented to the working party but feedback given was not incorporated which is extremely disappointing. Consultation should be meaningful and reports should be shared with the working party far enough in advance of finalisation to ensure feedback is can properly be addressed.
2. What are the proposed next steps? The Barbican Residential Estate Consultation Committee is merely asked to note the report.

A motion was moved by the Chair, Sandra Jenner, and seconded by Graham Wallace, requesting that further information be provided regarding the governance, finance, and scope of the programme of works. This was put to the committee and agreed.

It was agreed that the committee would provide nominees to the programme stakeholder board following the meeting.

In response to a question, officers confirmed that the City Surveyor's Department was investigating whether reinforced autoclaved aerated concrete had been used in the construction of the Barbican Estate and that a report on the matter would be brought to the next meeting of the committee.

RESOLVED:

The Barbican Residential Estate Consultation Committee is concerned that there are many outstanding comments and questions still to be answered about the Major Works Five-Year Asset Management Programme before work should begin. These are to be included in the minutes of the Barbican Residential Estate Consultation Committee meeting of 4th September 2023.

The immediate concern is the appropriate governance of such a high cost, complex and inherently risky programme which requires resource with the capability and capacity to deliver the programme successfully.

The Barbican Residential Estate Consultation Committee is therefore calling for preliminary work to be undertaken, involving resident nominees, to establish a formal Programme Board of stakeholders; terms of reference; authority framework, programme/project management methodology etc, taking expert advice as necessary, before any other work on the programme begins.

11. BRANDON MEWS CANOPY

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

The committee noted the work undertaken to check City of London Corporation records and that 24 leases were in the process of being checked for canopy clauses. The committee discussed what commitment, if any, the Corporation had given regarding the ongoing maintenance of the canopy roof and noted that the legal advice of the Corporation's Comptroller and City Solicitor's Department was being sought to inform interpretation of the information found thus far. It was noted that a range of leases were in place across the residential estate.

12. BLAKE TOWER UPDATE

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

The committee noted that a meeting with the Town Clerk and Chief Executive was scheduled for the end of September 2023 and that the matter would be reported back to the committee in due course.

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

There were no questions.

14. ANY OTHER BUSINESS THAT THE CHAIRMAN CONSIDERS URGENT

The Chair advised the committee that she had accepted several items of urgent business.

Barbican Estate Transformation Programme and Action Plan

Officers advised the committee that the action plan was being delivered in accordance with its timeline and that the recruitment of a permanent Head of Barbican Estate Office was likely to take place in November 2023. It was noted that the recruitment to this role had been agreed and that agreement on an increased salary was expected in the coming days.

Breach of Lease Protocol (Verbal)

The committee noted that proposals to amend the lease protocol with respect of the carpeting of floors and keeping of animals would be brought to a future meeting of the committee.

Repairs and Maintenance Procurement Update (Verbal)

The committee expressed its dissatisfaction that the complex briefing had not been provided in a written report for the meeting, to which officers responded by confirming that a written summary of the matter would be provided following the meeting and that it was proposed to extend a contract with a supplier which residents were dissatisfied with because officers had not initiated the procurement early enough. It was further agreed that a timeline for the procurement would be provided to the next meeting of the committee.

The committee discussed the financial impact of outsourcing repairs and maintenance as compared to this service being provided in-house and noted that it was likely that any affected staff would be subject to the Transfer of Undertakings (Protection of Employment) Regulations 2006.

Underfloor Heating Working Party

A motion was moved by Ted Reilly and seconded by Adam Hogg requesting that further information be provided regarding the governance, finance, and scope of the programme of works. This was put to the committee and agreed.

RESOLVED:

1. The Barbican Estate Residential Consultation Committee strongly supports the Underfloor Heating Working Party in its efforts to establish a trial of individual Controls for our heating system. Plans are well developed for a trial for 14 homes on Wallside (the smallest individually metered group of homes on the estate) including the design of the control and metering system, and a suitable legal framework within which this trial will operate. If the current study indicates that individual system is feasible, the City's Climate Action team will be approached for financial support. There will be no cost to leaseholders or Wallside freeholders.
2. The Barbican Estate Residential Consultation Committee asks the Barbican Residential Committee to support this initiative.

The meeting ended at 20:30.

Chairman

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