

## **Report of the Service Level Agreement Working Party to the Residents Consultation Committee for its meeting on 27 November 2023**

This working party met on Nov 9<sup>th</sup>. It was a well attended and lively meeting which considered a wide range of issues. Those present included Tony Swanson, Andrew Tong, Jane Smith, Juliet McNamara (Carey), Jim Durcan, Rosalind Ugwu, Helen Davinson, Robbie Eunson, Ella Ashton, Luke Barton and Steven Johnson.

**1. KPIs:** a spreadsheet containing KPI data was circulated in advance.

Civica: concern was expressed that after 7 quarters and escalation the Civica software was still not producing reliable and consistent data in relation to a range of KPIs. Officers stated that Pam Wharfe (interim replacement for Paul Murtagh) was in the process of bringing in a consultant who is familiar with the software and with the Civica organisation. This was welcomed by the Working Party (WP) which has previously emphasised the need for resolution of these issues or replacement of the Civica software.

Complaints: it was observed that the number of complaints is increasing, that fewer are receiving responses within the 10 working day target and that fewer are being resolved at the first stage of the complaints procedure. Officers acknowledged the validity of these observations and drew attention to the increasing number of difficult to resolve complaints about repairs. The WP will continue to closely monitor this situation.

Barbican Estate Bulletin: KPI data showed that the number of Bulletin subscribers continues to rise. The Bulletin is sent out to 2085 subscribers every week. The extent of this degree of coverage was warmly welcomed by the WP. Questions were raised as to whether the circulation list was restricted to leaseholders and residents and as to how many of the emails are opened by recipients. Officers agreed to provide more information on these matters. They also agreed to consider a suggestion that Barbican Life be asked to carry a piece encouraging more leaseholders/residents to sign up to the Bulletin.

Lifts: KPI data on lift availability was the subject of an extended discussion. Expressing availability across a number of lifts over a quarter may mask serious problems with individual lifts. Concern was also expressed about waiting times for lifts in tower blocks at peak periods. It was agreed to distinguish between corridor and staircase blocks in future reporting and to give consideration to reporting when individual lifts are out of action for extended periods. This latter issue will be discussed further before any action is taken. It was recognised that the lift refurbishment programme for the towers is being planned which should improve their availability and service.

Cleaning: joint inspections with House Group representatives showed a welcome and significant improvement in Quarter 2. Work is on-going to adapt the iSafety software to better reflect the situation in the smaller blocks e.g. Lambert Jones Mews. Moving staff from agency status to employment is proceeding.

Repairs: the introduction of comparative data showing repairs in Quarter 2 of the current year and Quarter 2 of the previous year was welcomed but concern was expressed that the WP is still struggling to identify trends over time or meaningful differences between blocks. It was accepted that there are limits to the amount of data that can be provided. Officers suggested that analysis of the data would be part of the role of the new Contracts

Manager who could present the results of their analysis to the WP making it easier to identify the underlying issues.

In response to a query officers explained that, where repair costs are borne by individual flats rather than the block, this is shown as Recharges.

No repairs data was shown for Lambert Jones or Wallside in the most recent quarter because no repair orders had been raised.

The prohibition on 'hot works' by the Corporation for H&S reasons has resulted in some 20 repairs being delayed. A trial of the effectiveness of 'cold work' is being conducted. If that is successful then it is hoped that the backlog of cases will be resolved rapidly.

Water penetration covers a number of different issues – balcony leaks, ingress beside windows, roofs and corroded cast iron down pipes. The WP was assured that the review of balconies was proceeding with the aim of establishing a programme of works rather than one-off repairs.

## **2. Terms of References**

The WP agreed to defer consideration of its terms of reference until its next meeting.

## **3. 24 Hour Cover following staff resignations**

Officers reported that the Resident Engineers' Manager and one of the Resident Engineers had resigned. Given that the team of four resident engineers, including the manager, have been responsible for providing 24 hour emergency cover that is a serious loss.

Emergencies include a whole range of issues e.g. lift trappings, water leaks, lighting failures inside blocks, keys breaking off in locks etc. The KPI data showed that, over the last two quarters, an average of nearly 60 out of hours incidents were reported each month. Not all of those incidents are necessarily emergencies that required immediate intervention but they did require consideration and appraisal by experienced personnel.

Officers stated that the two remaining resident engineers had agreed, as a short term measure, to provide 24 cover between them but such an arrangement is not sustainable. Interviews are to be held next week for an interim resident engineer manager although it is not clear that acceptable candidates are prepared to provide 24 hour cover.

The WP expressed grave concern about the current situation and its potential to adversely impact service provision. Officers stated that using call out services was not an option because of unacceptably long response times. Discussions between the BEO and Property Services (resident engineers reporting lines are through Property Services although they work exclusively on the Barbican) to resolve this situation are on-going.

## **4. Elevator Service Arrangements**

The WP's attention was drawn to a recent incident when a lift in Thomas House House was out of action from Friday until Monday. Given that THM is a staircase block this raised concerns about those residents unable to use the stairs e.g. those with mobility issues or

buggies etc. Normal practice in such cases is for the CPAs to post notices explaining the situation and offering support to residents in need. In this instance the problem coincided with a shift change-over by CPAs which, unfortunately, resulted in the appropriate notices not being posted.

The contract with the lift service company provides for two engineers and an assistant to be available during normal working hours. Outside of normal hours engineers are expected to attend within an hour if anyone is trapped and within four hours otherwise. In the TMH case the engineers did attend on Friday. They attended again on Saturday but were unable to resolve the problem because of the lack of a suitable part. When they returned on Monday with the needed part the problem was resolved. Some spare parts are held in stock but, in this instance, the part needed was not held.

## **5. Window Cleaning Contract**

The WP requested an update on the Window Cleaning Contract. Officers explained that the contracting process had been delayed by mistakes with the original Section 20 notifications. Those mistakes have now been rectified and it is expected that 'standstill letters' (notifications to the unsuccessful bidders for the contract) are expected to be sent next week. Unsuccessful bidders then have ten days to lodge an appeal against their rejection. It is unusual for unsuccessful bidders to appeal.

Once that process is complete officers, together with some residents who have shown a keen interest in window cleaning, will meet with the successful contractor to clarify contract terms, expectations, communications to residents about cleaning schedules etc. The involvement of residents in this way is in line with a commitment given by the Interim Head of the BEO during an earlier discussion at the RCC. The residents involved are drawn from a pool of those who have been critical about performance under the old contract, have been selected to represent the variety of blocks in the Barbican (without involving every House) and are not otherwise involved as resident representatives. The names of the residents involved will be shared with the WP once they are finalised.

In the light of resident pushback about the costs reported in the new schedule officers have held meetings with the successful contractor which have resulted in some cost changes. The old contract originated in 2017 and the overall cost increase since then was in line with inflation. The new schedule of costs per block will be made available as soon as it is finalised.

## **6. AOB**

The WP expressed its very real appreciation of Robbie Eunson's contribution as a House Officer and to the workings of the SLAWP. The WP further expressed very real regret at his impending departure and wished him every success in his new role.