

Report of the Service Level Agreement Working Party to the Residents Consultation Committee for its meeting on 24 June 2024

This working party met on May 21st 2024. Those present included Tony Swanson, Juliet McNamara, Andrew Tong, Jim Durcan, Helen Davinson and Luke Barton. Apologies were received from Jane Smith.

1. KPIs – the KPI report was discussed in detail

The Working party (WP) noted in its last report the falling response rate in relation to Stage 1 complaints. At that time only 40% of complaints had responses within the required time frame of 10 working days from acknowledgement. In the most recent quarter the response rate has fallen further still to 29%. The WP understands that there has been significant staff turnover in the BEO and that a new management team is being assembled. The WP considers that the new management team needs to make the handling of complaints a priority if this situation is not to be repeated or even further worsen.

Four of the complaints concerned communications, one concerned customer service, six concerned repairs and three costs and service charges.

Service Level Agreements for repairs and maintenance have six Key Performance Indicators. These cover such matters as quality of repairs, timeliness of repairs (which varies depending on their assessed urgency) and underfloor heating repairs. Problems with the Civica software, which is used to record and track repairs, means that reliable data is not available for four of these these KPIs. The WP was assured by officers that a fix has now been applied to the software which will mean that accurate information will be available at its next meeting. The WP welcomed this news.

There was discussion of data on lift availability- in particular there was concern that tower lifts were only available for 85% of the period. (this is the equivalent of one tower lift being out of order for the whole three months or each tower being without a lift for one month in a quarter.) It was appreciated that the towers have three lifts each but there was concern that lengthy outages resulted in unacceptable delays for residents and leaseholders. The lengthy delays reflect the difficulties of obtaining spare parts for old lifts. The WP would welcome confirmation of the start date and duration of the programme to replace the tower lifts. The WP would also welcome information on the likely scheduling of lift replacement work in the terraced blocks.

The WP requested that future reports should include data on short term holiday lets as there seem to be continuing problems about AirBnB bookings despite the prohibition in the lease of such short term tenancies. The WP thanked officers for their prompt action when such cases are reported but was concerned about reports that bookings continued after the offending flats had been reported.

There was a discussion about guidance on use of the gardens. It was agreed that the guidance would be republished in the Bulletin.

2. KPIs - Repairs Breakdown

The WP noted that the numbers of reactive repairs has continued to rise – up from 6789 in 2022-23 to 7897 in 2023-24. The WP also noted that the costs of those repairs fell from and estimated £2.96 million in 2022-23 to an estimated £2.48 million in 2023-24. The

WP was concerned that such high levels of reactive repairs reflected very substantial maintenance needs across the estate and resulted in a high level of unpredictability in service charges. These concerns are heightened by the sharp rise in general repair costs. Using Andrewes House as an example general repair costs have risen from £78,596 in 2017/18 through £114,990 in 2019/20 to £297,037 in 2022/23 – a quadrupling over a five year period.

The WP expressed its thanks to officers for the gradual improvements that have been made to the presentation and scope of repairs data in recent times. The WP remains concerned at the absence of reports analysing emerging repair trends and the consequent failure to highlight emerging areas for preventative maintenance.

3. Other Issues

The WP was pleased to learn that action is under way to fill the two outstanding House Officer vacancies. The WP noted that one of the two Resident Engineer vacancies has been filled. It was confirmed that the Safety Culture software for managing cleaning continues in use.

There are continuing concerns about the difficulties of having smart meters installed in the Barbican. This issue was raised at the last RCC and we were promised a Standard Operating Procedure that would cover the installation of smart meters where there are concerns about asbestos. The WP wondered what progress had been made with the SOP. It was suggested that there were only a small number of contractors across London involved in the installation of smart meters. If those installers who are regularly engaged for Barbican jobs could be identified it would make it easier to engage with them about the best ways of ensuring the future installation of smart meters.