

BARBICAN ESTATE RESIDENTS CONSULTATION COMMITTEE
Monday, 2 September 2024

Minutes of the meeting of the Barbican Estate Residents Consultation Committee
held at Committee Rooms, 2nd Floor, West Wing, Guildhall on Monday, 2
September 2024 at 6.30 pm

Present

Members:

Sandra Jenner - (Chair)	Andy Hope - Breton House
Lucy Sisman - (Deputy Chair)	Helen Hudson - Defoe House
Jane Smith - Seddon House	Dave Taylor - Gilbert House
Roy Sully - Shakespeare Tower	Rodney Jagelman - Thomas More House
David Lawrence - Lauderdale Tower	Monique Long - Mountjoy House
Adam Hogg - Chair, Barbican Association	Petre Reid – Willoughby House
Fiona Lean - Ben Jonson House	Claire Hersey – Lambert Mews
Fritz van Kempen – Speed House	Gordon Griffiths – Bunyan Court
	Graham Wallace – Andrewes House

In attendance

Anne Corbett – Deputy Chair, Barbican Residential Committee
Deputy Randall Anderson – Aldersgate Ward Member
Michael Gwyther-Jones – Head of Services, Community and Children’s Services
Tam Pollard – Chair, Asset Maintenance Working Party
Sandy Wilson – Shakespeare Tower
Sally Spensley – Forbisher Crescent
Andrew Tong – Brandon Mews
Dave Taylor – Gilbert House
Edward Reilly

Officers:

Judith Finlay	- Executive Director, Community and Children’s Services
Dan Sanders	- Assistant Director, Barbican Estate
Rhys Campbell	- Town Clerk’s Department

1. APOLOGIES

Apologies were received from the Deputy Chair (Jim Durcan), John Taysum, Monique Long and Fiona Lean. Both Monique and Fiona have sent representatives for this meeting with Stuart Lynas representing Mountjoy House and Helen Hulson representing Ben Jonson House.

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

There were no declarations.

3. MINUTES

RESOLVED, that – the public minutes from previous meeting held on 24 June 2024 be approved as a correct record subject to the following amendments:

- Page 7 under the subheading ‘Brandon Mews Canopy’ to replace “Andrews House” with “Brandon Mews”
- Paragraph 6.1, ‘Major Works Programme’, to be replaced with ‘Major Works Programme – Redecorations Project’.
- Page 9, 7a) delete phrase in square brackets

Matters Arising

- Regarding the Barbican Highwalks, the Assistant Director agreed to confirm the source of the £50k contribution and inform Members at the next meeting since there was still some confusion over the source of funding as well as which party was responsible for its overall maintenance.
- The Assistant Director also agreed to liaise with the property services team and provide a further update regarding the planned maintenance work carried out on the Lambert Jones roof at the next meeting.
- Whilst there was no update available for the audit of invoices for the balconies situated on Ben Jonson House, the Assistant Director advised Members that once the audit had been finalised then he would be in position to provide the Committee with further information.
- The Assistant Director confirmed that it was the template for registering expiring contracts, which was used for the car parking working party group, that would be used to create the register of contracts.
- The representative of Willoughby House advised the Committee that they were still not satisfied with the redecoration work carried out and wanted to know how the final cost would reflect their dissatisfaction. The Assistant Director confirming that the BEO were in the process of quantifying what work was needed to be redone to Willoughby House, Speed House, Cromwell Tower and Ben Jonson House and the associated costs due to this. A report detailing the funding options would then be brought to the next meeting.

4. WORKING PARTY UPDATES

The Committee received the following updates from the Working Parties:

4.1 **Service Level Agreement Working Party**

Regarding the report on repairs orders in Q1 which had been provided to the Working Party the Assistant Director explained that this should not have been

circulated as was not a report on repairs charges. It had not been verified as indicative of costs which would fall to service charges in the quarter. The outturn report for repairs charges in Q1 had yet to be finalised and would be provided to the Service Charge Working Party in due course.

4.2 Asset Maintenance Working Party

The RCC were still awaiting further information from the Highways and Cleansing Departments, who were responsible for processing output from the Garchey. Further input was also awaited from Thames Water.

4.3 Leaseholder Service Charge Working Party

A Member raised a question about the redecorations management and supervision costs. The sum of £85,000, a recharge to residents via service charge, was viewed as a large amount and they were of the view that the City Corporation would undertake this amount. The Assistant Director advised the RCC that this was not a consultancy cost but the charge for the management of the works undertaken by colleagues (City of London employees) not within the BEO.

A Member asked if it was possible to reduce this cost with the Chair confirming that the Assistant Director had agreed to review all Redecorations Project costs after the completion of the project.

The Executive Director, Community and Children's Services further advised the Committee that a housing consultant had been employed at the City's cost to assist with the Barbican Transformation Project and their employment was specific to a point in the timeline of the transformation.

5. ENERGY AUDIT

In consultation with the Chair and colleagues within the City Surveyor's Department this paper was withdrawn from the agenda.

6. FIRE DOORS

The Committee received a report of the Executive Director, Community and Children's Services in respect of a review of the fire doors across the Barbican Estate

During the discussion, the following points were noted:

1. There was some confusion as to which doors were going to be replaced with the Assistant Director confirming that it was both the doors and the units surrounding the doors which shall be replaced. However, the Assistant Director was unsure whether the windows beside the Fire Doors situated in Andrews House and similar blocks would be replaced and agreed to investigate and provide an update at the next meeting.

2. The Assistant Director agreed to liaise with the Project Manager to identify which doors shall be self-closing since a Member highlighted a potential security risk.

RESOLVED, that – the report be noted.

7. **SPRINKLERS**

The Committee received a report of the Executive Director, Community and Children's Services in respect of sprinklers situated on the Barbican Estate.

During the discussion, the following points were noted:

- 1) The improvement of fire notification systems within the Tower Blocks was strongly advised and the Assistant Director suggested that the proposed Barbican App would help to provide residents with further methods of communication since the App could send phone alerts, text messages and could be used in emergency situations. However, the App wouldn't be the only method of communication in emergency situations.
- 2) It was also mentioned that a resident engagement strategy, for the Building Safety Act, would help to initiate a series of webinars where residents would be invited to understand and ensure that they knew what the fire strategy was in their buildings and what to do in the event of a fire.
- 3) The Chair asked the Assistant Director about the smoke detection systems and alarm systems referred to in the report. He confirmed that these were present in car parks, plant rooms and buildings that the BEO manage, however, they were not present in communal residential areas e.g. corridors.

RESOLVED, that – the report be noted.

8. **HOUSING REPAIRS AND MAINTENANCE CONTRACTS – PROCUREMENT REPORT**

The Committee received a report of the Executive Director, Community and Children's Services in respect of the Housing Repairs and Maintenance Contracts Report.

During the discussion, the following points were noted:

1. The Head of Services, Community and Children's Services explained that the procurement process was midway through to completion. The appropriate contractors had now been identified with the intention of executing contracts by the end of the calendar year and mobilising the new contractors by the 1st April 2025. Costs shall be evaluated, and a report shall be submitted to Court of Common Council at the beginning of December for approval. The Head of Services advised that the key

dates listed within the appendices of the report were expected to be achieved.

2. The Resident Representatives on the Project Team expressed their dissatisfaction at the proposal to limit their activity in evaluating the bids to Customer Care only nor could they understand why they could not observe the moderation process. The Head of Services explained that technical questions would be evaluated by technical experts that sit within the Barbican Team which include Quantity Surveyors and Contract Managers. The Executive Director confirmed that this would be raised with the Procurement Team.

RESOLVED, that – the reports and its contents be noted.

9. **BARBICAN APP**

The Committee received two reports of the Executive Director, Community and Children's Services in respect of the BEO's engagement with Spike Global on an initial proposal to develop a bespoke app for the Barbican Estate.

During the discussion, the following points were raised:

1. The Assistant Director outlines the Altair report as the basis for requiring an improved use of technology, having a resident portal and single point of contact is one as well as drawing on his own professional experience when asked by the committee.
2. The Assistant Director confirmed that the figure of £52,332 was made up of the initial £15,000 set up costs and year 1 subscription fee (not including VAT) the Assistant Director was clear costs for years 2/3 should be reviewed and signed off by committee again for transparency.
3. The CoLP and Corporate IT departments have both been provided security and GDPR information by the provider Spike for review. To date there have been no concerns shared.
4. The Assistant Director was clear it was difficult to deliver tangible saving figures at this moment in time. The App would be used for identifying trends, monitoring trends, operating reports automatically and could better serve working parties, BEO staff and residents. Overall, it would streamline communication coming in and out of the BEO, such as regular updates and reporting of faults/issues. It would encourage a change to working practices to ensure the App could be used to its full potential. The Assistant Director was confident this would drive some savings the committee asked these were attempted to be quantified.
5. The proposal was the app would be service charge recoverable and there was some discussion by the committee on this.

6. The Assistant Director confirmed that alternative arrangements would be made for those residents who chose not to use the app including a web browser, retained email correspondence (run through the app) and for those with no access to technology communal board.
7. Members considered a 'walk through' by a cross section of residents and staff together would be worthwhile. It was confirmed that there would be no cost to this and the AD would take this forward as a condition of approval to proceed.
8. the Exec Dir welcomed members' questions and comments to gauge views on the adoption of the app. The majority of the members did not object to the BRC approving the proposal although there should be a 'walk through' and review before the pilot phase as per point 7.
9. The cost of introducing an appropriate financial and performance monitoring data framework was mentioned and it was confirmed that RIT had held discussions with Spike Global, and they were satisfied with what method was needed to include the necessary CRM data into this app. This would be included in the overall costs, with no additional cost from BEO.

RESOLVED, that – the report and its contents be noted.

10. **BARBICAN LIFT CONSULTANCY**

The Committee received a report in respect of a proposal to engage with ILECS, an industry leading lift consultant, to provide an improved value for money in both contract management and capital project management.

During the discussion the following points were raised:

1. The Assistant Director reaffirmed his intention to partner with ILECS who would oversee all lift management on the Barbican Estate and made the Committee aware of the various technical problems concerning lifts across the estate.
2. A Member queried the figure of £26,275 to be spent on the initial asset overview, suggesting that the BEO already possessed some details. The Assistant Director advised that the critical part of the overview would be the inspection criteria; the condition of lifts and the mechanical components themselves. An initial asset overview was deemed necessary since the former lift replacement programme had taken place many years ago and whilst there was some information which could be used it was necessary for an updated review to determine the full extent of necessary works ILECS needed to carry out.
3. Members wanted to understand better the costs on principal design and project management between the previous contractor (Butler and Young) and whether under ILECS it would be a completely new

arrangement. The Assistant Director advised that Butler and Young's method was to charge on an hourly ad-hoc basis and it was proposed that with ILECS each project's costs would be reviewed and if the figure of 10% was deemed to be excessive it would be challenged. There would be more commercial negotiations that could be held, with involvement from the Programme Board and Service Charge Working Party where appropriate. Any commitment would be channelled via the standard consultation process under section 20. and with the Programme Board.

4. A Member asked when a plan would be available for the RCC to view in detailing lift replacements and improvements. Members of the RCC remained concerned that lifts on the Barbican Estate were still in a state of disrepair with some being out of action for a number of weeks. It was their expectation that the lift programme would be commencing soon and were keen to know what the BEO was doing to resolve this. The Assistant Director advised the Committee that the BEO was aware of the ongoing issue with lifts and a lot of work was needed to resolve the issue. Their aim was to employ an expert consultant and target lifts, which required repairs, in a more structured way. The mechanical plant which supported the lifts across the estate was deemed to be in a fairly good state. However, the electrical components in most lifts were obsolete and needed replacing. The Assistant Director advised Members that ILECS expertise would be important in establishing a project with the BEO to resolve the ongoing issues with the lifts.
5. Whilst the Assistant Director could not give a definitive date he did strongly suggest that this could be made available at the first meeting of 2025 for the RCC. It was confirmed that ILECS would have access to all data relating to the lifts situated on the Estate and they will effectively manage lift contracts and the associated project(s) delivery, granting more opportunities as leading expert in the industry to obtain necessary requirements for projects such as machine parts and other industry experts.
6. The Assistant Director confirmed that it was the intention to review each lift and target components which needed replacing rather than undertake a wholesale replacement of all lifts on the estate.
7. A question was raised regarding any potential recourse for cost recovery from Butler and Young. the Assistant Director advised the Committee that full transparency would be granted once the partnership with ILECS had been established and information had been reviewed and would engage with Members around these excess costs discovered. The Chair highlighted the problems had occurred under the previous management, that lack of management was confirmed in the Altair Report and highlighted that this may be another area where a rebate was due to leaseholders for services paid for but not delivered.

8. In respect of Contractor Guidelines, The Assistant Director confirmed that ILECS would be expected to carry out checks on lifts, as preventative measure, which was specified in the contract. However, overall ILECS were in place from more of a reactive sense and would engage fully when lifts were faulty.

RESOLVED, that – the report and its contents be noted.

11. BARBICAN ESTATE OFFICE – CASH PAYMENTS

The Committee received a report in respect of the Barbican Estate Office receiving some service charge/rent payments for the Barbican Estate and other HRA developments. The report sought to identify those risks and provides a recommendation on how to phase cash payments out.

During the discussion, the following point was raised:

- The Chair asked the Assistant Director whether it was possible to extend the range of methods and modes of payment and he confirmed that this was indeed something that could be investigated further.

RESOLVED, that – the report and its contents be noted.

12. TEMPORARY WORKERS

The Committee received a report in respect of the Barbican Estate Office in respect of a temporary workers contract with Hays (“the Hays Agreement”) over a five-year period starting in 2017 without consulting affected long leaseholders under Section 20 of the Landlord and Tenant Act 1985.

During the discussion, the following point was raised:

1. A Member registered his intention of sending a note to the BRC, as Chair of the Barbican Association, in relation to history on this matter.

RESOLVED, that – the report and its contents be noted.

13. ASBESTOS

The Committee received a report in respect of identifying material risks (identifying which type of asbestos if any is in situ) in all areas within the common parts of the Barbican.

During the discussion, the following points were raised:

1. Members of the Committee were keen to know the scope of asbestos which may be present in common parts of the Barbican. The Assistant Director confirmed that it was a substantial project which, at the time of

the meeting, facilitated urgent restricted access and removal of 247 areas of asbestos at the cost of £95,000. In terms of project terms, under section 20, further removals were expected. 542 enclosures, of which there were 15 removals, and encapsulations, of which there were 2256. However, these were viewed as not high-risk asbestos that would need removing imminently.

2. The estimated cost was in the region of £1.5 Million - £2 Million for the entire project. The Chair registered her dissatisfaction that this project had been outstanding since 2022 and asked if these costs were likely to fall within one year. The Assistant Director acknowledged that it was a very large cost but was keen to seek involvement from the Programme Board, as well as resident engagement, to assess the available options and decide the best course of action.
3. The Assistant Director confirmed that a full report would be brought to Committee at a future meeting detailing costs and who was liable for them and how this project affected other ongoing projects on the Barbican Estate most particularly the fire door replacements programme and meter installations.

RESOLVED, that – the report and its contents be noted.

14. ASSISTANT DIRECTOR PROGRESS REPORT & ACTION TRACKER

Prior to the meeting a newsletter was circulated to Members of the Committee which sought to give residents and leaseholders, further information and active updates in terms of the Transformation Programme. The Assistant Director provided a verbal update at this meeting to provide further context. Following this, the Committee received the actions tracker.

During this discussion, the following points were raised:

1. The Chair highlighted that the RCC should be receiving a report on the Transformation Programme at every meeting as a standing agenda item and tasked the Town Clerk with ensuring that it was included as a standing agenda item going forward.
2. A question was raised in relation to the timescale of the Transformation Programme, since it had increased to an estimated five years for completion. The Assistant Director confirmed that completion was phase 3 after which he would be in a better position to determine the success of the programme and if changes needed to be made during the bedding in period to year five.
3. The Assistant Director explained that he was referring to projects that were cyclical in nature, such as internal/external redecorations, and highlighted that the Transformation Programme had significantly impacted the output of projects such as these.

4. The Chair cited the newly established Major Works Programme Board, which were expected to convene at the end of September 2024 and acknowledged that at the time of this meeting the necessary work had not been undertaken yet. The Assistant Director agreed to provide the Committee with further information regarding phase 3 in the next Transformation Update.

RESOLVED, that – the report and its contents be noted.

15. PROGRESS OF SALES AND LETTINGS

The Committee received a report of the Executive Director, Community and Children's Services in respect of sales and lettings agreed since the last meeting of the Committee. A Member asked for report to include information on lease extensions granted and the income generated. The Executive Director advised the Committee this shall be provided at a future meeting.

RESOLVED, that – the report and its contents be noted.

16. BARBICAN ARREARS

The Committee received a report of the Executive Director, Community and Children's Services advising members of the current arrears in respect of tenants and leaseholders on the Barbican Estate.

RESOLVED, that – the report and its contents be noted.

17. QUESTIONS ON MATTERS RELATED TO THE WORK OF THE COMMITTEE

A Member raised a question which stemmed from news of a fire that engulfed a Dagenham housing block. There was concern about the City Corporation's responsibility in the event of a disaster and its commitment to residential safety and support. The Executive Director alleviated their concern by stating that humanitarian assistance is the Corporation's responsibility in its capacity as both a local authority and housing association.

Following a question raised regarding increased service charge, the Assistant Director advised the RCC that affordability was at the forefront of the programmes mentioned previously and that it was the work of the Programme Board to ensure that residents and leaseholders were getting value for money. The Chair reminded the Committee that the exercise to quantify services paid for by leaseholders but not received or received sub-optimally in order to quantify the financial redress remained to be undertaken.

18. ANY OTHER BUSINESS THAT THE CHAIRMAN CONSIDERS URGENT

There were no non-public items of urgent business.

The meeting ended at 20:48pm

Chairman

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