

BARBICAN RESIDENTIAL COMMITTEE
Monday, 16 September 2024

Minutes of the meeting of the Barbican Residential Committee held at Committee Rooms, 2nd Floor, West Wing, Guildhall on Monday, 16 September 2024 at 1.45 pm

Present

Members:

Mark Wheatley (Chairman)
Anne Corbett (Deputy Chairman)
Helen Fentimen OBE JP
John Foley
Steve Goodman OBE

In Attendance:

Dawn Frampton
Andrew McMurtrie
Mary Durcan
Sandra Jenner, Chair of RCC
Jim Durcan, Deputy Chair of RCC

Officers:

Judith Finlay	- Executive Director, Community and Children's Services
Dan Sanders	- Assistant Director, Barbican Residential Estate
Nichola Lloyd	- Community and Children's Services
Jack Nuttall	- Community and Children's Services
David Blane	- Community and Children's Services
Rhys Campbell	- Town Clerk's

1. APOLOGIES

Apologies were received from Dawn Frampton, however she attended the meeting virtually.

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

There were no declarations.

3. MINUTES

That the public minutes and non-public summary from the previous meeting held on 1 July were approved as an accurate record.

4. **BARBICAN RESIDENTS' CONSULTATION COMMITTEE MINUTES**

The Chair of the Barbican Resident's Consultation Committee was invited to speak on matters relating to the most recent Barbican Residents Consultation Committee (RCC) meeting. Members noted the following:

- **Redecorations Programme**

Four houses were still dissatisfied regarding the redecorations programme and the Assistant Director, Barbican Residential Estate (AD) had agreed to conduct a full review once works had been completed and the contract had ended.

- **Fire Doors**

The Chair, RCC highlighted resident's confusion on whether doorframes were inclusive of the overall fire doors replacement programme with the AD advising that he shall confirm and update Members of the RCC at the next meeting.

- **Housing Repairs and Maintenance Contract**

Members of the RCC remained disappointed that the selected RCC representatives were not involved further in the procurement process.

- **Barbican App**

The Chair, RCC updated Members on the discussion held regarding this Barbican App and advised the Committee that it would be very helpful for residents to have a walkthrough before the app is officially launched. It was suggested that a walkthrough might also help to identify any tangible cost savings before the app is purchased.

- **Lift Consultancy**

The lift consultancy report was broadly accepted by the RCC.

- **Temporary Workers**

A paper from the Chair of the Barbican Association was shared to Members of the BRC prior to the meeting which explained the residents perspective regarding agency workers. Chair, RCC informed the BRC that residents were not consulted regarding the employment of agency workers when entering into a employment contract back in 2017.

- **Asbestos**

The major project underway to remove asbestos situated on the Barbican Estate had taken the RCC by surprise, especially considering the expected cost (£1.5 Million - £2 Million). RCC Members expected some debate around this about whether the cost of asbestos removal should fall to residents or not.

5. **ACTIONS TRACKER**

Members noted the actions tracker. During the discussion the following point were raised:

Temporary Repairs

A Member asked whether permanent repairs/changes were imminent, and the Assistant Director confirmed that the 18 months listed in the report was on a contingency basis. The Barbican Estate Office were addressing through contract procurements on matters such as water penetration and window repair issues on a more permanent basis.

A question was raised in relation to anti-social behaviour (ASB) on the Barbican Estate and the Committee was advised that this topic was being reviewed by the BEO. Cooperation between the BEO and the Barbican Centre was expected to take place since the centre had security resources, and there was expectation that the BEO could establish 3-4 hourly patrols. Other proposals were expected to be considered such as CCTV. The Chair acknowledged that anti-social behaviour had also been mentioned within the City, and not just on the Barbican Estate, and that eventually the Court of Common Council may need to be investigated further. The Chair noted the work of a Barbican Resident who had been gathering ASB data and thanked them for their work.

6. **FIRE DOORS**

The Committee received a report from the Executive Director, Community and Children's Services in respect of the fire door replacement programme.

The Assistant Director explained to the Committee that the programme was developed to ensure compartmentation of both fire and smoke if an apartment fire was to occur. Under the Fire Safety (England) Regulations 2022, apartment fire doors, must meet specific standards to ensure they provide adequate protection in the event of a fire. A Member highlighted residents concerns that, subsequently, they might be expected to 'foot the bill' for these works. The Assistant Director advised Members that the BEO would require the potential contractors to make good on anything they do which may ultimately damage the property. However, at the conclusion of the tender process any further costs shall be factored into the final project cost, and this shall be shared with the Committee since the BEO had no intention to incur any further costs onto residents without being transparent in the process.

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

7. **SPRINKLERS**

The Committee received a report from the Executive Director, Community and Children's Services in respect of the installation of sprinkler systems within the towers situated on the Barbican Estate.

A Member asked whether the previous recommendations, which had been provided to the BRC, advocating for the fitting of sprinklers had been overturned and if the overall view had changed. The Assistant Director advised Members that the report had received informed input from fire safety colleagues within the City Surveyor's Department, along with industry experience and the Assistant Director's qualified knowledge of fire safety regulation. He advised the Committee that the Towers were robust reinforced concrete buildings which were due to have its fire doors retrofitted and upgraded. A building safety case and resident engagement strategy was expected to be delivered soon. Whilst the Assistant Director was content with analysing previous reports in relation to sprinkler systems, he advised the Committee that there was no current risk that needed to be mitigated and which would demand a requirement for the installation of sprinklers in the towers.

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

8. **BARBICAN APP**

The Committee received a report from 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.

The Assistant Director advised Members that the Altair report recommended the improved use of technology and having a resident portal would help to achieve this. The BEO had entered commercial negotiations with Spike Global and they had managed to secure a "sliding scale" of costs in its first year and he deemed it appropriate for the app to be reviewed by the BRC and RCC after one year before making any further commitments. It was noted that colleagues within Corporate IT and CoLP did not have any concerns around GDPR and data handling at the time of this meeting.

A Member asked if it was possible for WhatsApp to be used as a tool for resident engagement, however the Assistant Director advised that WhatsApp was not the correct communication service that could assist with the work done by the BEO. This included work such as postal handling and request for repairs.

In respect of data handling, a Member raised concerns regarding the multi factor authentication process since she believed this could inhibit some residents from using the app. It was explained that Spike Global shall be committed to hosting a series of events where they shall provide support to those in setting up the Barbican App. The BEO were aware that some residents may find difficulties using modern technology and they shall assist where possible. However, these residents were identified to be in the minority and therefore it was recommended

that the project should be strongly considered. Members were satisfied with the proposal of a walkthrough involving a cross-section of Barbican residents prior to the app's official launch.

The Assistant Director advised the Committee that the Barbican App shall be able to create sub-group for those who could be contacted via email instead of app notifications. He highlighted that in its infancy, the app shall not be used to its fullest extent since focus should be maintained on the simplicity of the app in helping to manage functions such as s repair requests. However, eventually it was expected that the Barbican App could interact with service charge payments and be incorporated with other systems such as Civica.

A Member was concerned that the Barbican App could cause job losses within the BEO. The Assistant Director advised the Committee that there were no job losses were expected since the app was being introduced as method to support staff in delivering a better service to residents.

RESOLVED, that – Members of the Barbican Residential Committee approve the proposal listed in the report.

9. **BARBICAN LIFT CONSULTANCY**

The Committee received a report from the Executive Director, Community and Children's Services in respect of a proposal to engage with ILECS, an industry leading lift consultant, to provide improved value for money in both contract management and capital project management.

The Assistant Director advised the Committee of the benefits of engaging with ILECS and explained that ILECS would help to identify what components of lifts need repairing or ultimately which lifts were in need of a complete refurbishment. ILECS was identified as a potential project partner and although the costs for this were not listed within the report the Assistant Director agreed to return to the Committee on a per project basis to seek their approval.

A Member acknowledged that the performance of lifts situated in Shakespeare Tower had improved since parting with former lift consultancy company Butler and Young. He thanked officers for their work in relation to this report. The Member did, however, highlight the figure of 9% owed to ILECS for refurbishment or replacement of lifts above the cost of £125,000, and wondered why a flat rate hadn't been determined rather than a fixed percentage. The Assistant Director agreed that the figure of 9% was high and informed the Committee that once the asset overview had been completed that a commercial negotiation was expected to take place with ILECS if they were to become the Barbican's principal project partner.

RESOLVED, that – Members of the Barbican Residential Committee approve the proposal listed in the report.

10. **BARBICAN ESTATE OFFICE – CASH PAYMENTS**

The Committee received a report a report from the Executive Director, Community and Children's services 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.

The Assistant Director highlighted the potential risks of handling cash payments within the BEO and primarily the safeguarding issues from a staff perspective. The Committee was advised that payments via card or cheque would still be accepted, however cash payments would eventually be phased out and this shall be communicated to residents. The Deputy Chair queried the profile of those who decide to use cash payments and the Assistant Director agreed to update the Committee at a later date.

A Member highlighted the Barbican initiatives and changes, and its significance to other social housing estates within the remit of the City Corporation. She had hoped that these changes were being recorded and when appropriate if they could be extended to other social housing estates. The Executive Director noted the Members comments and advised the Committee that officers were mindful and were ready to explore such ideas further with other social housing estates when appropriate.

The Chair emphasised that the Barbican could be seen as an example to stimulate better provision in the wider context of all housing within the remit of the City Corporation. He suggested that the proposal of a Housing Committee which would enable Members to have better oversight on all housing matters.

RESOLVED, that – Members of the Barbican Residential Committee approve the proposal listed in the report.

11. **TEMPORARY WORKERS**

The Committee received a report from the Executive Director, Community and Children's Services 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. A briefing note was circulated to all Members ahead of this meeting which summarised the history, from the Barbican leaseholders' perspective, of the failure by the City Corporation to undertake consultation in relation to temporary workers.

Having undergone the Tribunal Property Chamber process, the City Corporation had conceded on a dispensation having not consulted with Barbican leaseholders. However, the City Corporation defended recoverability in terms of the lease agreement.

A Member was keen to know what the next step in the tribunal process was and if a decision was. The Assistant Director advised the Committee that the City Corporation had intended to submit a dispensation application to the tribunal. The result of this dispensation application, if agreed upon by the Tribunal, will be the removal of the £100 cap.

The Assistant Director informed the Committee of the commitments made by the BEO when entering into the next temporary workers contract. The usage of temporary labour was expected to be minimised and the BEO shall maintain a responsibility, locally, to ensure that resources were being managed effectively and not at the financial detriment of leaseholders.

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

12. **ASBESTOS**

The Committee received a report from the Executive Director, Community and Children's Services 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.

The Assistant Director advised the Committee that a further asbestos report shall be submitted to both the BRC and RCC at its next meeting. The report noted that £95,000 worth of asbestos removals had been identified and soon quotations for remaining work shall be finalised. Wanted to bring paper to this committee as soon as possible prior to its submission. 2,500 – 3,000 asbestos removals were expected to be required and this was budgeted at a cost of approximately £1.5 Million- £2 Million. Stage 1, section 20 notices had been issued due to the urgency of this work.

A Member asked if there was any risk of danger to residents or visitors to the Barbican Estate in relation to asbestos. The Assistant Director believed that there no imminent risk to either residents or visitors and any high-risk asbestos, to date, had been addressed and dealt with immediately. The Assistant Director also agreed to share a further communication regarding asbestos removal to reassure residents at the request of the Deputy Chair.

In relation to the costs detailed in the report, a Member wanted confirmation on which party shall be responsible for these costs. The Assistant Director confirmed that further detail on this shall be listed in the next asbestos report submitted to the Committee.

A Member highlighted the risk of asbestos once interfered with and advised officers to mindful of this when making decisions to remove asbestos situated on the Barbican Estate. The Assistant Director advised that out of the circa number of asbestos removals (2,000), 15 were classed as complete removals and that there was consideration for restriction requirements or encampments (enclosure) for remaining asbestos.

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

13. **PROGRESS OF SALES AND LETTINGS**

The Committee received a report from the Executive Director, Community and Children's Services in respect of sales and lettings agreed since the last meeting of the Committee.

A Member highlighted the "grace and favour flats" being used by the City Corporation and was seeking some more information concerning this. Assistant Director explained that further information regarding this shall be provided to Members at the next meeting.

In respect of the freeholds of 14 flats situated in Wallside, Barbican Estate the Assistant Director explained that as freeholders they had their own external work conducted at their own costs and were not part of the redecorations programme.

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

14. BARBICAN ARREARS

The Committee received a report from 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.

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

There were no questions.

16. ANY OTHER BUSINESS THAT THE CHAIRMAN CONSIDERS URGENT

The Chair asked for an update regarding Blake Tower and the Executive Director confirmed that Redrow PLC were undertaking survey work and that a report shall be submitted at the next Committee meeting.

17. EXCLUSION OF THE PUBLIC

MOTION – That under Section 100(A) of the Local Government Act 1972, the public be excluded from the meeting for the following item(s) on the grounds that they involve the likely disclosure of exempt information as defined in Part 1 of the Schedule 12A of the Local Government Act.

18. NON-PUBLIC MINUTES

RESOLVED, that – the non-public minutes from the previous meeting held on 1 July be approved as an accurate record.

19. REPORT OF ACTION TAKEN BETWEEN MEETINGS

The Committee received a report from the Town Clerk advising Members of action taken by the Town Clerk outside of the Committee's meeting schedule, in

consultation with the Chairman and Deputy Chairman, in accordance with Standing Order Nos. 41(a) and (b).

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

20. BARBICAN RESIDENTIAL ARREARS APPENDIX

The Committee received a report of the Executive Director, Community and Children’s Services which provided members with further information with regards to the current arrears in respect of tenants and leaseholders on the Barbican Estate, and the action being taken with these arrears.

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

21. HOUSING REPAIRS AND MAINTENANCE CONTRACTS – PROCUREMENT REPORT

The Committee received a report from the Executive Director, Community and Children’s Services which provided a progress update for the procurement of the preferred suppliers for the City of London Corporation (COL) Repairs and Maintenance contracts which were due to expire on 31 March 2025.

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

22. NON-PUBLIC QUESTIONS ON MATTERS RELATING TO THE WORK OF THE COMMITTEE

There were two non-public questions.

23. ANY OTHER BUSINESS THAT THE CHAIRMAN CONSIDERS URGENT AND WHICH THE COMMITTEE AGREES SHOULD BE CONSIDERED WHILST THE PUBLIC ARE EXCLUDED

There were no non-public urgent items of business.

The meeting ended at 15:31pm

Chairman

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