

BARBICAN ESTATE RESIDENTS CONSULTATION COMMITTEE
Monday, 25 November 2024

Minutes of the meeting of the Barbican Estate Residents Consultation Committee
held at Committee Rooms, 2nd Floor, West Wing, Guildhall on Monday, 25
November 2024 at 6.30 pm

Present

Members:

Sandra Jenner - (Chair)	Fred Rogers - Breton House
Jim Durcan - (Deputy Chair)	Helen Hudson - Defoe House
Lucy Sisman - (Deputy Chair)	Dave Taylor - Gilbert House
Jane Smith - Seddon House	Rodney Jagelman - Thomas More House
David Lawrence - Lauderdale Tower	Stuart Lynas - 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	Graham Wallace – Andrewes House
Andrew Tong – Brandon Mews	Sandy Wilson – Shakespeare Tower
	Sally Spensley – Frobisher Crescent

In attendance

Anne Corbett – Deputy Chair, Barbican Residential Committee
Helen Fentimen – Aldersgate Ward Member
Steve Goodman – Aldersgate Ward Member
Jacqui Webster – Cripplegate Ward Member
Michael Gwyther-Jones – Head of Services, Community and Children’s Services
Tam Pollard – Chair, Asset Maintenance Working Party

Officers:

Judith Finlay	- Executive Director, Community and Children’s Services
Dan Sanders	- Assistant Director, Barbican Residential Estate
Michael Gwyther-Jones	- Head of Services, Community and Children’s Services
Emma Bushell	- City Surveyor’s Department
Anna Donnoghue	- Department of Community and Children’s Services
Rachel Pye	- Environment Department
Rhys Campbell	- Town Clerk’s Department

1. APOLOGIES

Apologies were received from Monique Long and Andy Hope in advance of this meeting. However, they both sent Stuart Lynas and Fred Rogers respectively as their representatives. John Taysum had sent his apologies also.

Pauline Fasoli became the RCC rep for John Trundle Court (taking over from Miranda Quinney).

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

There were no declarations.

3. **MINUTES**

RESOLVED, that – the minutes of the meeting of the Barbican Residents Consultation Committee (RCC) held on 2 September 2024 be approved as a correct record.

Matters arising

- The following shall feature as standardised agenda items going forward:
 - Transformation Programme Update
 - Barbican Estate Office (BEO) Reporting Committee
 - Major Works Programme Board
- The review of redecorations programme to be included in the action tracker.
- The status of the Barbican App to be included in the action tracker also and further details regarding the number of residents on the mailing list to be incorporated.

4. **WORKING PARTY UPDATES**

The Committee received the following working party updates:

4a. **GARDEN ADVISORY GROUP**

- Members voted in favour of the proposal to create a new design for the Barbican Gardens. £40,000 would be required and this cost shall be spread over two years and costings shall feature in the 2025/26 budget. An application for a grant from the Community Infrastructure Levy Neighbourhood Fund (CILNF) was expected to help support these costs.

4b. **SERVICE CHARGE WORKING PARTY**

- The Chair reminded the Committee that a “root and branch” review was expected, however the Chamberlain’s Department had caused some delay. The Assistant Director advised the Committee that the budget had historically ran concurrently with the City Fund risk but the City Fund budget and risk had now been separated from the local risk and service charge contributions. Officers would continue to review, change and monitor the service charge budget for the following year and a report was expected to be submitted to the RCC at its first meeting of 2025 following consultation with the working party to finalise figures.

4c. **ASSET MAINTENANCE**

- A Member asked how projects were going to be overseen and how shall costs be shared and the Assistant Director confirmed that this would be addressed in further report.
- A Member asked if the hiring of an in-house painter and decorator was contrary to the repairs and maintenance contract. The Assistant Director confirmed that the contract contained more broader features and a specific breakdown could be provided to RCC members detailing what percentages of costs were spent on decorative repairs. The Member asked for further clarity surrounding the in-built costs for supervision and the Assistant Director advised that the contract shall be managed robustly however collective responsibility was to be encouraged and leaseholders should have the ability to raise concerns as soon as possible if works carried out were not to a suitable standard.

In response to this, the Deputy Chair asked if leaseholders would receive an invoice for any repairs undertaken and the Assistant Director would review if this was possible to ensure positive collaboration with leaseholders continued.

5. **OUTSTANDING ACTIONS**

The Committee received the action tracker and the Assistant Director highlighted a typo under item 3; '23/24 outturn' had been noted instead of '22/23 outturn'.

During the discussion the following points were raised:

1. Regarding the Barbican Podium Project, a Member asked officers for a further update and officers confirmed that a report providing further information shall be submitted to the RCC in 2025.
2. In respect of the Repairs and Maintenance Contract, a Member raised a concern that members of the BEO Contracts Team would have their responsibilities divided between the work undertaken at the Barbican and Golden Lane, and asked officers to confirm if there was a divided responsibility. The Assistant Director confirmed that unequivocally these contracts would be managed separately and no resource from the BEO in terms of contract management shall be going to Golden Lane or Housing Revenue Account (HRA) estates.
3. The Deputy Chair highlighted under potential breach of lease protocol a case in Andrewes House where it was believed to be that a small business was operating out of an apartment. The noise emanating from the apartment caused disturbance to the residents living below and asked officers to investigate the matter as it was a breach of lease. Officers

agreed to investigate further and to return to the next Service Level Working Party (SLWP) with an update before updating the RCC.

A Member mentioned that similar problems in relation to lease protocol has been experienced at Lauderdale Tower and questioned whether further information could be provided in regards to violations of lease. Officers advised that a redacted report could be submitted to the RCC providing further information on this subject in consultation with SLWP.

4. The Assistant Director advised the Committee that Avanti (An Architectural Practice) had undertaken options appraisal and a feasibility study of Brandon Mews Canopy. A report would be submitted to the RCC once a proposal had been submitted. A member welcomed this development but asked if officers could proceed with the resident consultation process as soon as possible and if the scope of service had been defined. The Assistant Director advised Members that Avanti had been instructed to hold engagement sessions with leaseholders and listed authorities prior to the submission of their proposal. However, no scope of service had been defined at the time of the meeting.
5. The Assistant Director provided an ILECS Lift Consultant presentation to the Committee and a Member asked if any comparative figures were available from the previous consultants to explain the difference in cost, and it was confirmed that the quality of data was not enough to conduct a comparison exercise. A Member raised a further concern in relation to the components of lifts situated on the Barbican Estate. The Assistant Director advised the Committee that whilst the electrical components were becoming outdated and the replacing of electrical components were becoming increasingly difficult, however the mechanical components were performing well.

6. **SERVICE CHARGE OUTTURN REPORT**

The Committee received a report of the Executive Director, Community and Children's Services in respect of the service charge overrun for 1st April 2023 – 31st March 2024 for the Barbican Estate.

A Member asked for further clarity on the £575,172 difference listed for general repairs and the Assistant Director agreed to investigate further since there could be multiple contributing factors which could explain this figure.

Regarding sharing the information listed in the appendix with residents situated at Willoughby House the Assistant Director advised the Willoughby House representative that whilst the information was accurate it'd be best to exercise caution because it could be subject to small variance.

A Member raised a question in relation to the Q3 service charge bill and asked when and how residents shall receive reimbursement of funds. The Assistant Director reminded the Committee that billing liabilities from heating costs

remained and this would reduce the outstanding credit. The Assistant Director advised the Committee that ongoing issues surrounding heating were being addressed and whilst there were resourcing issues within the BEO which impacted work, he estimated the heating issues to be resolved by April 2025.

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

7. PURCHASE POWER AGREEMENT

The Committee received a report of the City Surveyor in respect of a high-level overview of the City Corporation's Power Purchase Agreement (PPA) and the benefit due to the Barbican Estate.

The Assistant Director advised the Committee that the City Corporation had entered into a power agreement with a solar farm in Dorset and energy rates had been locked in for a period of 15 years. Excess energy was sold back to the national grid at a variable rate which had been favourable over the last couple of years and had contributed to overall savings in heating and electricity for the Barbican Estate.

In response to question regarding charged costs, the Assistant Director advised that a monthly report was received which included a standardised kilowatt per hour rate and the variable rate when selling back to the national grid, and this was applied to service charge accounts. It was confirmed that the costs had been applied to 2023/24 service charge budget calculations but officers had been fairly conservative due to the nature of the variable energy market.

Officers confirmed that the City Corporation had been successful in reducing energy consumption across the organisation as part of its net zero by 2027 corporate target which reflected the increase in contribution of the PPA.

A Member raised concerns regarding the sale of electricity back to the national grid and the difference between the contracted price and market price. He wondered if this contracted price would be beneficial in years to come. The Assistant Director admitted that the City Corporation was fortunate at the scale of credit received over the last couple of years, due to global and economic factors, and did not believe there was a risk that this would fall into a cost negative position. The Member asked if credit(s) attributed to non-residential blocks were used to offset estate expenditure and officers agreed to investigate further and provide clarity to Members on which switch rooms had been credited.

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

8. PROPOSED HEATING STUDY

The Committee received a report of the City Surveyor in respect of a high-level overview of a proposed study to deliver a set of bespoke data backed solutions that will address ongoing and longstanding issues and concerns with the performance and cost of the existing communal electric underfloor heating system.

The Assistant Director advised the Committee that it was the BEO's intention to conduct a heating study with contractor Ambue using several apartments as a case study to monitor temperature, air and heat loss to create a building information model (BIM) and identify areas where heating was being lost. The report had been steered from the perspective of the "Four C's": cost, carbon, control and comfort. The Assistant Director was keen to tackle the issue of heating loss in a data-driven way. The total cost of the study was £234,900 and this was service charge recoverable, however £100,000 was available from the Climate Action Strategy Fund which could be applied reducing the total cost to £134,9000 for long leaseholders.

Whilst a Member welcomed the proposal listed in the report he wished for a re-wording of a paragraph in relation to the control mechanism and officers agreed to work with the RCC Member before the next BRC meeting.

A Member requested that the study be broadened to include overheating in the summer. Officers confirmed that monitoring was expected to be undertaken during the winter period into early spring 2025, however officers were willing to explore whether it was possible to extend the study beyond this to investigate overheating in the summer months.

It was highlighted at this meeting work conducted by Westminster Council and an online application called "Building Atlas" and a Member suggested that officers liaise with Westminster Council to help create a strategy for sustainability refits and energy sustainable measures.

A Member asked for further expansion on the BIM aspect of the exercise and the Assistant Director advised that whilst it was the first time that BEO had used BIM, BIM's were becoming more widely used across all work streams however there were other work streams that could be utilised.

The Chair wanted to ensure that residents be involved on the project team and encouraged anyone with a fundamental interest, be it RCC Member or resident, to get involved.

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

9. **BARBICAN WINDOWS**

The Committee received a report of the Executive Director, Community and Children's Services to address the known dilapidated condition of windows situated on the Barbican Estate.

The Chair highlighted to officers that the repairs required were due to the neglect of the buildings, lack of planned preventive maintenance and overall poor repairs and not because of the age of the building as listed in the report.

A Member was frustrated that more surveys were expected despite several being conducted in the past. He wanted assurance that this survey would deliver a

quality output and the Assistant Director maintained that the survey would deliver a quality output, specifically around creating a full and costed specification of works for repairs on the tower blocks listed in the report. The Member was keen to know where the source of funding for the projected programme costs for repairs and it was confirmed that this shall be discussed in line with the repairs charging policy once a report had been finalised detailing the funding recommendation(s).

The Assistant Director agreed to improve wording in the next report submitted to RCC since a Member asked for further clarity on the term “making good” and officers would make clear the funding strategy for the repairs of windows so that there would be no miscommunication.

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

14. LIFT SCREENS

The Committee received a report of the Executive Director, Community and Children’s Services in respect of a proposal from Elevision to install digital screens in the lifts across the Barbican Estate. The screens would show building management information, local news such as TFL status and weather and advertisements for which the service charge will receive a revenue share.

The Assistant Director advised the Committee that the BEO had put forward the proposal, however following negative feedback received from long leaseholders and RCC Members it was decided that this proposal shall no longer be considered. He reminded the Committee that as custodian of the Barbican Estate the BEO had a duty to put forward marketing proposals and options and would continue to do so in consultation with the RCC.

The Deputy Chair thanked the BEO for the proposal and enthusiasm shown to explore possibilities to lessen service charge and asked them to continue to do so.

RESOLVED, that – the proposal listed within the report not be considered any further.

15. OMBUDSMAN CHOICE FOR BARBICAN RESIDENTS

The Committee received a report of the Executive Director, Community and Children’s Services in respect of a proposal that Barbican Leaseholders enter into the Property Ombudsman Scheme as opposed to the Housing Ombudsman Scheme.

The Chair advised the Board that at the pre-meeting of the RCC it was agreed that further time was needed to consider the proposal and there was an expectation that a further report would be submitted at the next RCC meeting. The Deputy Chair confirmed that the proposal would be discussed at the next SLWP meeting and those who were interested were encouraged to get involved.

The Chair further advised that legal advice should be sought from the Federation of Private Residents' Association when considering this proposal.

RESOLVED, that – the proposal listed in the report be considered further by the Service Level Working Party and a further report be submitted at the next committee meeting for consideration.

16. BLAKE TOWER

The Committee received a report of the Executive Director, Community and Children's Services in respect of a briefing note to provide the Committee with background information relating to Blake Tower and to set out the Corporation's actions to date.

The Executive Director, Community and Children's Services advised the Committee that although Blake Tower did not fall under the remit of RCC the report was being shared for full transparency as the City Corporation prepared for the transfer of management of Blake Tower from Redrow Barratt.

The Chair advised officers that the issue of the service charge costs shall need to be investigated further since the BEO shall be receiving new leaseholders once the transfer had been completed. Officers confirmed that an apportionment review shall be incorporated, and its findings shall be reported back to the Committee.

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

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

A Member raised a question in relation to the transformation programme and the Assistant Director advised the Committee that he would provide further details of the upcoming transformation programme report outside of the meeting.

A further question regarding matters arising from the minutes of previous meeting was raised and it concerned redecoration work undertaken at Willoughby House. The Assistant Director confirmed that talks were still ongoing in relation to funding options and he would update Members at the next meeting. A Member informed officers that residents at Bunyon Court had not been advised of redecoration works and the noise emanating from this at anti-social hours and officers apologised for oversight on their part for not informing Bunyon Court residents.

18. ANY OTHER BUSINESS THAT THE CHAIRMAN CONSIDERS URGENT

There was no business.

The meeting ended at 20:13pm

Chairman

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