

BARBICAN RESIDENTIAL COMMITTEE
Monday, 17 February 2025

Minutes of the meeting of the Barbican Residential Committee held at Committee Rooms, 2nd Floor, West Wing, Guildhall on Monday, 17 February 2025 at 1.45 pm

Present

Members:

Mark Wheatley (Chair)
Helen Fentimen OBE JP
John Foley
Dawn Frampton
Steve Goodman OBE
Michael Hudson
France Leach
Timothy James McNally
Paul Singh

In Attendance

Anne Corbett (Deputy Chair)
Ceri Wilkins
Sandra Jenner (Chair, RCC)
Adam Hogg (Chair, Barbican Association)

Officers:

Judith Finlay	- The Executive Director, Community and Children's Services
Dan Sanders	- Assistant Director, Barbican Estate
Mark Jarvis	- Head of Finance, Chamberlains Department
Michael Gwyther-Jones	- Head of Services, Community and Children's Services
Dan Castle	- Community and Children's Services
Owen Doyle	- Community and Children's Services
Arjan Johal	- Town Clerk's Department
Callum Southern	- Town Clerk's Department

1. APOLOGIES

There were no apologies for absence.

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 and non-public summary of the previous meeting held on 16 September 2024 were approved as a correct record.

Matters arising

- A Member raised a concern that the Barbican Fire Doors Project had not been completed yet despite being an area of concern for some years.
- In response to question raised about Blake Tower, the Executive Director, Community and Children's Services advised the Committee that officers were working closely with residents and members to ensure that issues at Blake Tower were being addressed. However, the legal case was in abeyance until further work had been completed.
- The issue concerning "Grace and Favour Flats" was raised, however The Executive Director, Community and Children's Services advised the Committee that this was not a matter for the Assistant Director, Barbican Estate to progress further with however an update would be provided at a subsequent meeting.

4. BARBICAN ESTATE 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:

Reporting Committee – Draft Terms of Reference

Members of the RCC were in favour of approving the draft Terms of Reference for the Reporting Committee.

Major Works Programme Board – Lift Tower Report

The Chair, RCC explained to Committee that residents of the towers listed within the report had scrutinised the report heavily due to the large sums of money required for the full capital replacement of the tower lifts. Residents were surprised that the cost had increased from £1.5 Million to £2.65 Million, and wondered if this increase was due to the delay of the commencement of this project, and further concern was raised regarding the issue of payment since the Chair noted that residents would find these payments "very difficult" to meet. However, it was agreed that a report would be submitted at the next RCC meeting detailing further payment options. A working group, comprising of residents from each of the three towers and officers, was expected to be established also.

Barbican Podium - Waterproofing

The Chair, RCC highlighted the redacted version of the Barbican Podium II report and Members were disappointed to learn that other Committees had been given sight of an unredacted version in the public domain. However, shortly after the meeting of the RCC, Members were provided with an unredacted version of this report. The Assistant Director suggested that in future non-public reports which required residents' would require for a tailored report to be submitted instead.

RCC Members were frustrated that it had taken some time for the project to be underway and problems with costs were mentioned. The artwork included in the project was identified as a component which could be removed if an exercise to reduce the project's cost was needed. RCC Members were given assurances that the 14 vents being removed from Beech Street Tunnel would not affect levels of emissions since these vents were already inactive.

Service Charge Expenditure and Income Account

RCC Members were pleased to receive a budget which displayed a reduction of £2.4 Million and more transparency given to the Service Charge Working Party compared to the previous year. However, Members were concerned about the £1.3 Million charge for overheads.

The Chair, RCC reminded Members of the previous RCC meeting held in January 2024 where a discussion was held on the problems regarding the budget and it was agreed that a representative of the Chamberlain's Department would conduct a "root and branch" review, however this did not occur and instead had been conducted by the BEO.

The Chair, BRC advised the Committee about resident payment plans that if residents were to experience any financial difficulties that they should contact the BEO and seek support.

The Chair, BRC thanked Sandra Jenner in her capacity as the Chair, RCC and noted that it was a "privilege and a pleasure" working alongside her. The Chair, RCC thanked the BRC for the time and consideration given to address difficult issues relating to the Barbican Estate.

5. OUTSTANDING ACTIONS

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

1. The Assistant Director, Barbican advised the Committee that the Anti-Social Behaviour Report and Asbestos Report shall be submitted to the BRC in Q2, April 2025. He also noted a correction at point three of the report as it should be written '24/25' and not '23/24'.
2. The Purchase Power Agreement (PPA) non-consumer blocks were still being assessed and once confirmed then this would be included onto the Action Tracker.
3. There was an underspend in the previous year's budget which explained the variance of the £575,000 for Repairs and Maintenance in the 2023/24 outturn report.
4. A Member was concerned about the length of time taken to complete several actions listed on the action tracker with some actions dating to

March 2020. The Chair did highlight that there were some deficiencies prior to the Assistant Director's arrival at the City Corporation but these actions were now being attended to. The Assistant Director did explain that some actions listed were projects, such as the Barbican Podium Project, which spanned across years and remained on the action tracker to keep Members informed.

5. Regarding the Barbican Fire Door Replacement Project, the Assistant Director confirmed that officers were still on track to complete this project within the given timeline and many fire door tests had been conducted in the past 18 months. A Member asked if the fire door tests were still being conducted in Poland and what difficulty this would pose since the UK was not a part of the EU. The Assistant Director confirmed that all fire door testing had primarily been concluded and due to the long UK waiting list for tests such as these it was more beneficial to utilise the external market overseas. One test, a smoke test of the letter plates and panels, was left before a door set would be manufactured and affixed to one of the Barbican tower apartments for review in June 2025, and this door would be the basis for the project to move forward. It was agreed that Members would be given notice of where the fire doors would be manufactured.

6. REPORTING COMMITTEE UPDATE - TERMS OF REFERENCE

The Committee received a report of The Executive Director, Community and Children's Services in respect of an update of the Reporting Committee and its Terms of Reference.

The Assistant Director advised the Committee that there was an amendment to the term 'AMWP' which had been changed to the 'Monitoring Committee' and that paragraph 30 listed within the report was being reviewed by Comptrollers at the time of this meeting.

RESOLVED, that – Members agreed the final draft of the BEO Reporting Committee's Terms of Reference.

7. MAJOR WORKS PROGRAMME BOARD - LIFT TOWER REPORT

The Committee received a report of the Executive Director, Community and Children's Services in respect of Major Works Programme Board and a recommendation of a full capital replacement of the tower lifts situated on the Barbican Estate.

The Assistant Director advised the Committee that industry consultants had reviewed the tower lifts and despite an early modernisation project undertaken in the early 2000's there was ongoing difficulties to maintain the lifts and its components, therefore it was recommended to proceed with a full capital replacement of all lifts. He confirmed that a working group had been set up and discussion with this group and residents of the towers was expected to take place to provide further context and reasoning(s) for a full capital replacement would

be explained. It was confirmed that the financial costs for leaseholders would be spread over two years with replacements to two lifts per tower in year two, one lift per tower in year three and specifying and tendering of the project would take place in year one.

A Member asked if there were any further comments regarding the additional costs of £2.65 Million as opposed to £1.5 Million and acknowledged that often lifts were already out of action in the towers which could cause some difficulties in year two and three of the project. The Assistant Director was aware of the performance of the tower lifts and this was specified to the lift consultant (ILEX) that it was essential to retain the critical spares from the first lift undergoing a replacement so that parts could be used to support another lift if it were to be temporarily out of action. Programming and prioritisation would be at the forefront of the project and data would be used to prioritise the lift with the most breakdowns and outages to ensure vertical transportation in all towers were maintained. The Assistant Director agreed that further investigatory work needed to take place to determine definitively the costs of the project and he shall update the Committee at a later date. The Committee were keen to see alternative recommendations or proposals if there was to be change in costs. A Member asked if the project could be spread over three years to alleviate the pressure of costs on leaseholders, the Assistant Director explained that the reliability of the lifts were poor and the BEO was keen to improve this as quickly as possible instead of extending the project for a third year.

In response to a question relating to the condition of lifts situated in the terrace blocks, the Committee was advised that reports were commissioned by ILEX for every lift within residential buildings on the estate and this was expected to be completed by end of March 2025 with 80% being completed at the time of this meeting. Tower lifts were progressed first due to their difference in size and the amount of floors which they served, and the terrace blocks' lifts would be progressed as a separate project with an estimated 70 lifts to be repaired or replaced. Structural surveys had been conducted on the tower lifts and their lift wells, visibly, were given early indication that they were in good condition however this would be reviewed more intensively at a later stage of the project. A Member asked if this could be included in the project's risk register.

The Assistant Director was advised that support available was via the Community and Children's Services for expensive projects in relation to the City Corporation's housing estates.

RESOLVED, that – Members approved the recommended expenditure of £75,000 (£25,000 per tower) draft the specifications and carry out the tender exercise.

8. TRANSFORMATION PROGRAMME UPDATE

The Committee received a report of the Executive Director, Community and Children's Services in respect of the Transformation Board Programme Update.

A Member noted that although appendix one (Transformation Progress Review) was in the process of being printed, the document contained Common Councillors who would be standing for election in March 2025. Therefore, he wondered if it would be more appropriate to distribute after the election. The Executive Director, Community and Children's Services confirmed that it was their intention distribute prior to the election period however noting Members comments it was decided to delay distribution of the Transformation Progress Review and if possible, to investigate whether Common Councillors' names could be removed from the document.

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

9. BRANDON MEWS CANOPY - OPTIONS APPRAISAL

The Committee received a report of The Executive Director, Community and Children's Services in respect of the Brand Mews Canopy.

The Assistant Director advised the Committee that Brandon Mews Canopy was in need of repair and replacement in some areas and a study would be required from Avanti to assess all options available, and to determine where funds would be allocated. Avanti were to determine if the lack of maintenance had an impact on its life cycle.

A Member was concerned about the cleaning of the barrels affixed to the Canopy and wanted officers to be mindful of this, however the Assistant Director confirmed that the cleaning strategy would be a large feature of this project and advised that Avanti would explore all options available to determine best functionality for the canopy.

RESOLVED, that – Members approved £365,000 of spending from the City Corporations fund on the proposal for Avanti to carry out an options appraisal of Brandon Mew Canopy.

10. SERVICE CHARGE EXPENDITURE AND INCOME ACCOUNT - LATEST APPROVED BUDGET 2024/25 AND ORIGINAL BUDGET 2025/26

The Committee received a report of The Executive Director of Community & Children's Services in respect of the original budget for 2024/25 and 2025/26 for revenue expenditure included within the service charge in respect of dwellings.

The Assistant Director explained the source of saving £2.4 Million, rounded to the nearest £10,000, listed within the report with £500,000 derived from utilities savings since the City Corporation had a power purchase agreement in place with energy being purchased on a kilowatt per hour basis. The projects budget was reduced by £850,000 since the BEO had switched their focus to three key objectives for the year 2025; delivery of a planned preventive maintenance program, development of a contracts matrix and a capital expenditure programme for 25 years. The BEO had taken the decision to remove any non-urgent project works for this year and would evaluate and create a capital expenditure plan, in consultation with leaseholders, residents and the BRC. The

sum of £1.125 Million derived from the reduction to repairs and maintenance charges.

The Chair, BRC asked for further clarification on the concern raised by the Chair, RCC regarding the sum of £1.3 Million listed in appendix two and if greater assurance could be provided to confirm the justification for this cost. The Assistant Director advised that the Chamberlain's Department were reviewing overheads within all City Corporation's Departments and further clarity would be provided to leaseholders to justify the figures within the £1.3 Million breakdown detailing the services and departments which supported the Barbican Estate. Due to both time and resourcing constraints officers were unable to provide Members with the percentage allocations and rationale for these figures at the time of this meeting but the Chamberlain's Department were undergoing a full review. The Head of Finance advised the committee that the Chamberlain's Department remained committed to being as transparent as possible and that a report would be brought to the attention of the Service Charge Working Party for review once available. A Member asked for further clarification on the data listed within both appendix two and three, and they were advised that appendix two noted the corporate recharge and appendix three incorporated £1.3 Million as an ancillary overhead of the staffing costs which had caused some confusion.

A Member mentioned Barbican long leases and noted that there was a provision in addition to the service charge expenditure for a management fee and the Royal Institution of Chartered Surveyors (RICS) Code was mentioned. The Assistant Director agreed that a breakdown of the sum of £1.3 Million needed be undertaken as soon as possible and shared with leaseholders.

A Member was opposed to the term 'latest approved budget' and asked for officers to take a more commercial approach since budgets could not be rewritten partway through a financial year. He advised that this topic had been raised at several other Committee meetings in the past, including the Finance Committee. The Head of Finance took note of this and agreed to inform colleagues within the Chamberlain's Department.

Further clarity regarding cleaning costs, general repairs and redecorations was asked and it was explained that the £70,000 allocated to cleaning costs was a mis budget for the previous year since National Insurance had been overbudgeted. £1 Million was sourced from new management, practices, contractors and KPI's and no internal or external maintenance would take place in the following year to ensure a capital expenditure plan could be drafted and issued to leaseholders.

RESOLVED, that – Members reviewed the provisional 2025/26 net £Nil revenue budget and approved the budget for submission to the Finance Committee, and authorised the Chamberlain to revise these budgets to allow for further implications arising from departmental reorganisations and other reviews, and corporate projects.

11. REVENUE AND CAPITAL BUDGETS - LATEST APPROVED BUDGET 2024/25 AND ORIGINAL 2025/26

The Committee received a report of the Chamberlain in respect of the annual submission of the revenue and capital budgets overseen by the Barbican Residential Committee seeking approval for the provisional revenue budget for 2025/26, for subsequent submission to the Finance Committee.

The Head of Finance advised the Committee of the non-service charge budget estimates for 2025/26 which showed a total net expenditure of £3,255,000 which was a decrease of £109,000 compared to the budget of the current year. The lower supplementary revenue project costs were noted as a substantial reason for this decrease.

A Member asked if 595 unused spaces in car parking and asked officers to explain the reasoning for this, and if spaces could be let out externally. Similarly, there were 201 unused baggage stores. The Assistant Director admitted that the BEO was aware that the redundant space and this needed to be reviewed. However, there were cheaper car parks within the area which explained partially the reasoning for this and the BEO were aware that there was a large amount of unused space and little uptake.

RESOLVED, that – Members reviewed the provisional 2025/26 revenue budget and approved this budget for submission to the Finance Committee, reviewed and approved the draft capital budget, and authorised the Chamberlain to revise these budgets to allow for further implications arising from departmental reorganisations and other reviews including corporate projects.

12. BARBICAN ESTATE OFFICE RESTRUCTURE

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

The Assistant Director made a point of clarification in relation to eight existing estate concierges who'd be given light managerial duties such as sickness, absence and cover. They'd be allocated four to six hours a week and would operate in a more senior role compared to their peers whilst also providing a pathway from frontline services into the BEO. Previously, the management ratio was 1:30 and this would be changing to 1:8.

In respect of Garchey workers, a Member was keen for explanation for the number of Garchey workers given that there was a decrease in the number of Garchey systems on the estate. Members were advised that there was a total of three Garchey workers at the time of this meeting and that Garchey system concerned not only domestic waste disposal through sinks but also disposal of waste for all rainwater with an over 50% estimated to still be in use. In response to this a Member asked if this rainwater could be used for other purposes such

as gardening or other parts of the City. The Assistant Director had begun working with Assistant Director, Garden and Environment on this however there was some intricacies involved with the system due to its unpopularity and contingencies would need be put in place if it were to be used for this purpose.

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

13. **BARBICAN COMMERCIAL ARREARS**

The Committee received an annual report of the Executive Director, Community and Children's Services advising Members of the current arrears in respect of commercial property tenants on the Barbican Estate and the action being taken with these arrears.

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

14. **BARBICAN APP**

The Committee received a verbal update from the Assistant Director in respect of the Barbican App.

An "opt out" letter had been sent out to all leaseholders to express their desire to not be included with the Barbican App in line with GDPR requirements. However, at the time of this meeting only a small number of leaseholders had taken the decision to opt out.

A pilot in Thomas Moore House was expected to take place in March 2025 and a version of the App would be available for Members to review in April 2025.

15. **REPAIRS & MAINTENANCE MOBILISATION**

The Committee received a verbal update from the Assistant Director in respect of Repairs & Maintenance Mobilisation.

The BEO were firmly in demobilisation with the incumbent contractor and supply chain risk had been identified and managed by the Contract Manager. Also, onboarding with Chigwell and Elkins had taken place for lot two and lot three with the Assistant Director having seen "good work" from officers in terms of monitoring and integration of the City Corporation's IT systems.

16. **RECRUITMENT**

The Committee received a verbal update from the Assistant Director in respect of BEO recruitment.

The Assistant Director introduced Owen Doyle as the new Head of Property Services and welcomed his wealth of experience and qualifications and was happy to have him onboard. He also noted that a Project Manager would be starting in May 2025 and would be responsible for the BEO's Capital Expenditure

Plan. Interviews for the position of Service Charge and Revenues Manager was expected to take place on 7 March 2025.

The Chair welcomed Owen and all new Members of the BEO team.

17. WATER PENETRATION

The Committee received a verbal update from the Assistant Director in respect of Water Penetration.

The Assistant Director advised the Committee that work was being undertaken in terms of drainage from balconies, windows and roofs. Whilst work was progressing in the right directions there was still much left to do and the BEO had been positively engaged with the RCC and sub groups and the newly formed Monitoring Committee and Major Works Programme Board.

The Chair thanked the Assistant Director for the amount work achieved on this since further problems were identified upon investigation, however he had clarified and addressed problems in a “thorough fashion”.

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

In response to a question raised by the Deputy Chair regarding the Barbican Heating Study, the Assistant Director advised the Committee that the study intended to develop a heating information model of three residential buildings that would feature as the pilot study. Some volunteers from these buildings had been selected and sensors would be fitted into selected apartments, and drone surveys and air pressure tests would be conducted to identify the ongoing heating system issue. The Assistant Director suggested that a data-driven approach was necessary to tackle this issue.

19. ANY OTHER BUSINESS THAT THE CHAIRMAN CONSIDERS URGENT

The Chair raised his concern regarding issues in relation to lease enforcement within the Barbican Estate and asked the Assistant Director to provide further comments on this matter. The Committee was advised that issues regarding lease enforcement had been addressed sporadically across the estate, and it was clear that ultimately lease enforcement guidance should be reviewed and published. A Member advised that officers would be able to locate further information on how to address lease enforcement in the BRC minutes from a previous meeting seven years prior to this meeting since the BRC discussed this previously.

The Chair thanked Members and officers for supporting him during his terms as Chair of the BRC and acknowledged the Committee’s profound responsibility. He noted that it was a privilege to be a part of the transformation in resident engagement helping to attain more efficient communication between residents and officers compared to previous years.

Members thanked the Chair for his contributions to the BRC and the Barbican Estate and noted that his significant leadership helped to facilitate great improvements to the Barbican Estate.

The Executive Director noted her thanks, on behalf of officers, especially in relation to the Chair's work on the Transformation Board over the previous 18 months.

20. EXCLUSION OF THE PUBLIC

RESOLVED, 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.

21. NON-PUBLIC MINUTES

RESOLVED, that – the non-public minutes of the previous meeting held on 16 September 2024 were approved as a correct record.

22. NON-PUBLIC APPENDIX - BARBICAN COMMERCIAL ARREARS

The Committee noted the non-public appendix in relation to Barbican commercial arrears.

23. REPORT OF ACTION TAKEN BETWEEN MEETINGS

The Committee received a report of 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 of the Barbican Residential Committee, in accordance with Standing Order No. 41(a).

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

24. BARBICAN PODIUM WATERPROOFING, DRAINAGE AND LANDSCAPING WORKS

The Committee received a report of the Executive Director, Community and Children's Services in respect of the Barbican Podium Waterproofing, Drainage and Landscaping Works.

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

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

There were no non-public questions.

26. **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 3.39 pm

Chairman

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