

Committee(s): Barbican Estate Residents Consultation Committee – For Information Barbican Residential Committee – For Decision	Dated: 3 November 2025 17 November 2025
Subject: Governance Review	Public
This proposal:	To approve the appointment of CRS and Inside the Box Consulting to carry out a governance review.
If so, how much?	£97,600 - £105,000
Has this Funding Source been agreed with the Chamberlain’s Department?	City Funded
Report of: The Executive Director of Community & Children’s Services	For Decision
Report author: Daniel Sanders – Director of Property & Estate Management	

Summary

This report recommends a Governance Review of the Barbican Estate, commissioned to examine the current decision-making structures, stakeholder relationships, and statutory frameworks under which the Estate operates. The review will assess how governance, consultation, and accountability can be strengthened across the Barbican’s unique mix of statutory bodies, resident organisations, and the City of London Corporation.

The proposal, developed by Charles Russell Speechlys (CRS) in collaboration with Inside the box Advisory, outlines a phased programme of work. It combines a legal and management consultancy perspective to ensure that governance arrangements for the Barbican Estate are complaint, robust, transparent, and effective.

The report was issued to House Group Chairs as part of our ongoing commitment to early engagement on 16 September 2025, their feedback has been incorporated within this report.

Recommendations

Members are asked to:

- Note the contents of this report.
- Approve the request to instruct CRS and Inside the Box to carry out a governance review.

Main Report

- **Background**

The Barbican Estate's governance arrangements have evolved organically over decades. The current model encompassing the Barbican Estate Office (BEO), the Barbican Residential Committee (BRC), the Residents' Consultation Committee (RCC), and recognised tenants' associations (RTAs) have become increasingly complex.

Feedback from residents and officers alike indicates that the current governance framework can be inconsistent, lacks clarity of roles, and at times results in duplication of work or unclear accountability.

The Governance Review was therefore commissioned to:

- Map out all existing governance structures and statutory obligations.
- Clarify roles, responsibilities, and lines of accountability.
- Assess the effectiveness of consultation and representation mechanisms.
- Recommend improvements to ensure a fair, transparent, and legally compliant framework.

- **Proposal Overview**

The CRS/Inside the box proposal sets out a three-phase review programme:

Phase One – Diagnostic and Legal Review

- Review of the statutory framework governing the Barbican Estate.
- Mapping of all governance layers, from BRC and RCC through to RTAs and working parties.
- Assessment of terms of reference, mandates, and decision-making authority.
- Identification of legal obligations and discretionary practices.
- Consultation with residents, RTAs, and stakeholders

Phase Two – Process and Governance Design

- Development of options for a clearer, more efficient governance model.
- Review of reporting structures and committee interdependencies.
- Identification of communication pathways between residents, BEO, and the City Corporation.
- Consultation with residents, RTAs, and stakeholders
- Drafting of model terms of reference and recommendations for consistent governance standards.

Phase Three – Resident and Stakeholder Engagement

- Consultation with residents, RTAs, and stakeholders on proposed options.
- Final recommendations to be presented to the BRC for approval.
- Implementation roadmap and evaluation plan.

This phased approach ensures the review remains independent, evidence-based, and consultative, while recognising statutory obligations and the need for staged transparency.

We have agreed to

- **Key Features and Benefits**

The Governance Review is designed to:

- Deliver a single, authoritative reference framework for how the Barbican Estate is governed.
- Clarify the relationship between the BEO, RCC, BRC, and RTAs.
- Support consistent communication and decision-making across working parties.
- Strengthen accountability by defining roles, authority, and escalation routes.
- Establish a foundation for improved resident engagement, transparency, and trust.
- Identify opportunities for digital communication and record-keeping improvements.

- **Resident Feedback and Adjustments**

Following circulation to House Group Chairs on 16 September 2025, several points of feedback were received and have been incorporated or scheduled for inclusion:

Theme	Resident Feedback	Response / Action
Transparency in early phases	Residents requested clarity on how Phases One and Two will be made transparent without delaying the process.	Recordings and written synopses to be shared after key meetings.
Resident representation	Calls for resident and/or RCC representation during the process.	BEO to invite resident observers to specific sessions.

Theme	Resident Feedback	Response / Action
Language and scope	Concern over use of “you” in the proposal (referring to CoL) and unclear references to “stakeholders.”	CRS to amend language for clarity and include a glossary of stakeholder definitions.
Protection of statutory rights	Request for confirmation that the process does not affect existing leaseholder rights.	Explicit statement to be added to confirm statutory rights remain unaffected.
Engagement and timing	Desire for meaningful involvement before recommendations are finalised.	Resident engagement built into all 3 phases of the work.

These refinements aim to ensure that the process remains open and inclusive, while maintaining the necessary independence and structure expected of a governance review.

- **Relationship with Other Workstreams**

This governance review complements several ongoing initiatives across the BEO and wider City Corporation, including:

- The BEO Organisational Review (current structure and service improvement plan).
- The forthcoming Resident Communication Strategy (Q1 2026).
- The Frontline Service Review and development of Service Level Agreements.
- The transition to the MRI Horizon Financial System, improving financial transparency and reporting.

These strands collectively strengthen the foundation for good governance by ensuring clear accountability, accessible communication, and data-driven decision-making.

Appendices

Appendix 1 – Barbican Estate Governance Review – Our Proposal

Appendix 2 – Barbican Estate Governance Review – ToR

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