Committee(s): Residents Consultation Barbican Residential	**Dated:** 29 June 2026 22 July 2026
Subject: Report of Director of Property and Estate Management	**Public**
This proposal:	Report of Director of Property and Estate Management
If so, how much?	N/A
Has this Funding Source been agreed with the Chamberlain's Department?	N/A
Report of: The Executive Director of Community & Children's Services	**For Information**
Report author: Daniel Sanders – Director of Property & Estate Management	

Summary

This report seeks to inform members of the on various workstreams of the Barbican Estate Office over the reporting period.

Recommendation:

Members are asked to note the contents of the report.

Main Report

Barbican App

We are delighted with the successful launch and early adoption of the Barbican App. Since its introduction, more than 1,100 residents have signed up, and engagement levels have been extremely encouraging. Feedback from residents has been positive, with the app providing a valuable new channel for communication, reporting issues, and accessing services.

Since 20 April, we have issued 35 announcements to residents through the platform and received 477 repair and operational service requests. Of these, 280 have been completed, 192 are currently in progress, and only 5 remain pending acknowledgement.

The volume of engagement demonstrates that residents are embracing the platform and using it to interact with services in a way that was not previously possible.
As with any new system implementation, we are experiencing some expected teething issues as both residents and staff become more familiar with the platform.

The increased visibility of services has also resulted in residents raising new tickets for existing issues, while we have sought to ensure that all works undertaken are captured and recorded through the system. This has contributed to higher levels of activity and provides us with a much clearer picture of demand and service performance.

We recognise that there is more work to do. As the Repairs Service team continues to take shape over the coming months and staff confidence and proficiency with the system continue to develop, we expect further improvements in efficiency, responsiveness, and overall service delivery. We are awaiting an update on timeframe for the desktop version of the system and hope to provide an update soon.

Overall, this represents a very positive start. The strong uptake by residents, high levels of engagement, and valuable operational insights being generated through the app provide a solid foundation on which to build and improve services in the months ahead.

In-House Repairs and Maintenance

Progress towards the launch of the new in-house Repairs and Maintenance Service continues at pace, with a revised go-live date of 1 September 2026. While this represents a delay to the original programme timetable, the additional mobilisation period has enabled the team to strengthen key elements of the service, including recruitment, operational processes, systems implementation and staff training, helping to ensure the service launches on a robust and sustainable footing.

The principal factor affecting the revised timetable has been the longer-than-anticipated recruitment and onboarding period required to establish the new operational team. As with many organisations operating in a competitive labour market, securing appropriately skilled personnel has taken longer than originally planned. Recruitment activity is now progressing well, with appointments expected to be completed during the summer and staff in place ahead of launch. In addition, four operatives currently working on the Estate will transfer into the new service, providing valuable local knowledge and operational continuity from day one.

Despite the revised launch date, the programme has continued to make strong progress across a range of workstreams. The Civica repairs management system is substantially configured and on track for implementation, supporting improved repairs tracking, scheduling, performance management and resident communications. Testing and pilot exercises completed to date have provided assurance that the system is capable of supporting the service from launch, with further live testing planned during August.

Resident engagement remains a central focus of the programme. Planned town hall events and demonstrations will provide residents with an opportunity to understand the new repairs process and the improvements being introduced. The service will also incorporate resident feedback mechanisms from launch, ensuring that customer

experience is monitored closely and that lessons learned can be incorporated as the service develops.

While some operational procedures and supporting documentation will continue to evolve during the early stages of the service, appropriate governance, risk management and stabilisation arrangements are in place. The revised launch date has provided an opportunity to ensure that the necessary people, systems and processes are established correctly, reducing implementation risk and supporting the delivery of a high-quality, resident-focused repairs service from the outset.

Governance Review:

The Governance Review commenced in April 2026 and is being undertaken by Charles Russell Speechlys and Inside the Box. Since the launch of the review, the consultants have undertaken a tour of the Barbican Estate and have been provided with the extensive documentation requested to support their work. The list of documents supplied was shared with all Residential Consultation Committee representatives in accordance with the action agreed at the previous meeting.

The consultants have now completed the initial documentation review phase of the project, and we expect to receive their preliminary findings based on this review shortly. This will provide the first stage of the evidence base that will inform the overall review and any future recommendations.

The next phase of the review will focus on stakeholder and resident engagement. It is important to note that no interviews, workshops or engagement sessions have yet taken place. As previously committed, the process will remain open, transparent and accessible, with opportunities available for all residents and stakeholders who wish to participate and contribute their views.

We are currently awaiting confirmation of the proposed engagement timetable and programme from the consultants and legal advisers. Once these arrangements have been finalised, details of the engagement opportunities will be widely communicated to residents and stakeholders to ensure that everyone who wishes to participate can do so.

Barbican Estate Car Park Review:

The City Corporation has commissioned and funded an independent review of the Barbican Estate's car parks, storage areas and cycle provision. The review is being undertaken by Arup, supported by specialist cost consultants, and is intended to provide an evidence-based assessment of how these assets are currently used and how they might best serve the Estate's future needs.

A key objective of the review is to ensure that resident needs remain at the forefront of any future recommendations. This includes understanding current occupancy levels, utilisation patterns, storage requirements and cycling provision, whilst considering how these facilities can continue to support residents' quality of life and the long-term sustainability of the Estate.

The review will examine opportunities to optimise existing space, improve functionality and ensure that facilities remain fit for purpose in the years ahead.

Alongside resident-focused improvements, the review is also exploring whether there are opportunities to make more effective use of underutilised spaces and assets. This includes assessing alternative uses where appropriate, balancing resident amenity with opportunities to enhance income generation and support the Estate's long-term financial resilience. Any future proposals will need to demonstrate clear benefits for residents while being supported by robust technical, operational and financial analysis.

Arup brings considerable experience in undertaking similar studies across major residential, mixed-use and estate environments, including assessments of parking provision, estate optimisation, operational requirements and commercial opportunities. Their work will consider transport, architectural, operational and financial factors to ensure that any recommendations are practical, deliverable and aligned with the wider objectives of the Barbican Estate.

The review is intended to provide a comprehensive evidence base to support future decision-making. Once completed, the findings will help inform discussions about the future use of the Estate's car parks and associated facilities, ensuring that decisions are made transparently and with a clear understanding of both resident priorities and longer-term opportunities for the Estate.

Ambue Heating (and overheating) study:

The Ambue feasibility study into heating performance, energy efficiency and overheating across the Barbican Estate continues to make good progress. The study has involved detailed surveys of a representative sample of homes across different building types and locations on the Estate, together with the installation of environmental monitoring equipment to better understand how homes perform in practice.

Initial findings have highlighted the unique characteristics of the Barbican's construction, with the study identifying both challenges and opportunities in relation to thermal comfort, energy performance and building fabric. While some residents reported difficulties maintaining comfortable temperatures during colder periods, the research has also identified areas where overheating and solar gain may become significant factors during warmer weather. The study is therefore considering both winter heating demand and summer overheating risks as part of a holistic assessment of building performance.

A key element of the project is the use of in-home sensors which are collecting continuous data on temperature, humidity and energy use. This monitoring will continue throughout the summer months to provide a fuller understanding of how homes respond to changing weather conditions, particularly in relation to solar gain, overheating and resident comfort. This additional data will help ensure that any future recommendations are based on a comprehensive evidence base covering both heating and cooling challenges across the Estate.

The consultants are currently developing detailed performance models and assessing potential options to improve comfort, energy efficiency and long-term sustainability. These may include considerations relating to building fabric, ventilation, controls and shading, although no conclusions have been reached at this stage.

Once received, the findings will help inform future discussions on how best to balance resident comfort, heritage considerations, environmental performance and value for money across the Barbican Estate.

Wet Riser Systems – Residential Towers

During the most recent servicing and inspection programme, the wet riser systems serving the three residential towers did not pass the required testing standards. As a result, the systems have been temporarily taken out of service while further investigations are undertaken. Early assessments indicate that significant remedial works may be required, and officers are currently working with specialist consultants to verify the scope of works and develop accurate cost estimates.

Following the test failure, the London Fire Brigade (LFB) was notified immediately and attended site to review the situation. Following their assessment, LFB advised that the overall level of risk remains low and agreed an interim operational arrangement. This involves the deployment of a water appliance to the towers, should it be required, allowing the existing infrastructure to be utilised in a manner similar to a dry riser system during any firefighting operation.

LFB had also intended to undertake a further pressure test of the system however, this was postponed due to an operational emergency elsewhere. Discussions remain ongoing and additional testing may be undertaken in due course to further inform the remediation strategy.

Importantly, there has been no change to the fire safety strategy for the residential towers and no increase in risk to residents has been identified because of the systems being taken out of service. The interim arrangements agreed with LFB ensure that appropriate firefighting measures remain available while the long-term solution is developed. On this basis, and following advice from fire safety professionals and LFB, a wider resident communication has not been considered necessary at this stage.

Further updates will be provided as the scope of remedial works is finalised and delivery timescales become clearer.

Lease Breach Position – Wooden Flooring:

Officers have continued to review the position regarding the installation of wooden and hard flooring within Barbican properties. Whilst lease provisions generally prohibit the installation of such flooring, it is recognised that there are a significant

number of flats across the Estate where wooden flooring has been installed, in some cases many years ago.

Given the prevalence of wooden flooring across the Estate, the City Corporation has sought independent legal advice to better understand the practical and legal options available. That advice indicates that, in the absence of evidence demonstrating a breach of other lease covenants, such as nuisance arising from noise transmission, it is unlikely that a tribunal would uphold enforcement action based solely on the existence of wooden flooring. This reflects the challenges associated with seeking a unilateral determination where no demonstrable impact on neighbouring residents can be evidenced.

Considering this advice, officers are reviewing the current position, previous decisions and the range of options available to the City Corporation. This work is intended to ensure that any future approach is legally robust, proportionate and capable of being applied consistently across the Estate.

A further report will be brought to the appropriate committee setting out the legal position, options appraisal and recommended strategy for consideration. Until that review is complete, no changes are proposed to the current approach.

Staffing Update:

Following the departure of Mia Blainey, Personal Assistant to the Director of Property and Estate Management, in May 2026, officers would like to formally record their thanks for Mia's contribution to the Barbican Estate and wider department during her time with the City Corporation. Approval to recruit to the vacant post has now been secured through the Workforce Control Panel (WCP), and the position will be advertised shortly.

There has also been significant progress in securing the resources required to support delivery of key service improvements and priorities. Approval has now been received from the Workforce Control Panel for all posts associated with the new in-house Repairs and Maintenance Service. Recruitment to these roles is expected to commence in late June and represents an important milestone in preparations for the service launch later this year.

In addition, approval has been secured for three new Senior Project Manager positions to strengthen the delivery capacity of the Capital Programme. These roles will provide additional professional expertise and support the effective planning, management and delivery of major projects across the Estate.

The successful approval of these posts represents a positive outcome and reflects a significant amount of work undertaken by officers to build the resource capacity required for the future. Recruitment to these positions will help strengthen service delivery, increase programme resilience and ensure the department is well placed to meet its operational and strategic objectives in the years ahead.

Expert Witness Report:

Following the commissioning of the Expert Witness Review, it has become apparent that the volume of documentation requiring examination and incorporation into the final report is significantly greater than originally anticipated. As a result, the scope of the review and supporting documentation has expanded beyond that envisaged when the original commission was procured.

This has led to a revision of the programme timetable, with the final report now anticipated in July 2026. While this represents a delay to the original schedule, officers remain comfortable with the revised timescales. Given the significance of the matters under consideration, the priority is to ensure that the review is comprehensive, accurate and evidence-based rather than to expedite its completion at the expense of quality.

The City Corporation has agreed to meet the additional costs associated with the expanded scope of work, recognising the importance of obtaining a robust and defensible expert assessment. The additional time being taken will enable the expert witness to fully consider the extensive documentary evidence and ensure that all relevant information is appropriately reflected in the final report.

The review process has benefited from substantial support from a range of stakeholders. In particular, the Barbican Estate Office has undertaken significant work in locating, recovering and reviewing historical documentation to support the exercise. Valuable input has also been provided by resident representatives, including Jo Boat, Chair of the Residential Consultation Committee, helping to ensure that relevant resident perspectives and information have been made available to the review team.

A further update will be provided once the final report has been received.

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