

## **BARBICAN ESTATE RESIDENTS CONSULTATION COMMITTEE**

**Monday, 25 November 2013**

**Minutes of the meeting of the Barbican Estate Residents Consultation Committee held at the Guildhall EC2 at 6.30pm**

### **Present**

#### **Members:**

Tim Macer (Chairman)	Gillian Laidlaw - Mountjoy
Randall Anderson (Deputy Chairman)	Fiona Lean - Ben Johnson
Robert Barker - Lauderdale	Jane Smith - Barbican Association
Mark Bostock - Frobisher	Prof M Swash - Willoughby
Dr Gianetta Corley - Gilbert	John Taysum - Bryer
Ald D Graves - Seddon	Deputy John Tomlinson – Cromwell Tower
Gordon Griffiths - Bunyan	Anthony Gisholt – John Trundle
Helen Wilkinson - Speed	
Natalie Robinson - Andrewes	

#### **Officers:**

David Bacon	- Chamberlain's Department
Julie Mayer	- Town Clerk's Department
James Goodsell	- Town Clerk's Department
Michael Bennett	- Community and Children's Services
Helen Davinson	- Community and Children's Services
Anne Mason	- Community and Children's Services
Eddie Stevens	- Community and Children's Services
Karen Tarbox	- Community and Children's Services
Barry Ashton	- Community and Children's services

#### **In attendance:**

Gareth Moore	- Chairman of the Barbican Residential Committee
Jeremy Mayhew	- Member of the Barbican Residential Committee

### **1. APOLOGIES**

Apologies were received from Janet Wells (John Trundle Court), who was represented by Anthony Gisholt and Chris Mounsey. The Committee noted that Mary Hickman had stood down as the RCC representative for Andrewes House and been replaced by Natalie Robinson.

### **2. DECLARATIONS BY MEMBERS IN RESPECT OF ITEMS ON THE AGENDA**

There were no declarations

### **3. MINUTES**

The minutes of the Barbican Estate Residents' Consultation Committee (RCC) held on 2 September 2013 were approved as a correct record

4. **BARBICAN ESTATE RESIDENTS CONSULTATION COMMITTEE - PROPOSED AMENDMENTS TO TERMS OF REFERENCE**

The Committee received a tabled document, drafted by the Chairmen of the Barbican Residents Consultation Committee (RCC) and Barbican Association (BA). It set out a practical consideration for the split of responsibilities between the BA, RCC and the various working parties. It also sought to streamline consultation and enhance RCC engagement with the City. The Chairman suggested that the document be considered at the RCC's AGM on 3<sup>rd</sup> February 2014 (date to be confirmed). The Chairman also suggested that, at this time, the Committee might also wish to review its Terms of Reference. The Town Clerk confirmed that it was good practice to do so regularly.

5. **SLA REVIEW**

The Committee received a report of the Director of Community and Children's Services, which reviewed the estate-wide implementation of Service Level Agreements for the quarter July to September 2013.

6. **PROGRESS OF SALES AND LETTINGS**

The Committee received a report of the Director of Community and Children's Services, setting out the sales and lettings which had been approved since the last meeting.

7. **REVENUE AND CAPITAL BUDGETS - LATEST APPROVED BUDGET 2013/14 AND ORIGINAL BUDGET 2014/15 (EXCLUDING DWELLINGS SERVICE CHARGE INCOME AND EXPENDITURE)**

The Chairman proposed that items 7 and 8 be taken together. The Committee received two joint reports of the Chamberlain; one relating to revenue and capital budgets and the other to the service charge account. During the debate and discussion the following items were noted:

**The treatment of asbestos.** Members noted that inspection works had started and the original budgets were based on initial feedback. The Head of Property Services agreed to provide members with an update.

**The treatment of original budgets and mid-way revisions.**

Members agreed that it would be helpful to receive a variance analysis with the September Outturn Report. It was also suggested that it might be helpful to refer to 'original budgets' as either 'estimates' or 'latest approved forecasts' and include dates and a variance column, which would focus attention on the most significant changes. The Town Clerk suggested that a briefing session for members might be helpful, directly before the September Committee.

**Concrete contingency.** Members noted that repairs to Breton and Mountjoy were imminent and would be followed by the other low rise blocks but funds had not been committed.

**Asset Management Strategy.** Officers were working on a 5-year programme, which would assist with planned maintenance. An update would be presented to Committee early in 2014.

8. **SERVICE CHARGE EXPENDITURE AND INCOME ACCOUNT - LATEST APPROVED BUDGET 2013/14 AND ORIGINAL BUDGET 2014/15**

The Committee received a joint report of the Director of Community and Children's Services and the Chamberlain.

9. **CAR PARK CHARGING**

The Committee received a report of the Director of Community and Children's Services, which sought to extend the charging policy for car parking on the estate for another year. Officers reported that occupancy was currently very good.

Members were concerned that, last year, the charges had come into effect a quarter later (i.e. June, not March) and therefore, the increase would be effective after just 9 months and not a full year. In order to correct the position the report would be revised for the Barbican Residential Committee for decision on 9 December 2013.

10. **RECOGNISED TENANTS' ASSOCIATIONS - ANNUAL REVIEW 2013**

The Committee received a report of the Town Clerk which set out the results of the 2013 RTA Audit. The Town Clerk was pleased to advise that all House Groups, which had applied, had achieved the RTA status. Members noted that the Town Clerk would formally notify the Chairmen of the House Groups, after the report had been presented to the BRC on 9 December 2013.

11. **UPDATE REPORT**

The Committee received a report of the Director of Community and Children's Services, which updated members on issues raised by the Residents' Consultation Committee and the Barbican Residential Committee at their meetings in September 2013. The report also provided updates on other issues on the estate.

During the debate and discussion, the following matters were noted/raised:

**Frobisher Crescent.** The House Group representative thanked the Barbican Estate Office for their input on the heating issues, which were being actioned.

**Barbican Exhibition Hall 1 – Proposed Tenant – London Film School (LFS).** The RCC agreed that the BA should progress the agreement on the lease terms.

**Hand watering of podium gardens.** The Barbican Estate Office would recharge the Barbican Centre as they had been responsible for the termination of the water supply to the irrigation system on Ben Jonson Highwalk.

**Beech Gardens.** Members noted that, due to an oversight, the grilles on the health and safety platforms on top of the turrets had been installed without listed building consent. The grilles were necessary for Health & Safety to prevent unauthorised persons access and had been painted black, as this was less obvious than a galvanised finish. The Head of Property Services agreed to investigate further and offered to report back to members. Members noted that the Project Board had been extended to include representatives from the

nearby houses and there was a vacancy for a representative from Defoe House.

Bunyan Court and John Trundle House Groups proposed a resolution, to the BRC on 9 December 2013, which sought assurance of delivery on the Beech Gardens project by the end of 2014. They also asked for further assurance of the control measures in place on similar projects. Residents remained frustrated that the works were taking a long time and had left part of the estate in a dilapidated condition, resulting in a loss of amenity.

The Housing Service Director explained that all City of London projects were subject to very robust scrutiny by the Projects Sub Committee (a sub group of the City's Policy and Resources Committee). The process included a detailed outcome report which, once works were complete, gave members an opportunity to analyse the lessons learnt. In addition to this, the project had been subject to (1) a full accounts audit and (2) a project management audit, which had been inspected by the Town Clerk.

The Director reminded Members that the podium had been leaking for some 30 years and various piecemeal works had failed to correct the defect. It was therefore essential to find a final, sustainable solution that would act as a benchmark for any future works. The Director acknowledged that the works were unsightly and, given the complex nature of the project, it had been a slow process. However, members were assured that a solution had been found, the contract had been let and the works were due to start in January 2014. The project was now at 'Gateway 6' in the City of London's Project Management Procedure - the outcome and lessons learnt being reported at 'Gateway 7'.

After hearing the Director's explanation, the Chairman asked members if they were amenable to deferring this resolution to the AGM in February 2014, which they agreed to do. In the interim, members asked to see the findings of the accounting and project management audits. The Town Clerk advised that Gateway 7 reports (to the Projects Sub Committee) were produced at the conclusion of the project and members asked if they could contribute to this report. Members also asked if the Director's explanation could be emailed to the House Groups.

**Soft Landscaping Working Party.** The first meeting had been arranged for 16 December 2013. The working party had requested information on the pre-condition and types of planting and the Director of Property Services agreed to provide this.

**Asbestos.** Members noted that the BEO held an asbestos register and there were regular examinations of all common areas. All phased removals, where necessary, would form part of the Asset Management Plan.

**TV upgrade.** Members noted that the contract had been signed on 22<sup>nd</sup> November 2013. The installation was likely to start in Shakespeare Tower, early in the new-year, with completion expected within 6 months. Members noted that the working party was likely to remain active during the installation

and the AGM in February could consider whether its role might need to change. Officers explained that residents would be able to leave keys with the estate office to allow access. The RCC thanked the working party for their hard work and commitment to this project.

**Underfloor Heating Working Party.** The Chairman reported that a working party had been convened after the last meeting. Given that there had been 26 expressions of interest for just 4 places, the Chairman had also formed an advisory group. The working party had met 3 times and the first set of minutes was included in the update report. They had also been extremely fortunate in sourcing monitoring equipment, free of charge.

Members noted that the working party would cover the re-award of the contract, and measurement of heat and current energy usage so that a usage profile can be formulated from which a more favourable energy tariff may be negotiated when the City goes out to tender for a new supplier next year. It will also consider other possible enhancements to improve efficiency and value (i.e. insulation and controls). Members noted that the system was far from life-expired, was running efficiently, its maintenance was inexpensive and failures were low.

**Tiles on the plinths on Ben Jonson Highwalk.** An update would be provided after the Streets and Walkways Committee meeting in January 2014.

**Concrete Works.** The Chairman of the Barbican Association (BA) advised that the BA and house groups of Lauderdale, Shakespeare, and Cromwell Towers continued to dispute whether the costs of the recent concrete repairs were fully recoverable from the long leaseholders. The Chairman of the BA and the groups were grateful to the Chairman of the BRC and officers of the BEO for their provision of information and willingness to give their time to meet with residents over this issue. However, their disagreement was not about the need for the repairs, or their nature, but a legal one as to what residents assert as defects to the structures and the provisions of the leases. The BA's Solicitor had sought Counsel's opinion and had written to the Comptroller and City Solicitor in the past 2 days, requesting a meeting.

12. **QUESTIONS ON MATTERS RELATING TO THE WORK OF THE COMMITTEE**

The questions asked by members, in advance of the meeting, had been emailed and tabled (please see Appendix A to these minutes). There were no further questions.

13. **ANY OTHER BUSINESS THAT THE CHAIRMAN CONSIDERS URGENT**

There were no items of urgent business

**The meeting closed at 8.40 pm**

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Chairman

**Contact Officer:**

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