

BARBICAN ESTATE RESIDENTS CONSULTATION COMMITTEE

Monday, 4 September 2017

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

Present

Members:

Jim Davies – Mountjoy House (*in the Chair*)
Brian Parks – Speed House
Gordon Griffiths - Bunyan Court
Fiona Lean - Ben Jonson House
Robert Barker - Barbican Association
John Taysum - Bryer Court
Caroline Reed - Thomas More House
Mike Bristow - Cromwell Tower
Fred Rodgers - Breton House
David Graves – Seddon House

Jacqueline Glonski- Gilbert House
Nancy Chessum - Andrewes House
Prof. Michael Swash - Willoughby House
David Lawrence - Lauderdale Tower
Mark Bostock – Frobisher Crescent

In Attendance

Ann Holmes – Chairman of the Barbican Residential Committee
Susan Pearson – Deputy Chairman of the Barbican Residential Committee
Mary Durcan – Member of the Barbican Residential Committee

Officers:

Julie Mayer	-	Town Clerk's
Paul Murtagh	-	Community and Children's Services
Helen Davinson	-	Community and Children's Services
Michael Bennett	-	Community and Children's Services
Anne Mason	-	Community and Children's Services
Mike Saunders	-	Community and Children's Services

1. APOLOGIES

Apologies were received from Graham Wallace, Christopher Makin, Jane Smith, Janet Wells, John Tomlinson, Richard Dykes, Sandy Wilson and David Kirkby. Representatives were sent, as listed above for Speed House, Barbican Association, Cromwell Tower and Gilbert House. Jim Davies had agreed to take the Chair for this meeting as both the Deputy Chairman and Chairman had become unavoidably indisposed.

As there were several substitute members this evening, the Chairman invited those present to introduce themselves.

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

There were no declarations.

3. **MINUTES**

There were no declarations.

4. **'YOU SAID; WE DID' - OUTSTANDING ACTIONS LIST**

Members received a report of the Director of Community and Children's Services in respect of outstanding actions.

5. **SERVICE LEVEL AGREEMENTS QUARTERLY REVIEW: APRIL - JUNE 2017**

Members received a report of the Director of Community and Children's Services which provided an update on the Estate wide implementation of Service Level Agreements (SLAs) and Key Performance Indicators (KPI's) for the quarter April to June 2017. In response to a question about the resourcing review, officers advised that this had arisen following the fire safety review.

RESOLVED, that the report be noted.

6. **PROGRESS OF SALES AND LETTINGS**

Members received a report of the Chamberlain and the Director of Community and Children's Services in respect of the sales and lettings approved since the last meeting.

RESOLVED, that the report be noted.

7. **2016/17 REVENUE OUTTURN (EXCLUDING THE RESIDENTIAL SERVICE CHARGE ACCOUNT)**

Members received a joint report of the Chamberlain and the Director of Community and Children's Services which compared the Revenue Outturn for the services overseen by the Barbican Residential Committee in 2016/17, with the final agreed budget for the year. Members noted that income and expenditure in relation to dwellings service charges was the subject of the following report on this agenda.

In respect of the £45,000 overspend referred to in the report for consultancy costs in relation to a 'hireable' community room in the Barbican Library, which would be added to the 2017/18 budget, the Assistant Director advised that this was under consideration and Members would receive an update at the next meeting.

RESOLVED, that the report be noted.

8. **2016/17 REVENUE OUTTURN FOR THE DWELLINGS SERVICE CHARGE ACCOUNT (INCLUDING RECONCILIATION BETWEEN THE CLOSED ACCOUNTS AND THE FINAL SERVICE CHARGE)**

Members received a report of the Director of Community and Children's Services which provided a summary of service charge expenditure. The report compared the revenue outturn (i.e. actual net costs) for the Barbican Estate residential service charges with the latest agreed budgets for the year ended 31 March 2017. The Service Charges Working Party had also scrutinised this report at a recent meeting.

Members were asked to note the questions submitted in advance of this meeting by the Service Charges Working Party, which had been emailed and laid around the table. The Town Clerk advised that they would be added to the City of London Corporation's website, on the page containing the RCC and BRC agendas.

The Town Clerk reminded Members that an amended version of reports 8 and 9 had been circulated in the supplementary agenda for this meeting and a further amendment to the table showing the actual costs of services had been tabled.

In response to questions, the following points were noted:

- The line showing the S&M technical increase of 50% in 4 years reflected staff increases and additional repair and maintenance work. Members noted that this included inspection staff, which were regularly on site, but not the actual tradesmen. Members suggested that the Service Charge Working Party might want to look at this in more detail.
- Redecorations were up 400% in the past 5 years and Members noted this was dependant on the programme of works.
- There was more project work than reactive work and officers suggested that a 5-7-year comparator was more realistic.
- Residents were charged for the costs incurred during the year.

RESOLVED, that the report be noted.

9. **RELATIONSHIP OF THE BARBICAN RESIDENTIAL COMMITTEE OUTTURN REPORT TO SERVICE CHARGE SCHEDULES**

Members received a report of the Director of Community and Children's Services which sought to clarify how the Service Charge Account 2016/17 Revenue Outturn Report relates to the service charge schedules provided to long lessees. Members noted that the Service Charge Working Party would report to the next meeting of the RCC.

Members suggested that, if changes in accountancy regulations resulted in entries being shown differently, it would be helpful if this could be explained in the notes to the report.

In response to a question about previous years' comparators, officers advised that this web page was currently being upgraded to improve accessibility for sight impaired residents.

RESOLVED, that the report be noted.

10. **FIRE SAFETY UPDATE**

Members received a report of the Director of Community and Children's Services, which updated Members on the City of London Corporation's approach to fire safety on the Barbican Estate and, following the tragic fire at Grenfell Tower and to inform Members on the subsequent actions taken by the City Corporation.

Members noted that the report had been presented to various City of London Corporation Committees, including the Audit and Risk Management Committee. During questions, the following points were noted:

- The City Corporation was committed to providing 60-minute fire doors wherever possible but was mindful of the heaviness of such doors and the implications for vulnerable residents. Current evidence suggested that most of the fire doors on the Barbican Estate were at least 30 minutes, which was the current new-build standard. Members noted that current testing of doors included frames and seals and this was being progressed as a single project.
- The Fire Brigade no longer install fire extinguishers as they require specialist training for safe use. Similarly, they do not recommend that residents purchase them unless fully conversant in their use. Similarly, the Fire Brigade have withdrawn fire blankets.
- The Fire Brigade still strongly enforce a 'stay put' policy.
- Officers were taking legal advice on the implications of charging to Lease holders.
- There had been a handful of fires over the last 10 years. None have gone further than the flat in which they originated.
- Members asked for hard copies of the Fire Risk Assessments to be available at the Estate Office, on request.

In concluding, Members asked for their thanks to be recorded to the Assistant Director and his team at the Estate Office for an excellent report and the responsiveness of staff in assisting the Royal Borough of Kensington and Chelsea.

RESOLVED, that the report be noted.

11. **GENERAL DATA PROTECTION REGULATION COMPLIANCE 2018**

Members received a joint report of the Town Clerk and Comptroller and City Solicitor in respect of the new General Data Protection Regulation Compliance and possible implications on future Recognised Tenant Association (RTA) Audits. The Town Clerk advised that detail on the new legislation was emerging and RCC Members and the Chairmen and Secretaries of House Groups would receive updates when available.

Members were reminded that this year's RTA Audit had been suspended and the City Solicitor had confirmed that House Groups' current RTA status would not be compromised.

The Town Clerk agreed to investigate a suggestion whereby flat numbers, and not the names of the Leaseholder, could be used in the audit.

RESOLVED, that the report be noted.

12. **UPDATE REPORT**

Members received a report of the Director of Community and Children's Services which updated Members on issues raised by the Residents Consultation Committee, along with updates on other issues on the estate.

During questions, the following points were noted:

- The planning application for the Stores Project had been submitted and the City of London Corporation's Projects Sub Committee and the Barbican Residential Committee would be considering an update report at their next meetings.
- Members noted that the Underfloor Heating Working Party, which was set up by the RCC, would need to elect a new Chairman. In the absence of any volunteers from the existing members of the Working Party, a Chairman would be recruited from the RCC.
- The Bryer Court representative asked for a meeting with officers in respect of the VFM contract.
- The Bunyan Court representative noted that the floor panels taken up by VFM had never been put back down properly and needed further attention.
- In response to an enquiry from a representative about getting a key to the meter switch room to read his meter monthly, officers have subsequently responded that the BEO's position is that residents are not allowed into the Switch Rooms (where the meters are located) unaccompanied. Access to these areas should be controlled and restricted to competent persons or persons who are under supervision in accordance with the site electrical safe systems of work. In this instance competent persons are our Resident Engineers. If a resident wishes for his meter to be read (and they live in a corridor block) then please contact Barbican Repairs who will arrange for this to be done. Officers also noted that if there is an issue with the timer on any meter, the resident should report it to their Utility company.
- In response to an enquiry about watering points on the podium, Officers agreed to investigate whether the locks could be changed to common parts keys making them more accessible.

RESOLVED, that the report be noted.

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

There were no questions.

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

The Chairman agreed to accept an item of urgent business in respect of Lease Enforcement. Members noted that the report was also due to be presented to the Barbican Residential Committee (BRC) on 11th September and comments from this meeting would be included.

Each House Group representative was given the opportunity to comment, as set out below. Some comments were reflected by more than one House Group:

- Noise disturbances generally should be acted on.
- Residents purchase flats thinking that the lease is a guarantee of certain factors; i.e. no pets.
- There should be no leeway on pets and short term holiday lets.
- Rules are rules and should be enforced.
- There are some 'shades of grey', particularly wooden flooring which has been adequately sound insulated and this may, therefore, be difficult to enforce
- Enforcement should be based on objective noise measurements

Members were invited to canvass their House Groups for further comments and to email these to the Town Clerk by 5pm on Thursday 7th September.

Other items of Urgent Business

- Members congratulated House Group Officers on the Open House Accreditation of the Barbican Estate and commended the high standard of service provided by the Barbican Estate Officers.
- On behalf of Members and Officers, the Town Clerk asked for thanks to be recorded to Jim Davies, the Mountjoy House representative, who had stood in to take the Chair at short notice, as both the Chairman and Deputy Chairman had to give apologies due to unforeseen circumstances.

The meeting ended at 8 10 pm

Chairman

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