

How to “run” the Barbican?

Cllr Hayward asked us to produce some thoughts on how the Barbican estate might be governed in future. The table on the next page responds to that request by setting out, as our initial paper did, what we would like to see and some tentative organisational options.

Lisvane has created an opportunity to come up with some creative solutions to optimise management and governance of the Barbican.

For the City the Barbican is a headache as well as something to be proud of (architectural icon, expensive to maintain, demanding residents, high profile, tricky governance issues, reputational risk); for residents and its other occupants (and much of the rest of the world) it is an architectural icon and an amazing place; for residents it is also home.

The existing governance structures don't work (conflicts of interest on the BRC and narrow remit; no overarching direction). It probably needs a hybrid solution. The Residents' Consultation Committee (established after a ballot of all residents in 2003 to give residents a say in the running of the estate and the way their service charge money is spent) has not proved as effective as residents hoped. In practice its views are easily ignored by both the BRC and the BEO

We suggest that to ensure that its residents are fully engaged and consulted in working out how best to run the Barbican, it would be worth considering some creative processes of engagement – e.g. a citizen jury type process.

We have split the issues raised by Lisvane into governance, management, and consultation.

We have also made some separate comments on wider City governance issues from our perspective as residential electors in the City.

Context

LISVANE CLIMATE CHANGE CULTURE BARBICAN AS A DESTINATION

WHAT OUTCOMES WE SEEK	GOVERNANCE	MANAGEMENT	CONSULTATION
<p><i>As residents in relation to our landlord</i></p> <p>Have real influence on how residents’ money is spent:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> *Direct the activities of the BEO <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - prioritisation - strategic planning - hold BEO to account for the services it provides and for value for money - establish policies to enhance communal living (not otherwise mentioned in the lease) 	<p>It is a City property. The City needs a mechanism for governance</p>	<p>Residents need a stronger role in the management of the estate.</p> <p>Management should be joint with officers and residents. Residents should be elected in a transparent, democratic, and accountable way</p>	<p>Ad hoc arrangements depending on the issue. For example, citizen’s juries to explore complex issues and make recommendations, polls etc for simpler issues</p>
<p><i>As residents living in the Barbican</i></p> <p><i>(a mixed community of dense residential flats, schools, arts centre, commercial spaces, gardens and landscape)</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> *Enhance, protect and promote this architectural gem *Protect and promote this “community”, maintaining the balance of activities and maintain it as a good place to live 	<p><i>Governance in this case is stewardship</i></p> <p>An umbrella board with responsibility for setting standards on the estate and a framework for how the individual parts of the estate should use it, maintain it, etc. And to resolve conflicting interests. A sort of Town Council</p> <p>This should include CCs (representing the stewards of the estate), residents, and representatives of all the institutions on the estate: BC, GSMD, CLSG, BEO, St Giles</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> *Oversight of the fabric of the estate and its public realm *Setting and enforcing standards consistent with the conservation area plan and the listed management guidelines 	<p>A management group of the occupants to deal with operational issues within the framework – to include resident representatives (BA)</p>	<p>Residents’ views represented through the Barbican Association, as now</p>

<p><i>As residents living in the City</i></p> <p>As residents we have no role in governing or managing the City except as electors. However, the residential voice in the City is completely drowned by the weight of the business vote and that feels disenfranchising.</p> <p>We do think that residents should have a stronger voice than currently and stronger than that of workers or visitors because we are more heavily invested in the City and what the City does affects our lives more. Residents are almost certainly better informed, more involved and more prepared to participate in constructive debate than other stakeholders.</p>	<p>City committees</p>	<p>City Departments</p>	<p>In the absence of a fairer franchise, a regular forum for residents across the City to be consulted about issues. This needs to be more discursive than the twice yearly residents' forums, it needs residents elected to it by their residential groupings, a consistency of membership, the right to receive papers and ask questions. This is in addition to statutory and ad hoc consultation on projects</p> <p>In terms of consultation with Barbican residents, the Barbican Association performs that function and will continue to do so.</p>
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We also have some specific concerns as electors that are touched in by Lord Lisvane:

*that our elected representatives should be able to speak on our behalf by being granted dispensations when appropriate, so we welcome the abolition of the standards committee, in which this issue had become politicised and toxic

*that the Planning Committee, because of its membership, is too heavily invested in City developments in general for it to be able to make balanced judgements when residential and commercial interests conflict. We support Lord Lisvane's recommendation that no councillor should sit on the planning committee if they also sit on a committee involved in managing City property