

Barking Reach Residents Association Meeting Minutes
Wednesday 25 October 2023
7.30pm via zoom

Attendance: 18

Meeting started: 7.38pm

AGENDA

1. Estate management tender update from BRL
2. L&Q failures
3. Heating
4. Dangerous dogs
5. Any other business

Minutes and matters arising

Venilia Amorim, the residents association (RA) secretary, asked to add the Project Office car park as an item under any other business.

Pete Mason, the RA's chair, went through the previous minutes and mentioned the Coop robberies should be discussed as item two on this meeting.

1. Estate management tender process update from BRL

Venilia invited Sarah Phillips, head of estates and assets at Barking Riverside Limited (BRL), to this meeting to give residents an update on the estate management tender process but since she was not available, she sent a statement instead to be shared with residents (see below).

“In June 2023, all residents received a letter formally notifying them of the tender relating to Estate Management Services that was being launched by Barking Riverside. This letter invited residents to identify any additional services or preferred companies they would like to be involved in the process which BRL had to consider as part of the process. During July 2023, estate managing service suppliers were invited to participate in the tender. The tender relates to a contract of up to five years for the management of the estate areas at Barking Riverside.

The first stage was for tenderers to complete a Pre-Qualification Questionnaire. This ensured suppliers met minimum experience and financial requirements to move forward to the next stage - the Invitation to Submit a Formal Tender. An invitation to tender pack was prepared in advance of this, which explained the site and expectations from BRL and included any feedback received from residents on the type of services required at Barking Riverside. The scope of the services was re-focused on core estate management functions to ensure the fundamentals were achieved before any services outside of this remit were added on. This includes ensuring health and safety is complied with, financial management is carried out correctly and operational contracts are providing best value.

Those submissions have now been received from five suppliers and have been taken through to the next stage which is interviews. The interviews took place on Thursday 19 and Friday 20 October. The interview panel was made up of various individuals from BRL from different departments together with three residents. All members of the panel have had access to the ITT pack and the submissions received. The format of the interviews included an opportunity for the agents to present on specific areas BRL had requested they prepare responses on, as well as questions that the panel had for them on the back of their presentations.

The comments and feedback from the members of the panel will now be collated and reviewed. This will then inform the final scoring of the tenders. Towards the end of the year, residents will be provided with the opportunity to view the shortlisted submissions and submit any comments they would like to make for consideration by BRL before a final decision on the successful tenderer is made.

Once they have all been reviewed and considered, a notice will be issued around March 2024 confirming who the successful tenderer is and the reasons for this decision.

There have been comments from residents that the incumbent estate managing agents, Tandem, will automatically win the appointment. This is not the case, and they are required to partake in the tender the same way as all other agents. To succeed, they will need to provide submissions and responses to BRL that show they are the best fit for our estate. It should also be noted that, unless BRL are confident that an agent should be appointed with a 5-year term, this will not happen. As a further assurance, there are a set of Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) in place, that will be included in the future appointment to manage and monitor the agent's performance. This will make BRL's expectations around performance very clear and will capture their performance on a quarterly basis."

A resident on Galleons Drive (62-85) said that Tandem is proposing wheelie bins for individual properties. He said most residents are opposing the proposal. Pete suggested he email the proposal to the RA to see what can be done.

Another resident mentioned the potential charges of the parking signs on phase 2 to be included in the service charge.

Venilia said this should not be added to the service charge. PCM should be claiming from its insurance company instead.

A discussion was also had around people parking illegally and in other people's bays. Venilia said that perhaps once the estate management tender process is completed mid-next year and a new estate manager is in place, residents should get involved in selecting a parking enforcement company for the estate.

A resident from Skinner apartments said he still has not received service charge invoices. Venilia referred back to the September residents meeting where, following a meeting with Sarah Phillips of BRL, she explained that currently there is a misalignment with when blocks of flats are completed per plot and when people start moving in. For instance, a plot can be made up of four blocks but if only two blocks are completed, residents would usually only be charged when all four blocks are completed. This is something that BRL has been heavily subsidising for now but will need to be aligned sooner rather than later.

Another resident from Newman Apartments on Kentfield Street complained about parking and rubbish in the area. This is a problem for Tandem to tackle once the handover of services is done from Bellway to Tandem. Venilia suggested complaints should be raised with Tandem as well as Pinnacle.

2. Coop robberies

Pete Mason, chair of the residents association, said the RA wrote to the management of the Coop (see correspondence [here](#)).

Out of Coop's rambling responses, the responding Coop manager mentioned an ICCTV (intelligent CCTV) system, which could be implemented. Pete suggested the RA write back to request such implementation in the Fielders Crescent shop.

Additionally, it was the RA's understanding that the security guard was no longer present at the shop and bringing the security officer back would be another request. This will be added in the RA's reply to the Coop.

Furthermore, the RA has not had any further reports of any recent criminal activity over the past couple of weeks or so. This could be that things are quietening down or that criminals have moved on to the next coop somewhere else. Venilia urged though for residents to continue reporting incidents to the police as and when they happen.

3. L&Q failures

Pete said the RA also wrote to L&Q following their fine from the housing ombudsman for failing to respond to residents complaints (see correspondence [here](#)).

The RA asked L&Q to double the number of frontline staff because it's quite clear L&Q wasn't able to deal with issues when they came up. That was part of the government's complaint about L&Q, that they didn't deal with complaints well. This included complaints about heating.

Pete said L&Q replied by stating that as the estate expands, L&Q should increase its staffing, but failed completely to address the issue of unanswered complaints.

Pete said the RA needs to reply back highlighting the importance of how L&Q deals with complaints and reinforce the idea of recruiting more staff.

4. Heating

Pete moved on to the subject of heating, saying that the size of radiators on phase two are 40% too small and L&Q at one point had agreed to replace them (almost two years ago now). A resident and committee member of Rhodes Mansions took L&Q to court and they settled out of court to get his radiators changed, because the previous ones were not producing enough heat.

It turns out, however, that loads of duplexes on phase 2 of the estate were discussing this just last week and have yet not been fixed, Pete said. He assumed that L&Q was going to do the right thing and sort it out for everybody, but it may be that they only did the one person who took them to court.

Pete suggested that the RA raises this again with L&Q.

Additionally, the properties on phase two that were built by Bellway use L&Q Energy heating. When Bellway residents phone up L&Q energy to say there's no heating or hot water, L&Q does not deal with any queries or complaints because they are not L&Q residents. In fact, call-centre staff hang up on residents, unable to handle such calls.

Pete also said that several residents have now bought Dyson heaters, which are also air conditioners, and they purify the air and they use them as it seems to be cheaper than the heating provided by L&Q energy. But this is still a failure of L&Q, Pete said.

A Bellway resident tried contacting L&Q to have his system set up, after one month is still waiting.

Pete said these points (bigger radiators and L&Q accounts for Bellway residents)) will also be raised in another email to the CEO of L&Q.

5. Dangerous dogs

Venilia started off the discussion on dangerous dogs by saying that unfortunately, it's not a new thing on the estate. It's been happening for quite some time, including Venilia who has been victim of a dog attack on her own dog by another dog without a lead on.

There's been a dog on phase one of the estate on Lawes Way that has been seen roaming around without a lead or owner around. This was about a week and a half ago, but this dog has also been seen previously on several occasions, out on the street, out on the children's play park off Lawes Way. Several times, the neighbours of the dog owner have complained to Southern Housing, the housing association. The property has now been taken over by L&Q.

Last week, the dog was seen loose from 11:00 am. According to neighbours the dog owner was not at home, so the dog couldn't be taken home. He was just roaming the streets and he ended up biting the relative of a resident who ended up at A&E that day. There have been complaints to L&Q, police, council and to RSPCA for animal neglect. The resident has been very defensive on social media saying that the dog is not harmful, even though the dog ended up biting someone.

The point is not that the dog is harmful or not. The dog, a Kangal – a dog of large stature – should not be roaming the streets unattended.

The RA will address this issue with L&Q to make sure that the dog owner, who is an L&Q resident, gets some sort of fine or repercussion. This has been happening for almost two years now and it's not acceptable. From the dog roaming the streets, creating havoc, threatening children and people who are scared of dogs, basically, to destroying neighbouring property.

There is a precedent with a similar case with a resident from Southern Housing who let his dog roam free for several minutes on the streets and a children's park just because he wasn't bothered to walk the dog to do its business.

6. Any other business

Venilia announced that the Project Office Car park, near the Riverside Station, is now 24 hours.

Next meeting is on Wednesday 22 November at 7.30pm.

Meeting ended 8.57pm