

**Barking Reach Residents Association Meeting Minutes**  
**Wednesday 25 November 2020**  
**7.30pm, online video conference**

**Attendance:** 33

**Guest speaker:** Paul Scott from B&D Heritage Conservation Group

**Meeting started:** 7.30pm

**The agenda:** was agreed.

Agenda

1. Guest speaker: Paul Scott from B&D Heritage Conservation Group on LBBB local plan
2. Heating on phase 2
3. Caspian Quarter fire safety
4. Phase 1 balconies and cladding
5. Governance on the estate
6. Committee member updates
7. Any Other Business

**Minutes and matters arising**

**Minutes** of the previous meeting were agreed. Chai Pete Mason spotted a mistake on an email to Southern Housing – item to be corrected.

**1. Guest speaker: Paul Scott from B&D Heritage Conservation Group on LBBB local plan**

Paul introduced himself, stating that his group mainly opposes to the council's planned over-development of the Barking and Dagenham area as well as having too many more high-rise buildings within the borough. He said his group is also campaigning for the borough's environment to be protected especially now that the local council, like its neighbour Redbridge, has recently declared a climate emergency.

He stated that the council's local plan is to develop 50,000 households by 2030. His group advocates that this borough's development needs to be safe: there should be enough open green spaces, reduced air pollution, there should be tree preservation, with good infrastructure in place (for example health and education services).

Paul said his group is involved with a petition to try to protect places such as Vicarage Shopping Centre and other places from demolition – there are concerns that new properties being developed are not affordable. Nearer Barking Riverside, there are plans for a 12,000-home project in Castle Green (across the A13) which will undoubtedly increase traffic and air pollution. On Thames Road there are also plans for several blocks of flats, including one developed by Be First, near Crossness Road.

Pete mentioned the residents' association (RA) had submitted an objection for the building on Crossness Road/Thames Road since several residents had shown concern about lack of parking spaces and an overburdening of current already limited services (such as doctor's surgery and limited shops).

**2. Heating on phase 2**

Pete said that since the last residents meeting, there was a response from L&Q: they've admitted to a few residents that radiators are the wrong size (too small) which residents have been saying from the beginning. They've committed to replacing radiators in three months, starting with empty properties.

According to the Landlord and Tenant Act 1985, one of the landlord's obligations is to "keep in repair and proper working order the installations in the dwelling-house for space heating and heating water". A resident has gone back to L&Q to claim compensation, so they will start replacing radiators on his flat next week.

Pete asked residents if the RA should write to L&Q to say if it applies to one, it should apply to all?  
Residents agreed.

**ACTION: RA to write to L&Q requesting that all radiators are exchanged as soon as possible, before empty properties.**

On Pedley House the situation with heating is worse as Bellway does not hold itself accountable. A resident of Pedley House has contacted NHBC instead so the issues are rectified via them, hopefully. The resident, who is also an RA committee member, said residents have not really engaged much with the problem so far because it is not that cold.

Pete mentioned it should be worth getting recognition on phase 2 to deal with Bellway directly.

Separately, a resident mentioned lack of street lighting on phase 2, which makes it unsafe for residents to walk around the area in the evenings and at night. Apparently, the contractor due to install lights in the area has cancelled its contract.

**ACTION: RA to write to BRL to push light installation on phase 2**

### **3. Caspian Quarter fire safety**

A resident and RA committee member said Encore is completing a fire safety survey which will take up to 4-6 weeks. Bellway said it will provide residents with details of their survey. Following on from the Encore leaseholder meeting in October, there is still no sign of the promised minutes. Several residents volunteered to chase up Encore on that.

As per previous discussions with Caspian Quarter residents, Bellway had previously stated that the cladding on the buildings was A2 rated (ie. non-combustible), however, Encore has specifically stated that the material used is combustible. A resident and RA committee member has contacted Bellway and is still wanting confirmation on what rating the cladding is.

Residents said that the meeting organised by Encore for Caspian Quarter residents – which was brought about as a result of action by the RA – was informative and Encore gave details of the process going forward. Encore's survey, they said, should be ready by the beginning of December. A resident said that there would be more power in getting the RA recognised with Adriatic, Caspian Quarter's landlord.

Pete mentioned several points of action for the RA's recognition: the association would need at least 50% of residents as members of the RA. For this, names and addresses would need to be collected (most likely electronically due to social distancing restrictions). Pete explained that many landlords consult with recognised residents' associations on management issues and they can often become the main representative of residents' views in the area. A recognised RA has the power to bring a collective enforcement of rights and greater scrutiny to the management of a development. For instance, it can ask for a summary of service charge costs incurred by the landlord for which the members have to pay a service charge; can inspect the relevant accounts and receipts; can be consulted about the appointment or re-appointment of a managing agent and on any major expenses, such as remedial works to remove flammable cladding.

Venilia Amorim, treasurer, mentioned that Adriatic uses different entities around the estate (Adriatic 4, Adriatic 9) so recognition might need to be sought separately for each 'different' landlord, but it would be a mere clerical process.

### **4. Phase 1 balconies and cladding**

Pete said that works on pilot homes around phase 1 was supposed to be completed by the end of December (5 weeks), which was unlikely. There is no sign of any pilot home having started on their cladding replacement yet.

## **ACTION: RA to request a progress update from BRL**

### **5. Governance on the estate**

Pete put forward the BRRA's proposal for the BRL CIC's governance model. There were a few finer points that needed clarification and discussion and Pete was invited to participate in the Learning Forum's governance sub-team to further discuss the BRRA's proposal and overall differences with the Learning Forum's proposed governance model. One of the main concerns was the possibility of bringing together the community without overturning the principle of elected resident representatives on the CIC.

Pete suggested the following:

“In the view of the committee, elections held by residents for the Barking Riverside Community interest company, to run the public realm on the estate, should be to a resident subcommittee from which board members are selected, and that this body cannot be mixed with people who are unelected, as this would negate the democratic process.

“Community groups and business groups may wish to have their own subcommittees which would be welcome, and/or may wish to form a community subcommittee involving all, which would also be welcome, but an elected residents subcommittee of the CIC, which places its members on the board, is a necessary requirement to give credibility to the board and the election process.”

The next Learning Forum meeting for the governance group is taking place on 8 December at 4.30pm.

### **6. Committee member updates**

Venilia attended a BRL CIC board meeting on 23 October, in which Pam Ross of BRL confirmed that out of the 231 properties on phase 1 that need cladding replaced, 165 have agreed to replace (109 are Southern Housing), Bellway has 42 to replace, GLA 14 (old Mace Group properties) – only 1 resident doesn't want to replace their timber cladding.

The target date to complete pilot units is 31 December, which is also the deadline for residents to respond to the consultation and decide whether or not they want their cladding replaced.

At the BRL CIC board meeting it was asked what would happen next if a resident was to refuse to replace the cladding by the end of the process. It was resolved that ultimately the final decision would be up to the leaseholder. They could change their minds, but the responsibility of maintaining and upgrading the wooden cladding lies with them.

Venilia added that Pam Ross gave her estate management update, stating that the estate service charge budget for 2019/20 had been approved and communicated to residents on phase 1. Heating works regarding temporary heating systems had started on John Miller and Ernest Websdale Houses. A new deputy estate manager had been appointed (Stacey Roberts).

### **7. Any Other Business**

None declared.

**Meeting ended 9.08pm**