

THE LONDON BOROUGH OF CAMDEN

At a meeting of the **CAMDEN TOWN DISTRICT MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE** held on **WEDNESDAY, 30TH NOVEMBER, 2022** at 6.30 pm in the Conference Room, 3rd Floor, Crowndale Centre, 218 - 220 Eversholt Street, London, NW1 1BD

REGISTERED DMC MEMBERS PRESENT

Fran Heron (Chair)	Amphill Square TRA
John Wood (Vice-Chair)	Walker House TRA
Steven Christofi (Vice-Chair)	Regents' Park TA
Zain Alam (Sub)	Amphill Square TRA
Sonia Uddin	Camden Studios TRA
David Perris	CASP
Monir Hussain	Churchway TRA
Amy Lame	Coopers Lane Estate TRA
David Auger	Clarkson and Mornington TRA
Helia Evans	Ossulston TRA
Yvonne White	Drummond Street TRA
Anne Byrne	Three Fields TRA
Amy MacDougall (Sub)	Curnock Street TRA

OTHER RESIDENTS PRESENT

Paul Tomlinson	Mayford TRA
June Williams	Churchway TRA
Brian Gardiner	Goldington Estate TRA
Dervilla Carroll	Bridgeway Street TRA
Jim Mansfield	

COUNCILLORS PRESENT

Councillor Meric Apak, Cabinet Member Better Homes
Councillor Shah Miah
Councillor Edmund Frondigoun

OFFICERS PRESENT

Glendine Shepherd	Director of Housing
Ododo Dafe	Head of Housing Transformation
Sharon Calvey	Head of Estates Management
Danny Waite	Head of Repairs and Operations
Sarah Moore	Tenant Participation
Ramona Damiean	Neighbourhood Housing Manager
Olivier Goma	Neighbourhood Housing Manager

The minutes should be read in conjunction with the agenda for the meeting. They are subject to approval and signature at the next meeting of the Camden Town District Management Committee and any corrections approved at that meeting will be recorded in those minutes.

MINUTES

1. REGISTRATION OF TENANT AND RESIDENT ASSOCIATIONS AND CO-OPTION OF REPRESENTATIVES

The DMC considered the list of registered tenant and resident associations (TRAs) provided by the Tenant Participation Service listed at Appendix A to the agenda and those TRAs whose registration had lapsed, which were listed at Appendix B.

The DMC noted that CASP should be added to the A list.

RESOLVED –

THAT the 'A' list information be noted.

2. APOLOGIES

Apologies for a absence were received from Richard Caylor (Bayham Place Estate TRA), Brian Gardiner (Churchway TRA), Ramiz Percuku (College Place Tenants and Residents Association), Wolfram Westendorf (Godwin and Crowndale TMO), Sherryl Murphy and Sheila James (Mayford Tenants and Resident Association).

3. ANNOUNCEMENTS

The Chair advised the meeting that David Perris had been appointed to the Camden Housing and Property Residents Panel.

4. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST OF ITEMS ON THIS AGENDA

There were none.

5. NOTIFICATION OF ANY ITEMS OF BUSINESS THAT THE CHAIR DECIDES TO TAKE AS URGENT

There were none.

6. MINUTES

The meeting agreed that on page 17, Bridgeway Court TRA should be revised to Bridgeway Street TRA.

RESOLVED –

THAT the minutes of the meeting held on 14th September 2022, with the above revision be approved as a correct record.

7. CAMDEN TOWN DMC ACTION POINT UPDATE

Consideration was given to the action tracker.

CCTV and the Responsive Security Patrol

Officers agreed to provide an update regarding whether the contract for the Responsive Security Patrol had recently been extended.

ACTION BY: Director of Property Management (DW)

The DMC expressed its concern regarding the fact that officers in the Responsive Security Patrol had no powers of arrest, and without that whether the service was fit for purpose. The DMC felt that this matter should be considered by the Council.

ACTION BY: Director of Public Safety

RESOLVED –

THAT the action tracker be noted.

8. HOUSING SERVICES REPORT

Consideration was given to the report from the Directors of Housing and Property Management.

HRA Budget

Emma Cardoso, Team Leader (HRA & Capital Projects) Strategic Finance, took the meeting through the report and she along with Councillor Meric Apak, Cabinet Member Better Homes, gave the following key responses to questions:

- Following the outcome of the Government's rent cap consultation, officers would be proposing a 7% rent increase to the Cabinet in January, along with

appropriate service charge increases. A savings plan had been identified that would seek to ensure that a balanced HRA was achieved. In order to ensure a linked approach was being undertaken, the Council would be considering its Medium Term Financial Strategy at the same time as the HRA Budget and Service Charge report.

- The HRA was a ring fenced budget, so officers would always take a robust approach regarding any requests to seek to move general fund costs to the HRA.
- Officers agreed to ensure that the report going to the January meeting of the DMCs regarding HRA Budget and service charge increase would clearly breakdown the 70% of tenants who were in receipt of Housing Benefit and Universal Credit, so it would identify those in receipt of the full amount and those that were entitled to a lesser percentage. Also they would include the average wage figure and the average wage increase for Camden residents, along with information regarding the impact the recent Census information (which showed a population reduction), would have on future resources available to Council and the HRA. They also wanted to see information in the January report to Cabinet and the DMCs regarding the costs to the HRA of successful leaseholder challenges

ACTION BY: Director of Finance (EC)

- A report would be going to the Cabinet and Housing Scrutiny Committee in December 22 that would be setting out the Council's approach to putting in place a purchase programme for Family Friendly Housing. The report would set out the context, aims, delivery proposals, process, estimated budget and proposed governance for the Overcrowding Strategy that would cover the next 5 years.
- The proposals would enable the Council to provide more support to overcrowded families and buy back former Right-to-Buy (ex-Council) homes in the borough, to increase the number of bedrooms and bed spaces so that more overcrowded families on the housing register could be accommodated in Council homes, using receipts from small and/or unsuitable properties. The report would also cover the Council's approach to assisting tenants that wished to downsize. The resources generated from this programme would be ring-fenced to fund the scheme.
- The Council was seeking to ensure that it was able to maximise its resources from its commercial property portfolio through a reduction in voids or to identify under-utilised assets, rather than just seeking to maximise rental income.
- The Council was also seeking to ensure that garage rents were more in line with the levels charged by other local authorities or similar garages nearby. The approach being proposed would seek to move garage rents towards these figures over the next 3 years.
- The HRA would be used to fund the debt servicing of the budget as part of its normal budgeting process.
- Officers would provide further information in relation to the individual metering installation programme for all tenants.

**ACTION BY: Director Property
Management (DW)**

- DMC members would be offered finance training in the new year.

The DMC had concerns regarding the level of transparency regarding the HRA and service charge proposals; whether the approach being taken fully met the required CIPTFA guidance; whether the Council was meeting its legal obligations and really balancing the HRA by the approach being taken in relation to repairs and planned maintenance.

Repairs

Danny Waite, Head of Repairs and Operations, took the meeting through the report and gave the following key responses to questions:

- The Repairs Service work programme was now dealing with normal work requests after meeting its pandemic backlog. Satisfaction levels were improving but there was still some concerns from tenants regarding the waiting times for a repair, which was still taking longer than before the pandemic.
- Officers were aware of legal firms contacting tenants regarding disrepairs and were taking a robust approach in dealing with action as a result of these interactions. It was hoped that once a fee cap was brought in by the Government next year that these claims would reduce.
- The general work that the Council had been doing to improve tenants homes had put the authority in a good place when claims did arise, especially in relation to the leading work the Repairs Service had done regarding its approach in handling damp and mould issues. Social housing providers were now seeking to actively tackle this issue, something the Government and the Housing Ombudsman were also taking more seriously. As a leading authority in setting out a successful approach to tackling damp and mould, the Council was in a very good position to offer guidance on how to deal with these issues. This was something that the service was now doing on a regular basis.
- Due to living in cramped conditions with inadequate space for the number of residents, overcrowded families were at an increased risk of having damp and mould in their homes. Neighbourhood Housing Officers would discuss this as part of their tenant visits and provide advice, guidance and signposting.
- The Repairs Service would proactively contact overcrowded families on the housing register, prioritising those at increased risk with small children, to check if there is damp in the home. A letter would be going out to tenants encouraging them to report damp and mould, together with an awareness raising factsheet on how to reduce moisture in the home. A You Tube clip providing guidance and demonstrating practical actions was in development and education and awareness training would be delivered to staff, partner agencies and residents.

- The Repairs Service was now seeking to look at how it could pro-actively help vulnerable and high risk tenants with their housing repairs issues before they became an issue. This would require the service to identify what the thresholds were to be considered a high risk tenant and what repairs services they could then expect from the Council.
- The Repairs Service was pulling together an asset strategy that would seek to identify what needed to be done on a cyclical basis to keep homes in good order. This would then provide the programme for future planned works.

The DMC suggested that officers may want to consider whether the process for allowing leaseholders to undertake work themselves should be made easier and quicker.

Housing Transformation

Glendine Shepherd, Director of Housing, took the meeting through the report and gave the following key responses to questions:

- Officers agreed to provide further information in relation to rent arrears collection data.

ACTION BY: Director of Housing (AS)

- An income collection team had been set up to allow officers to focus solely on helping tenants meet their rent obligations. Where necessary rent payment plans could be put in place to help them do so.
- Neighbourhood Housing Officer contact details were being made available to all tenants, as part of this process this information would be made available on notice boards that would be put up in communal areas.

The DMC suggested that the Council may want to consider having a clear line on tenant's alterations to their homes so that they were clear about what they could and could not do.

RESOLVED –

THAT the report be noted

At 8.40pm the meeting agreed to adjourn for 10 minutes. The meeting then reconvened at 8.50pm.

9. CAMDEN TOWN DMC BUDGET

Consideration was given to the report of the Head of Landlord Services

The DMC noted that no bids had been submitted for the meeting to consider. The meeting also asked officers again to ensure that the Bridgeway Street bid was listed in the report itself.

ACTION BY: Head of Landlord Services

The meeting noted that a special meeting to deal with budget bids would be held on 18th January 2023 and TRAs should ensure that all bids met the appropriate deadlines for the meeting. This meeting would also consider other issues and these would be determined closer to the time by the Chair.

ACTION BY: TRAs/DMC Chair

RESOLVED –

THAT the report and actions above be noted.

10. DMC CHAIRS PAPER - COMPLAINTS PANEL

Consideration was given to the information from the DMC Chairs regarding the complaints survey.

The DMC noted the number of tenants who had responded to the survey and felt it would have been helpful had more responses been received.

The Chair advised the meeting that any views or issues that DMC representatives had on the information should be fed back to Peter Wright, Chair of Holborn DMC, or her who would then forward the information on.

ACTION BY: DMC representatives

RESOLVED –

THAT the information be noted

11. LOCAL ISSUES

Cost of Living meeting

It was noted that all DMC representatives were invited to attend the Cost of Living Meeting taking place in December that had been arranged by local councillors.

Meeting with local councillors

The Chair advised the meeting that she would be meeting with local councillors to discuss issues of concern in due course.

ACTION BY: DMC Chair

12. UPDATE FROM THE CABINET MEMBER FOR BETTER HOMES

Councillor Meric Apak, Cabinet Member Better Homes, welcomed the constructive nature of the meeting and willingness of the DMC to work together with the Council to improve service delivery. He felt that housing services were moving in the right direction, and the housing transformation programme was the next part of the cultural change process. He welcomed the work that officers had done in improving the Council's approach to tackling damp and mould. This had led to the Council being a leading example in this field, with many local authorities now seeking to copy Camden's approach in dealing with these issues.

RESOLVED –

THAT the update be noted

13. ANY OTHER BUSINESS THAT THE CHAIR CONSIDERS URGENT

There were none.

The meeting ended at 9.15 pm.

CHAIR

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MINUTES END