

THE LONDON BOROUGH OF CAMDEN

At a meeting of the **KENTISH TOWN DISTRICT MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE** held on **TUESDAY, 14TH JUNE, 2022** at 6.30 pm in the Remote meeting via Zoom

REGISTERED DMC MEMBERS PRESENT

Derek Jarman (Chair)	Kennistoun & Willingham TRA
Momota Khatun (Vice-Chair)	St Pancras Way Estate TRA
Jane McWilliams (Vice-Chair)	Brookfield Estate TRA
Steve Barton	Holly Lodge TRA
Costa Costa	Brookfield Estate TRA
John Cowley	Camden Square TRAs
Petra Dando	Camden Association of Street Properties
June Dodds	Peckwater Estate Tenants Association
Helen Duff	Ingestre Road Tenants Association
Jane Hickson	Leighton Crescent TRA
Helen Jack	Lissenden Gardens Tenants Association
Andrew Peirce (sub)	Camden Association of Street Properties
Hazel Saunders	Una House TRA
John Webb (sub)	Kennistoun & Willingham TRA

OTHER RESIDENTS PRESENT

Joanna Hill	Maiden Lane TRA
Pauline Stafford	Maiden Lane TRA

COUNCILLOR OBSERVERS PRESENT

Councillors Cameron Aref-Adib, Sylvia McNamara, James Slater, Anna Wright

OTHER COUNCILLORS PRESENT

Councillors Meric Apak, Cabinet Member Better Homes

OFFICERS PRESENT

Hugh Boatswain	Tenant Participation
Tara Cookson	Neighbourhood Manager
Ododo Dafe	Head of Housing Transformation
Michael Killeen	Head of Strategic Asset Management & Compliance
Stanton La Foucade	Tenant Participation
Wayne Head	Principal Caretaking Manager
Glendine Shepard	Director of Housing
Angela Spooner	Head of Landlord Services
Danny Waite	Head of Repairs and Operations

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 Kentish Town District Management Committee and any corrections approved at that meeting will be recorded in those minutes.

MINUTES

1. REGISTRATION OF TENANTS' AND RESIDENTS' ASSOCIATIONS AND CO-OPTION OF TENANT 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.

RESOLVED –

THAT the 'A' and 'B' lists be noted.

2. ELECTION OF CHAIR

Nominations were received for Derek Jarman and Petra Dando.

Petra Dando expressed gratitude for the nomination but did not wish to stand due to her commitments as Chair of the Camden Association of Street Properties Committee.

No other nominations were received.

Therefore, it was resolved

RESOLVED –

THAT Derek Jarman be elected Chair for the 2022/2023 Municipal Year.

3. REMOTE MEETINGS

RESOLVED –

THAT the Chair be authorised to hold the DMC meeting as a remote meeting.

4. ELECTION OF VICE-CHAIR

Nominations were received for Momota Khatun and Jane McWilliams. There were no further nominations.

Therefore, it was

RESOLVED –

THAT Momota Khatun and Jane McWilliams be elected Vice-Chairs for the 2022/23 Municipal Year.

5. APOLOGIES

Apologies for absence were received from Josh Cedar, Andrew Peirce and Sue Robertson and Sophie Rodger.

6. ANNOUNCEMENTS

There were no announcements.

7. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST OF ITEMS ON THIS AGENDA

There were no declarations of interest.

8. NOTIFICATIONS OF ANY ITEMS OF BUSINESS THAT THE CHAIR DECIDES TO TAKE AS URGENT

There were no notifications of any items of urgent business.

9. MINUTES

Consideration was given to the minutes of the previous meeting.

RESOLVED –

THAT the minutes of the meeting held on 8th March 2022 be approved as a correct record.

10. KENTISH TOWN PROGRESS REPORT - ACTION POINTS UPDATE

Consideration was given to the progress report actions points arising from the previous meeting.

The Chair requested that information be sought on the viability of installing solar panels on the flat roofed properties.

11. HOUSING SERVICES CONSOLIDATED REPORT

Consideration was given to a report of the Director of Housing Management and the Director of Property Management.

Capital Works Update

Angela Spooner, Head of Landlord Services, updated the meeting on Capital Works drawing particular attention to the works that were to be undertaken to make homes more efficient. This work was crucial, especially in the context of rising fuel costs.

Michael Killeen, Head of Strategic Asset Management & Compliance, reported that works to windows, heating system, and roofing was planned to go ahead. Procurement activities were underway, and in some cases, the tendering stage had been completed.

DMC Members were pleased that the retrofitting work was progressing and asked what retrofitting work was going to be undertaken on street properties, especially as the design of these properties in Kentish Town meant that they were expensive to heat and fuel poverty was high in the area.

The Head of Strategic Asset Management & Compliance advised that pilot programmes for street properties had been undertaken and the Council would soon be in a position to begin retrofitting works on Street Properties. A briefing note would be provided.

ACTION: Head of Strategic Asset Management & Compliance

Voids Improvement Programme Update

Angela Spooner, Head of Landlord Services, advised that there had been a reduction in voids and there had been 28% more lettings than there had been pre-Covid in 2019/20. There had also been improvements in sheltered schemes and long-term voids. Strong performance had meant that the £1million savings target had been achieved. There would be a continued focus on improvement in order to achieve further savings targets.

Responding to a question about sheltered schemes, the Head of Landlord Services advised that those moving into sheltered accommodation would be moving out of previous tenancies and some will be completely new tenants.

DMC Members discussed issues with the allocation system and were concerned that some tenants who needed to move into more suitable accommodation, due to overcrowding for example, chose not to as they were not able to move within their community and would be placed elsewhere in the Borough so chose to stay in unsuitable accommodation.

The Head of Landlord Services explained that allocation scheme is Borough Wide so did not allow distinctions with regard to areas and those people who most overcrowding points get priority. The scheme had to be adhered to and allocation outside the scheme would be illegal. The scheme would be reviewed but it was a lengthy process, and a consultation would be required.

DMC Members recalled that there was previously an inter-estate housing policy and when a review of the allocation scheme was undertaken this should be considered.

Housing Repairs Contact Centre

Danny Waite, Head of Repairs and Operations, introduced the section on the housing repairs contact centre and provided an update on online repair reporting and call handling, highlighting that there had been a 40 – 50% decrease in call volumes, so calls were able to be answered more quickly, as more people used webchat to report repairs.

Responding to a question about the performance of external contractors, the Head of Repairs and Operations advised that there had been varying degrees of success and management worked with contractors, in the same way they would permanent staff, to ensure that performance was satisfactory and managing the contractors to high standards, however, some areas had better performance than others.

In response to a further question, the Head of Strategic Asset Management & Compliance advised that procurement activities were being considered for contracts for electrical work, but it was difficult to get these contracts and there was a high cost associated.

The Chair requested a visit be arranged to the contact centre for DMC Members. The Head of Repairs and Operations advised that he would contact the Head of Property Customer Services and Engagement to see if this was possible. Tenant Participation would assist in facilitating a visit, as necessary.

ACTION: Head of Repairs and Operations / Tenant Participation

DMC Members expressed concern that lighting was left on unnecessarily during the day, including the football pitch lighting near the Peckwater Estate, which was wasting energy and not cost efficient. The Head of Strategic Asset Management & Compliance advised that dusk to dawn timers were used, as well as LED lighting and other cost saving and efficiency measures.

Responding to a question about accessibility on the website, the Head of Repairs and Operations explained that a set of standards needed to be conformed to ensure accessibility and there were criteria of what could be put on the website to ensure it remained accessible. Work was underway to ensure that deaf and hard of hearing people were able to access services and had their needs met. For example, deaf interpreters and video capability were being considered.

DMC Members were pleased that this work was being undertaken and advised that a BSL 999 app was due to be launched and felt that it would be beneficial to carry out a benchmarking activity to identify best practise at other Councils.

Caretaking Performance Update

Angela Spooner, Head of Landlord Services, introduced the section on caretaking.

Responding to a question about covering caretakers, Wayne Head, Principal Caretaking Manager explained that it would be possible to inform TRAs when a covering caretaker was working, however it was not a priority. The Principal Caretaking Manager reminded DMC Members that caretaking schedules were displayed in the block entrances, and TRAs could contact their caretaking manger with enquiries using the information listed here.

DMC Members were happy with the caretaking work that was carried out on their estates. For example, at Peckwater much of the work was completed early in the day and it was clear that the caretakers did a good job on the estates, and it was a shame there had been complaints about the quality of the work as it was felt these were not warranted.

The community square at the Ingestre Road Estate had recently been jetwashed and this had had a positive effect on the area, because the estate was looking cleaner people were taking much more care in the area and there had been less littering.

Estate Parking

Angela Spooner, Head of Landlord Services introduced the section on estate parking and advised that a report would be on the agenda at the next meeting providing DMC Members with details on the Borough wide Traffic Management Orders.

Grounds Maintenance and Tree Management

Angela Spooner, Head of Landlord Services introduced the section.

Concern was raised about self-seeding tree and the damage they could potentially cause to properties. The Head of Landlord Services advised that there was a process in place for trees that caused damage to properties and explained that the Council's Tree Policy outlined this.

The meeting discussed grounds maintenance work that had been carried out and were pleased with the standard of the work that had been completed. However, several Members still had work outstanding on their estates, such as hedges that needed cutting back, and some residents had undertaken some of the work themselves. DMC Members requested an update on the outstanding tasks.

Landlord Services Performance Update

Angela Spooner, Head of Landlord Services introduced the section, drawing particular attention to the rent arrears and universal credit updates.

The meeting was advised that information on rent increases would come to the meeting that was scheduled for December and would cover the current position and outline options.

With regard to gas and electricity, purchase of supplies had been at higher prices than originally modelled during the 2022/2023 budget setting, which would be included in charges. However, there were no plans to increase charges for the district heating system.

The meeting was concerned that residents who started claiming universal credit did not get their first payment for six weeks, which would be a detriment on their ability to pay rent and enquired whether this issue had been raised with Central Government. Councillor Apak, Cabinet Member for Better Homes agreed to discuss this with the Leader of the Council.

CCTV and Responsive Security Patrol

Angela Spooner, Head of Landlord Services introduced the section advising that work on the Regents Park CCTV installation was underway and that the Peckwater Estate assessment was scheduled to take place in July. The installation of CCTV on estates would attract a service charge which would be payable by tenants in the financial year after installation was complete.

Responding to a question, the Head of Landlord Services advised that work on the CCTV installation was progressing well despite a number of issues including equipment shortage.

Complaints and Feedback

Angela Spooner, Head of Landlord Services introduced the section, which outlined the Council's new approach to complaints and the updated Housing Ombudsman's Complaints Handling Code.

In response to a question about identifying common themes in complaints, the Head of Landlord Services advised that this work will be undertaken as part of performance reviews and similar complaints would be linked so services can see trends or systemic issues and learn from these.

Responding to a follow up question about complaints about neighbours the Head of Landlord Services advised that a restorative approach was preferred, and mediation was offered to neighbours in dispute, however it was acknowledged that this was sometimes difficult. There were instances where this approach had been a success and examples of such would be included in performance reviews.

Creation of Residents Panel

Angela Spooner, Head of Landlord Services introduced the section, which advised the DMC that a Housing Resident Panel would be created.

The Head of Landlord Services explained that whilst the panel would be independent to the work of DMCs, TRA reps were encouraged to get involved.

Tenant Participation would be undertaking work on recruiting to that panel and it was envisioned that residents would be invited to apply or register their interest and a formal recruitment process would follow.

DMC Members noted that there had previously been a residents panel but felt that it had been ineffective. There were examples of resident's forums that worked well in other Authorities. It would be beneficial to receive information on why the previous residents panel was not effective and look at examples of good practice elsewhere. DMC Members felt the panel would be a good mechanism to get representative feedback and would give residents the opportunity to help drive improvements to services.

12. HOUSING OMBUDSMAN COMPLAINTS HANDLING CODE - DMC CHAIRS PROPOSALS

The Chair introduced the paper and gave an overview of the proposals.

The paper was noted.

13. KENTISH TOWN DMC BUDGET

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

Tara Cookson introduced the report and outlined the bids received, also reminding DMC Members of the bid criteria and process.

The meeting was advised that the bid for bike hangars at Abingdon Close was withdrawn by Camden Square TRA, due to lack of support by the residents.

The bids from Raglan TRA and Castle Road TRA were not agreed as representatives from these TRAs were not in attendance at the meeting.

Therefore, it was

RESOLVED –

THAT the following bids requests be approved:

TRA	BID REQUEST	AMOUNT
Camden Square TRA	Part funding for 1 x secure bicycle hanger	£1,600.00
Camden Square TRA	Gerda security panels for LFB drop key access to all 5 entrances at Camelot House	£4,285.00
Camden Square TRA	Gerda security panels for LFB drop key access to all 4 entrances at Bernard Shaw Court	£3,428.00
Camden Square TRA	Gerda security panels for LFB drop key access to all 4 entrances at Foster Court	£3,428.00
Camden Square TRA	Camden Square festival	£2,750.00
Lissenden Gardens TRA	Street festival	£4,320.00
Lissenden Gardens	Tennis coaching, tournament, and replacement net	£2,015.20
Peckwater TRA	50 Fire resistant chairs for TA hall	£1,875.75
St. Pancras Way TRA	6-week summer holiday project for children of the estate to tackle ASB, healthy eating, support for learning and vaccine awareness. A football tournament is also included	£2,500.00

14. KENTISH TOWN INFORMATION REPORT

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

Tara Cookson, Neighbourhood Manager, introduced the report and gave an overview of local updates.

An update was sought on the progress of a payment to of a bid from Ingestre Road TRA, which had not yet been received. The Neighbourhood Manager advised that an update on this payment would be provided by the end of the week.

The meeting discussed the bin store area at Leighton Crescent, it was noted that work on this project was ongoing and there were some issues to work out to ensure that the bins would fit. However, the project had come in under budget so the funding would be used on additional projects on the estate.

The report was noted.

15. INFORMATION ITEM - NEW HOMES FOR SMALL SITES PROGRAMME - LAUNCHING ON-ESTATE ENGAGEMENT

The information was noted.

16. ANY OTHER BUSINESS THAT THE CHAIR CONSIDERS URGENT

There was none.

The meeting ended at 8.55pm.

CHAIR

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MINUTES END