

HOUSING SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

**TUESDAY, 14 NOVEMBER 2023 AT 6.30 PM
COMMITTEE ROOM 1, TOWN HALL, JUDD STREET, LONDON WC1H 9JE**

**Enquiries to: Gianni Franchi, Committee Services
E-Mail: gianni.franchi@camden.gov.uk
Telephone: 020 7974 1914 (Text phone prefix 18001)**

MEMBERS

Councillor Kemi Atolagbe (Chair) (L)

Councillors Sagal Abdi-Wali (L), Richard Cotton (L), Nasrine Djemai (L), Tommy Gale (L), Eddie Hanson (L), Nancy Jirira (LD), Samata Khatoun (L),

C-opted Members

Bev Chambers, Ifrac Mahamoud and 1 vacancy

SUBSTITUTE MEMBERS

Councillors Nina De Ayala Parker (L), Edmund Frondigoun (L), Lloyd Hatton (L), Lorraine Revah (L), Tom Simon (LD) and Jonathan Simpson (L)

L = Labour, C = Conservative, LD = Liberal Democrat,

Issued on: Friday, 3rd November 2023

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HOUSING SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

14 NOVEMBER 2023

THERE ARE NO PRIVATE REPORTS

PLEASE NOTE THAT PART OF THIS MEETING MAY NOT BE OPEN TO THE PUBLIC AND PRESS BECAUSE IT MAY INVOLVE THE CONSIDERATION OF EXEMPT INFORMATION WITHIN THE MEANING OF SCHEDULE 12A TO THE LOCAL GOVERNMENT ACT 1972, OR CONFIDENTIAL WITHIN THE MEANING OF SECTION 100(A)(2) OF THE ACT.

AGENDA

Wards

1. **APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**

To consider any apologies for absence

2. **DECLARATIONS BY MEMBERS OF STATUTORY DISCLOSABLE PECUNIARY INTERESTS, COMPULSORY REGISTERABLE NON-PECUNIARY INTERESTS AND VOLUNTARY REGISTERABLE NON-PECUNIARY INTERESTS IN MATTERS ON THIS AGENDA**

3. **ANNOUNCEMENTS**

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

5. **MINUTES**

To consider the minutes of the meeting held on 11th September 2023.

(Pages 7 -
16)

6. **DEPUTATIONS**

Requests to speak at the Committee on a matter within its terms of reference must be made in writing to the clerk named on the front of this agenda by 5pm two working days before the meeting.

7. **APPOINTMENT OF A CO-OPTED MEMBER**

Report of the Director of Property Management.

All Wards

(Pages 17 -
18)

This report provides information on the process for filling the vacant co-opted members position on the Housing Scrutiny Committee

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|------------|---|------------------|
| 8. | HOUSING ASSOCIATIONS ANNUAL PERFORMANCE REPORT | All Wards |
| | Report of the Director of Housing | (Pages 19 - 26) |
| | This report provides annual performance information for the four housing associations (HAs) with the majority of HA stock in the borough and a summary of HAs' performance in the delivery of new homes. | |
| 9. | HOUSING PERFORMANCE REPORT | All Wards |
| | Report of the Director of Housing | (Pages 27 - 36) |
| | This report provides an update on performance for various aspects of the Housing service. | |
| 10. | PROPERTY MANAGEMENT UPDATE | All Wards |
| | Report of the Director of Property Management | (Pages 37 - 48) |
| | This report provides an update on a range of property management services: repairs including damp and mould; building and fire safety; planned maintenance and retrofit; the Asset Management Strategy and roll out of the CCTV network across Camden's estates. It also provides the November 2023 update on fire risk assessment actions. | |
| | The work outlined in this report supports a number of the ambitions set out in We Make Camden, in particular making sure Camden has enough decent, safe, warm, and family-friendly housing to support its communities. | |
| 11. | UPDATE FROM CABINET MEMBER FOR BETTER HOMES | All Wards |
| | To consider the report from the Cabinet Member Better Homes who has provided an update to the Committee regarding housing rent arrears, voids, and repairs. | (Pages 49 - 56) |
| 12. | WORK PROGRAMME AND FORWARD PLAN | All Wards |
| | Report of the Director of Property Management | (Pages 57 - 68) |

This report suggests a possible work programme for the scrutiny committee

13. ANY OTHER BUSINESS THAT THE CHAIR CONSIDERS URGENT

AGENDA ENDS

The date of the next meeting will be Monday, 18 December 2023 at 6.30 pm in Committee Room 1, Town Hall, Judd Street, London WC1H 9JE.

THE LONDON BOROUGH OF CAMDEN

At a meeting of the **HOUSING SCRUTINY COMMITTEE** held on **MONDAY, 11TH SEPTEMBER, 2023** at 6.30 pm in Committee Room 1, Town Hall, Judd Street, London WC1H 9JE

MEMBERS OF THE COMMITTEE PRESENT

Councillors Kemi Atolagbe (Chair), Sagal Abdi-Wali, Richard Cotton, Nasrine Djemai, Tommy Gale, Eddie Hanson, Nancy Jirira, Samata Khatoon and Bev Chambers (co-opted member)

MEMBERS OF THE COMMITTEE ABSENT

Ifrax Mahamoud and Andrea Radice (co-opted members)

ALSO PRESENT

Councillor Georgia Gould, Leader of the Council, for item 7
Councillor Pat Callaghan, Deputy Leader of the Council, for item 7
Councillor Meric Apak, Cabinet Member Better Homes

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 Housing Scrutiny Committee and any corrections approved at that meeting will be recorded in those minutes.

MINUTES

1. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were received from Andrea Radice and Ifrax Mahamoud (co-opted members) and Glendine Shepherd (Director of Housing).

2. DECLARATIONS BY MEMBERS OF STATUTORY DISCLOSABLE PECUNIARY INTERESTS, COMPULSORY REGISTERABLE NON-PECUNIARY INTERESTS AND VOLUNTARY REGISTERABLE NON-PECUNIARY INTERESTS IN MATTERS ON THIS AGENDA

There were none.

3. ANNOUNCEMENTS

Broadcasting of the meeting.

The Chair advised the meeting that due to technical issues the meeting was not able to be broadcast.

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

There were none.

5. MINUTES

Consideration was given to the minutes of the meeting held on 11th July 2023.

RESOLVED –

THAT the minutes of the meeting held on 11th July 2023 be approved and signed as a correct record.

6. DEPUTATIONS

There were none.

7. BUILDING SAFETY ACT & REGULATORY STANDARDS

Consideration was given to the report of the Director of Property Management.

Gavin Haynes, Director of Property Management, took the meeting through the report and he along with Councillor Georgia Gould, Leader of the Council, Gillian Marston, Executive Director Supporting Communities, Dominic Johnson, Head of Resident & Building Safety, and Ododo Dafe, Head of Innovation and Improvement, gave the following key responses to questions:

- The Council had obtained resources to pay for the Chalcots capital works and some other capital works carried out on the Cromer Estate (approximately £87.6M), and through the court settlement relating to the Chalcots. However, the ancillary costs regarding the evacuation, and the costs attached to the implementation of the Fire Safety and Building Safety Acts had mainly to be borne by the Council's own HRA, as additional Government resources had not been provided. This had meant that the Council has had to provide approximately £200M from its own resources to fund most of these requirements. The Council would continue to lobby the Government for local authorities to be given appropriate additional burden resources to fund these additional duties and responsibilities.

- The procurement of contractors to undertake works was a challenging process due to market volatility, so the Council was taking an agile approach when possible so the works could be undertaken, delivered and monitored effectively.
- Officers were working with the Regulator of Social Housing (RSH) regarding the way forward for the Council following the regulatory notice, and they would share the action plan arising from the regulatory notice once it had been signed off by the Regulator of Social Housing.

ACTION BY: Director of Property Management

- The Council was proactively getting on and delivering the works outlined in the regulatory notice and when the RSH returns in the autumn, it was expected that the authority would be able to provide evidence that it was on the right pathway for the delivery of the required works.
- The Council remained focussed on achieving the highest standards of resident safety and had been part of the Government's early adopter group; put in place and delivered fire risk assessments for its Council homes; and set up a Fire Safety & Compliance Advisory Panel (FS& CAP) to contribute to ongoing developments in fire safety and monitor the Council's delivery of its own fire safety works. Further thought was also being given regarding the membership of the FS&CAP so it could involve all the political groups on the Council, along with whether an independent co-chair should be brought in to work with the resident co-chair.
- The Council had a good record of informing its own residents regarding the duties and responsibilities arising from the new regulatory framework. The Council also had been working with other providers who would also be required to take on some of these responsibilities to ensure that they shared information with their own tenants. Officers would provide members with a copy of the briefing information being provided to private rented sector landlords.

ACTION BY: Director of Property Management

- The Council had put in place a plan to contact commercial property owners to ensure that they and those people who lived above such premises were also aware of the new fire safety regulatory responsibilities.
- The Council had not noticed an increase in fire safety issues being raised by the public following the issuing of the regulatory notice.
- The Council would be working with the LFB Borough Commander regarding the sharing of joint publicity regarding the dangers of E-Bikes batteries and how and where they should be stored safely.
- The Council now had 85 overdue high-risk actions that mainly related to door replacement works, and it was anticipated that the bulk of these works would be completed in the early autumn. Progress on these and the other

outstanding works was being considered by internal monitoring arrangements, as well as the FSCAP. The Council had also been working with specialist third party advisors to develop its approach to the implementation of the fire and building safety regulatory framework. This would lead to a third-party audit of the Council's processes so that it could meet British Standard 9997. The results of this undertaking would be shared with members when it was available.

ACTION BY: Director of Property Management

- In preparing for the new consumer standards, the Council would be undertaking a survey of tenant's satisfaction that would start in September 23. The survey would contain the views of a random sample of tenants and provide valuable information on how they felt the Council was delivering its housing services.
- The Council's damp and mould initiative had brought to light over 6,000 cases after the initial campaign of which only 400 remained to be dealt with. Out of those 6,000 cases only 12 people needed to be decanted to enable damp and mould to be rectified in their homes. Going forward the Council now had valuable information regarding where such issues were, and would be contacting those tenants in the future to see if they still had these problems.
- The master key access programme for street properties only related to communal areas and not an individual's home.
- Officers would provide further information regarding the key issues arising from the estate action initiatives.

ACTION BY: Director of Housing

Following consideration of the report and responses the meeting,

RESOLVED -

- i) THAT the report be referred to full Council at its meeting 18 September 2023 for discussion and noting;
- ii) THAT it be recommended that the LFB Borough Commander and the current and/or past resident chair of the Fire Safety and Compliance Advisory Panel be invited to speak at Full Council at the meeting on 18th September 23 about their experience;
- iii) THAT the fire safety and regulatory standard be a standing item on the agenda for the scrutiny committee for the rest of the municipal year;
- iv) THAT members of the scrutiny committee receive a monthly update on performance of fire safety actions and any progress made and possible risk. This will also include updates on all areas of compliance (repairs/estate service/landlord service and capital works); the installation of hard wired smoke and carbon monoxide detectors; whether all buildings have had the FRAEW test; the BS9997 third party audit (evidence to be provided that this

has been undertaken (4.10)); the outstanding high risk actions; the Building Safety Case reports on the Council's high rise blocks; and on the clearing of combustible items with a focus on how the Council would support vulnerable residents to achieve this;

- v) THAT a report be submitted to the scrutiny committee on the tenant satisfaction regulatory survey when completed (2.16);
- vi) THAT officers provide updates to members of the scrutiny committee on the council's work to meet the new consumer standard (2.15); and with regards to self-assessment against the consumer standards, an update on the compliance against each of the standards and any action needed (2.16); and
- vii) THAT a report be submitted to the next meeting of the scrutiny committee regarding the Decent Homes Standard and an update on the 2023 stock conditions survey.

ACTION BY: Director of Property Management/Director of Housing

8. UPDATE ON COUNCIL'S STRATEGY TO TACKLE OVERCROWDING AND PURCHASE FAMILY FRIENDLY HOMES

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

Ododo Dafe, Head of Innovation and Improvement, took the meeting through the report and she gave the following key responses to questions:

- Officers would seek to ensure that the downsizing offer was widely known amongst tenants in the borough. The information would be more widely shared with other places within the borough that were well accessed by tenants (e.g., community centres, G.P surgeries, as well as family hubs).
- Housing officers worked with colleagues in adult social care and children's services to ensure that they were able to reach those tenants that needed assistance, because they were living in overcrowded homes or may wish to downsize.
- The Council worked alongside the tenant to understand their experiences and needs, this in-turn would help the development of a bespoke approach to their needs. The approach being followed had been shaped by the learning achieved from the visits to the 22 severely overcrowded families that was undertaken in January 2023, and the subsequent workshops with staff. Increases in the number of tenants seeking to downsize required a multifaceted approach that could not be solely achieved through the offer of increased financial incentives. When appropriate overcrowded households could be offered, a storage shed at no extra cost if that would help ease their situation. This offer could also be used to help in other circumstances.
- Officers were using the data from the choice based lettings system to see who was bidding for what types of properties, and through that checking which

overcrowded households weren't bidding to see if they could be encouraged to bid for homes in the scheme.

- The aim of the Family Friendly Housing Purchase Programme was to purchase family size former right to buy properties. This would be entirely funded by capital receipts from the sale of several categories of housing that were uneconomical or of low social value or both.

RESOLVED –

THAT the report be noted.

9. COUNCIL'S CORPORATE PERFORMANCE QUARTER 4 END OF YEAR 22/23

Consideration was given to the report of the Executive Directors of Supporting People, Supporting Communities and Corporate Services.

Gavin Haynes, Director of Property Management, took the meeting through the report and he along with Ododo Dafe, Head of Innovation and Improvement, gave the following key responses to questions:

- Officers agreed to provide further information regarding the 'Cost of Living' support being provided by the Camden Advice Network (e.g. where the support was based, types of concerns being presented, number on waiting lists to access advice and how long on average were they on a waiting list for, and what happens to those on agency waiting lists). Also, further information to be provided regarding accessing the temporary accommodation homes the council has, the support provided through that process, and storage available on estates.

ACTION BY: Head of Innovation and Improvement/Head of Neighbourhoods

- Officers would also provide further information regarding rough sleeper support provision (e.g. numbers contacted, where they were located, what support they were provided with, and repeat person contact)

ACTION BY: Director of Public Safety/Director of Housing

- Officers were working hard to speed up the gas certification process to ensure that the whole project was undertaken as quickly as possible.

RESOLVED –

THAT the report be noted.

10. HOMELESSNESS SCRUTINY PANEL

Consideration was given to the report of the Chair of the Scrutiny Committee.

The scrutiny committee agreed to the establishment of a scrutiny panel to look at homelessness with the terms of reference as set out in the paper, with Councillor Richard Cotton as the panel chair, along with Councillors Kemi Atolagbe, Tommy Gale and Nancy Jirira as the other members. The panel would submit its final panel report to the scrutiny committee at its February meeting at the latest.

RESOLVED –

That the Homelessness Scrutiny Panel be established as identified above.

**ACTION BY: Director of Housing
(JH)/Director of Corporate
Strategy and Policy Design (IDLC)**

11. WORK PROGRAMME AND FORWARD PLAN

Consideration was given to the report of the Director of Property Management.

The meeting was advised that the work programme should be revised to add for the November meeting the Cabinet report on the Resident Safety Programme – Implementation of the Fire and Building Safety Acts (Cabinet Report) and the Decent Homes Standard and an update on the 2023 stock condition survey. Also, to revise the January meeting with the report of the Cabinet Adviser: Leaseholder Billing and Service Charges to be moved to the February meeting. The final report of the Homelessness Scrutiny Panel was to be considered at the February meeting at the latest, though it could come to an earlier meeting if the work was completed sooner. All remaining meetings for the municipal year would have an update on fire safety and regulatory standard.

The scrutiny committee also wished to see added to the programme reports on the Tenants Satisfaction Regulatory Survey, when it was available. Also, update reports should be provided regarding the Cabinet Adviser reports on Supporting Rough Sleepers, Estates Mission and Tenants Participation.

The scrutiny committee asked the Cabinet Member for Better Homes if his next report to the meeting could include information regarding rent arrears, repairs (including lifts and what the issues were along with proposals for improvement), and voids.

**ACTION BY: Cabinet Member Better
Homes**

Housing Scrutiny Committee - Monday, 11th September, 2023

Members asked that officers ensure that they provide responses to actions in good time rather than waiting for the next meeting of the scrutiny committee to provide the update.

Officers agreed to set up visits to the Council's temporary accommodation sites for members of the scrutiny committee to attend.

ACTION BY: Director of Housing

Programme of meetings (new items in bold)

Meeting date: Tuesday 14th November

Items:

- Repairs and improvement
(This report to include information on planned maintenance and the retrofit programme; roll-out of CCTV across the borough, damp and mould)
- Housing Association update report
(A report on the activity from Housing Associations in the borough – including the build of new homes; how they are tackling key issues such as damp and mould).
- Housing Services Performance Update
- **Resident Safety Programme – Implementation of the Fire and Building Safety Acts (Cabinet Report)**
- **Update on fire safety and regulatory standard.**
- **Decent Homes Standard and an update on the 2023 stock condition survey**
- Cabinet Member better Homes – Update
- Work programme

Meeting date: Monday 18th December

- Housing needs and allocations
- Housing Supply:
 - *CIP delivery including small sites (Cabinet report)*
 - *Temporary Accommodation Purchasing Programme*
 - *Private rented sector*
- HRA Budget Update
- **Update on fire safety and regulatory standard.**
- Cabinet Member better Homes – Update
- Work programme

JANUARY 2024

- HRA rent setting (Cabinet report)
- Tenancy arrears
- Cost of Living issues
- **Update on fire safety and regulatory standard.**

Housing Scrutiny Committee - Monday, 11th September, 2023

- Cabinet Member Better Homes – Update
- Work programme

FEBRUARY 2024

- CIP annual report
- Cabinet Member Better Homes annual report
- **Update on fire safety and regulatory standard.**
- **Report of Cabinet Adviser: Leaseholder billing and service charges**
- **Homelessness Scrutiny Panel – Provisional date**
- Work programme

Yet to be programmed

- **Tenants Satisfaction Regulatory Survey, when it was available.**
- **Update reports regarding the Cabinet Adviser reports on Supporting Rough Sleepers, Estates Mission and Tenants Participation.**

RESOLVED –

THAT the report work programme be revised as outlined above.

**ACTION BY: Director of Housing/Director
of Property Management**

12. ANY OTHER BUSINESS THAT THE CHAIR CONSIDERS URGENT

There were none.

The meeting ended at 8.45 pm.

CHAIR

Contact Officer: Gianni Franchi

Telephone No: 020 7974 1914

E-Mail: gianni.franchi@camden.gov.uk

MINUTES END

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LONDON BOROUGH OF CAMDEN	WARDS: All
REPORT TITLE Co-opted members of the Housing Scrutiny Committee	
REPORT OF Director of Property Management	
FOR SUBMISSION TO Housing Scrutiny Committee	DATE 14 th November 2023
SUMMARY OF REPORT This report provides information on the process for filling the vacant co-opted members position on the Housing Scrutiny Committee. Local Government Act 1972 – Access to Information No documents that require listing have been used in the preparation of this report. Contact Officer: Gavin Haynes Director of Property Management 020 7974 1955 gavin.haynes@camden.gov.uk	
RECOMMENDATION That the Housing Scrutiny Committee approves the nominated co-opted member to join the Committee for the remainder of the 2023/24 municipal year in line with the Chair's recommendations.	



Signed:

Date: 2 November 2023

1. Purpose of report

- 1.1 The purpose of this report is to provide an update on the proposal to fill the vacant co-opted member position on the Housing Scrutiny Committee and seek approval from the Committee members on the candidate put forward by the Chair.

2. Introduction

- 2.1 The Council's Constitution (part 4: item 3) includes provision for co-opted members of Scrutiny committees.
- 2.2 The Constitution states that: "Each scrutiny committee shall be entitled to appoint a number of people as nonvoting co-optees. Non-Voting co-optees are members of the committees and as such count towards the quorum as part of the 'elected membership.'"
- 2.3 One of the benefits of having co-opted members is that they can enable a broader discussion and an 'outside view' of services received. There is also an opportunity to draw on expertise as well as a member's lived experience. This can complement the existing skills, knowledge and experience of current Committee members.
- 2.4 Three co-optees were appointed onto the Committee in July 2023 for the 2023/24 Municipal year following a recruitment process.

3. Co-opted vacancy

- 3.1 Sadly, there is currently one vacant position for co-optee members following the unexpected death of Andrea Radice.
- 3.2 It is proposed that this vacancy is filled by Victor Seedman for the remainder of the 2023/24 Municipal year. Victor Seedman has previously sat on the Housing Scrutiny Committee as a co-opted member and was on the reserve list for this Municipal year.
- 3.3 Later in the year the Council will invite applications for the 2024/25 Municipal years from Council tenants and leaseholders, in addition to representatives from Housing Associations and the Private Rented Sector.

4. Finance Comments of the Executive Director of Corporate Services

- 4.1 There are no resource implications arising for the Council.

5. Legal comments of the Borough Solicitor

- 5.1 There are no legal implications arising for the Council.

6.1 Environmental Implications

- 6.2 There are none.

REPORT ENDS

LONDON BOROUGH OF CAMDEN	WARDS: All
REPORT TITLE Housing Associations Annual Performance Report	
REPORT OF Director of Housing	
FOR SUBMISSION TO Housing Scrutiny Committee	DATE 14 th November 2023
<p>SUMMARY OF REPORT This report provides annual performance information for the four housing associations (HAs) with the majority of HA stock in the borough and a summary of HAs' performance in the delivery of new homes.</p> <p>Local Government Act 1972 – Access to Information No documents that require listing have been used in the preparation of this report.</p> <p>Contact Officer: Simone Melia Head of Housing Solutions 020 7974 6371 simone.melia@camden.gov.uk</p>	
<p>RECOMMENDATION That the Housing Scrutiny Committee notes and comments on the report.</p>	

Signed: 

Glendine Shepherd

Date: 2nd November 2023

1. Purpose of report

- 1.1 The purpose of the report is to provide annual performance information for the four housing associations (HAs) with most of the HA stock in the borough and a summary of HAs' performance in the delivery of new homes.

2. Introduction

- 2.1 There are 49 HAs who between them own and manage 12,306 homes in Camden. The majority of those HAs have relatively little stock in the borough but there are four that between them manage nearly two-thirds of the HA stock: One Housing (OH) who are part of the Riverside Group, Origin Housing, Notting Hill Genesis (NHG) and Clarion. This report therefore focuses largely on the performance of those four HAs.
- 2.2 The Council has little formal regulatory control over HAs but instead relies on its strategic partnership working with HAsu to resolve issues and to work together to meet borough wide priorities as set out in plans such as the Camden Plan and the Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Strategy.
- 2.3 This report has been prepared in accordance with the recommendations of a HA Scrutiny Panel that reported to a previous Housing Scrutiny Committee in 2015. The panel envisaged an annual performance report containing all the most pertinent data that could give the Housing Scrutiny Committee a window into the activities of the HAs, including:
- proceeds from sales of Camden units and reinvestment of the proceeds back into Camden/elsewhere.
 - number of voids on a given date
 - numbers of possession orders
 - number of changes to rent 'type' and tenancy agreement type.
 - tenancy lengths offered and whether the security is assured.
 - how many homes are being built by HAs in Camden

3. Sales of and investment in Camden HA stock 2022/23

- 3.1 Table 1 indicates nil sales this year. In recent years, Notting Hill Genesis has been the only HA making any significant number of disposals in the borough. Last year Clarion was the only HA that sold stock in the borough, and this was in fact one property where the remaining lease period was sold back to the charity freeholder. The property had been supported accommodation and had individual tenancies for the 8 rooms contained therein.

Table 1: Sale of HA stock 2022-23

HA	No of Units sold	Sales receipt
Clarion	0	Nil
NHG	0	Nil
OH	0	Nil
Origin	0	Nil

- 3.2 During bilateral meetings, the HAs have advised that they would only dispose of void properties that are uneconomic to manage or maintain, poorly performing or with high latent market value, with receipts from such disposals recycled to support investment in new and existing stock, although not necessarily in the borough.
- 3.3 Table 2 below shows the investment the four HAs made in 2022-23 in their existing Camden stock, including stock component replacements such as windows, boilers, kitchens and bathrooms, as well as cyclical works, which usually involves the following:
- painting and decorating externally
 - repairing, repainting and maintaining doors, windows and brickwork
 - repairing entrance gates, party walls, paving, shared stairs and drains
 - cleaning or replacing the flooring in shared areas.

Table 2: Investment in Camden stock 2022/23

HA	Total spend	Total stock in Camden
Clarion	£0.32m	1323
NHG	£1.55m	1748
OH	£0.61m	2452
Origin	£1.59m	2428

- 3.4 Clarion report that they are planning to invest £650k in the coming months on three blocks, including roof replacements at Bevan John House and Harpur Mews.

4. Managing tenancies

- 4.1 This section analyses data provided by the four HAs in relation to their Camden stock for voids, evictions, rent arrears, tenure changes, and new tenancies.
- 4.2 Table 3 below shows, for both 2021/22 and 2022/23, the average turnaround time for letting voids and the percentage of stock that was void. Turnaround data is notoriously difficult to benchmark as different organisations measure different elements of the process, but the table shows that, in 2022/23, Clarion took the longest to re-let its empty properties and had the highest percentage of stock void during the year.

Table 3: Average turnaround times and Voids 2021/22 and 2022/23

HA	Average turnaround time for letting (days)		% of Camden stock void during the year	
	2021/22	2022/23	2021/22	2022/23
Clarion	NA	153	2.6	5.2
NHG	42	42	2	2
OH	79	64	3.8	3.3
Origin	76	54	1.9	2.1

4.3 The table also shows marked differences from the previous analysis in the time that HAs are taking to let their empty properties. Origin and OH both improved their turnaround times. The Council is undertaking a review of the nominations process and meetings have been arranged with the HAs to identify the blockages and work on solutions where required.

4.4 Table 4 below shows the number of evictions carried out in Camden by the four HAs and the reasons for those evictions. It shows that the only reason for evictions was rent arrears.

Table 4: Evictions 2022/23

HA	Rent Arrears	Anti-Social behaviour	Illegal Occupation	TOTAL
Clarion	0	0	0	0
NHG	0	0	0	0
OH	1	0	0	1
Origin	2	0	0	2
Total	3	0	0	3

4.5 Table 5 below shows what the HAs' rent arrears were in Camden in 2022/23 as a percentage of rent roll. Origin has the most effective rent collection record whilst Clarion, although the highest, continue a downward trend as they recover from a major cyber-attack last year.

Table 5: Rent arrears 2022/23

HA	Rent arrears as % of rent roll
Clarion	6.7
NHG	4.9
OH	5.9
Origin	4.6

4.6 Table 6 below shows how many units in Camden each HA changed from social rent to Affordable Rent or market rent. In 2022/23, none of the big four HAs converted any social rent units to either of these tenures and, as a whole, the number of such conversions to Affordable Rent by HAs have stopped as the development programme that was funded in this way came to an end. In the recent past, Origin and OH converted units to market rent to support their development/refurbishment programmes and both have given assurances that they will convert these back to social rent within a few years, after the necessary funding has been raised.

Table 6: Tenure changes from social rent 2021/22 and 2022/23

HA	to affordable rent 21/22	to affordable rent 22/23	to market rent 21/22	to market rent 22/23
Clarion	0	0	0	0
NHG	0	0	0	0
OH	0	0	0	0
Origin	0	0	0	0

- 4.7 Table 7 below shows the number of new tenancies each HA issued in Camden in 2021/22 and 2022/23 and whether they were lifetime or fixed term tenancies. It shows the continued shift away from fixed term tenancies that were approximately two-thirds of new lettings in 2018/19, with only Clarion issuing any fixed term (normally five year) tenancies in 2022/23.

Table 7: New Tenancies 2021/22 and 2022/23

HA	Lifetime (Assured) 2021/22	Lifetime (Assured) 2022/23	Fixed term 2021/22	Fixed Term 2022/23
Clarion	21	32	5	5
NHG	26	26	0	0
OH	76	45	0	0
Origin	146	69	0	0
Total	269	172	5	5

5. Maintenance of properties

- 5.1 There are two main measures that the Council collects of a HA's repairs performance in Camden:
- the number and nature of enquiries from Members and MPs on behalf of the HA's tenants
 - the number and nature of referrals from the HA's tenants to the Council's Private Sector Housing Team (PSHT), which is responsible for providing advice and enforcing Environmental Health standards in relation to private sector housing, including HA stock.
- 5.2 Table 8 below shows the performance of the big four HAs in Camden in relation to these two measures over the last 12 months.

Table 8: Enquiries and complaints 1st October 2022 to 30th September 2023

HA	STOCK IN CAMDEN	MEMBER/MP ENQUIRIES	CLLR/MP ENQUIRIES RE REPAIRS	COMPLAINTS TO PSHT	LBC ENFORCEMENT NOTICES ISSUED
Clarion	1323	22	11	12	4
NHG	1748	17	13	12	3
OH	2452	31	17	8	4
Origin	2428	17	11	16	3
Total for all HAs and Co-ops in Camden	12306	105	68	70	20

5.3 The table shows that, proportionally, Clarion had the most Member/MP Enquiries, whilst NHG have the highest proportion of Member/MP Enquiries that are Repairs. OH, have the least complaints to PSHT but the highest proportion leading to statutory Notices.

6. Fire Safety

6.1 In general the HAs have policies to minimise risks of fire in properties, personal injury and property damage and statutory compliance (e.g., Building Act 2002) whilst implementing good practice.

6.2 Examples of policy include;

- Provide training and information to all key stakeholders.
- Provide adequate means of escape at all times.
- Ensure measures are taken to reduce fire and smoke spread.
- Provide and maintain where necessary suitable fire systems.
- Implement contingency arrangements in the event of a critical fire system failure.
- Implement a business continuity procedure.
- Discuss fire safety with other Duty Holders to meet legal requirements.
- Regular undertaking and review of Fire Risk Assessments (FRAs) across all properties.
- Effective procedures for the remediation and management of fire safety actions arising from FRAs.
- Maintaining and updating a property list and asset register for fire safety equipment.

- Ensuring appropriate contracts and management processes are in place for the testing, servicing, and maintenance of active and passive fire safety systems.
- Fostering and maintaining effective working relationships with regulatory bodies, including the Primary Authority Partnership with the London Fire Brigade.
- Monitoring and adapting to changes in legislation, guidance or best practice.
- NHG apply the precepts of the PAS 7 fire risk management system (BSI approved holistic management system across the entirety of an organisation) to develop a clear, formally documented system to reduce fire risk.
- Regular communication on fire safety matters with all relevant parties including residents and customers. Communication to include meeting groups of residents where required.

7. Damp and Mould

7.1 In general the HAs have a common approach to dealing with Damp and Mould cases and indeed the Council convened a meeting with the HAs and our own Repairs team in February 2023, where individual policies, best practice were discussed and similarities emerged, these include;

- Ensuring staff are trained on how to recognise, manage and identify solutions to damp, mould and condensation within homes and communal areas.
- Stock condition surveys as well as non-repairs related visits to pick up damp and mould issues.
- Multiple ways of reporting damp and mould concerns by tenants (live chat, WhatsApp, email, phone, in person, social media) to their HA
- Surveyor inspections usually within 10 working days of report
- Each report risk assessed and categorised according to the severity of the hazard.
- Real time monitoring and tracking of cases.
- Clear timescales for completion of work
- Decants where required.
- A system of aftercare/post works monitoring to minimise recurrence of issue.

Table 9: High risk Damp and Mould cases/decants.

HA	Severe Cases	Decants
Clarion	25	0
NHG	1	0
OH	N/A	2
Origin	8	2

7.2 Table 9 is a current snapshot of cases, we are expecting annual figures from next year onwards.

8. Development of new homes

8.1 Table 10 below shows the affordable housing delivered through HAs and the Council's Community Investment Programme (CIP) in each of the last five years.

Table 10: Development of new affordable homes 2018/19-2022/23

	2018/19		2019/20		2020/21		2021/22		2022-23	
	HAs	CIP	HAs	CIP	HAs	CIP	HAs	CIP	HAs	CIP
Social Rent Units	26	188	93	8	8	79	16	16	16	51
Affordable Rent Units	13	0	16	0	24	0	47	0	0	0
Intermediate Housing Units*	16	23	31	0	6	0	41	0	7	0
TOTALS	55	211	140	8	38	79	104	16	23	51

*Intermediate Rent and Shared Ownership

8.2 The table shows that HAs have delivered 360 affordable housing units over the last five years and CIP has delivered 365. HAs report that there are currently just under 400 units for social-affordable (social rent or London Affordable Rent) and 28 units for Affordable Rent in development /on-site with expected completion dates between October 2023 and August 2025.

9. Finance Comments of the Executive Director Corporate Services

9.1 The Director of Finance has been consulted and has no comments to add.

10. Legal Comments of the Borough Solicitor

10.1 The report provides an update on housing association activity in Camden and therefore there no legal implications for the Council.

11. Environmental Implications

11.1 This report provides an update on housing association activity in Camden and therefore there are no environmental implications arising for the Council.

REPORT ENDS

LONDON BOROUGH OF CAMDEN	WARDS: All
REPORT TITLE: Housing Performance Update	
REPORT OF: Director of Housing	
FOR SUBMISSION TO: Housing Scrutiny Committee	DATE: 14 November 2023
SUMMARY OF REPORT: This report provides an update on performance for various aspects of the Housing service.	
LOCAL GOVERNMENT ACT 1972 – ACCESS TO INFORMATION: No documents that require listing were used in the preparation of this report.	
CONTACT OFFICER: Ododo Dafé Head of Innovation and Improvement ododo.dafe@camden.gov.uk	
RECOMMENDATIONS: The Housing Scrutiny Committee is asked to comment on the report, provide feedback on its format, and advise on any specific areas it would like to see in the future.	

Signature: 

Glendine Shepherd

Date: 2nd November 2023

1. INTRODUCTION

Context

- 1.1 We Make Camden outlines the Council's ambition that everyone in Camden will have a place they can call home. The Housing service contributes to this ambition through the Council's role as a strategic housing authority – delivering services such as homeless prevention and advice, hostels and temporary accommodation, allocations and rehousing, services supporting people in the private rented sector, and partnership working with housing associations. The Housing service also contributes through the Council's role as a social housing landlord managing services to tenants and leaseholders of around 33,000 homes.
- 1.2 Council housing across the country, and especially in urban areas, is under immense pressure with national policy changes and decades of budget cuts impacting councils' resources. This long-term housing challenge has been exacerbated over recent years by the energy crisis, building and fire safety requirements, and challenges around damp and mould which have impacted the Council's financial reserves, as well as inflation which has increased pressures on the Housing Revenue Account.
- 1.3 The Council is responding to two new important regulatory frameworks that will change the way that councils deliver and report on services. The Building Safety Act 2022 requires a team of Building Safety Managers for tall buildings and new regimes for checking thousands of doors as part of wider cyclical checks, and new different IT systems and practices to accurately record and report on safety actions. To meet this requirement and bring homes up to a good standard of repair an investment of £180m is needed.
- 1.4 The Social Housing (Regulation) Act 2023 places new requirements on all social landlords in respect of the quality and safety of homes, and the quality of neighbourhoods and housing services – including complaints, anti-social behaviour, domestic abuse, tenant engagement and the provision of performance and other information to tenants.
- 1.5 As part of Camden's work to listen to and empower tenant voices both through tenancy visits and the intensive tenant participation programme, council staff have visited 4,750 homes and held multi-council team pop-up events on 15 council estates to discuss estate and service improvement with tenants. The Council is also working with Housemark who are currently conducting Camden's first tenant satisfaction survey as part of the Tenant Satisfaction Measures under the new regulatory regime. This survey will be completed by end March 2024.
- 1.6 Significant focus has recently been placed on establishing robust performance reporting arrangements and agreeing measures and targets to track. Housing services are focussing on improving performance in key areas of work. Temporary teams were established to give detailed attention to rent arrears management, the voids process and tenancy management, and the groundwork done in these teams provide the bedrock for upcoming structural and service improvements. There have also been major service reviews underway for homelessness and allocations areas of work.
- 1.7 As a result of the significant challenges ahead, the housing transformation aims to achieve the following outcomes:
 - Residents experience an empathetic, joined-up housing service and access the support they need quickly and effectively
 - Residents have access to decent, safe, warm and friendly housing and advice

- Camden’s estates and neighbourhoods have a greater sense of community cohesion and belonging
- Residents and staff are more connected, feel listened to and empowered; and their feedback is used to drive improvement

2. HOUSING SERVICES PERFORMANCE

2.1 Homelessness

	2020-21	2021-22	2022-23	2023 - YTD
Homeless approaches	2338	2322	2457	1734

- 2.1.1 Dwindling numbers of affordable private sector rented (PRS) accommodation, a tenuous renting landscape and consequent evictions has resulted in consistently high levels of homeless approaches in the last four years. The average PRS asking rent in London is 20% higher than pre-covid. In response, the Council is making use of targeted funding from central government to address the increasingly complex needs of rough sleepers and to support Camden’s Housing First approach. The Council will be developing short-term off-the-street accommodation, and an out of borough private rented accommodation offer for those who are not in priority need. The Council is also working to increase street outreach support and working with partners to target transport hubs and rough sleeping hotspots.
- 2.1.2 With the Home Office fast-tracking decisions to grant asylum seekers indefinite leave to remain, this group are increasingly approaching local authorities to apply as homeless. Homelessness approaches for those leaving Home Office accommodation increased by 270% since last year and from January to August 2023 alone and the number of people rough sleeping after receiving an asylum decision is three times as much as last year. The Council is developing short-term off-the-street accommodation, and an out of borough private rented accommodation offer for those with local connections. Work is also planned to target street outreach support and work with partners to target transport hubs and rough sleeping hotspots and have gained access to the Home Office portal so the Council can support those receiving asylum decisions sooner. Responding to this changing landscape, the Council have used central government funding for new homes for Afghan refugees and to support Ukrainian refugees into the PRS.
- 2.1.3 The Council acknowledges that homelessness is gendered, with women more likely to experience hidden forms and remain unsupported for longer than male counterparts. During September this year, Camden participated in the Women’s Rough Sleeping Census, a pan-London survey aiming to improve data on women’s homelessness and rough sleeping by advocating for targeted approaches to meet women’s needs. There were 44 responses in Camden (second highest in London) and significantly more women were reached and supported during gender-informed outreach.

2.1.4 A Homelessness Scrutiny panel has been set up to look at gaps in provision and make recommendations to improve the homelessness service. The panel will examine resident understanding and perceptions of homelessness and the experiences of accessing joined-up, holistic support for those who have been or are currently homeless.

2.2 Temporary Accommodation

	Q2 2022-23	Q3 2022-23	Q4 2022-23	Q1 2023-24	Q2 2023-24	% change Q2 2022 to Q2 2023
Number of households in TA	536	558	647	624	674	+25.7%

2.2.1 Temporary accommodation (TA) has been a particularly challenging area over recent years, with the numbers of residents occupying TA steadily rising. Despite Camden having the second lowest rate of residents in TA in London, the proportion of families in unsuitable TA (hotels and B&Bs) has been increasing over the last year.

2.2.2 Driven by the lack of PRS properties available for temporary accommodation, Camden is increasingly reliant on commercial hotels and B&Bs. A Temporary Accommodation Reduction Leads Group has been set up to address these issues, work together to seek alternative options, and to improve processes. This group will enable the Council to increase provision and move-on out of TA to meet the demand seen through the homeless front door.

2.2.3 The Council is also increasing the supply of self-contained accommodation to work towards getting all families out of hotels and B&Bs. Chester and Camden Road hostels are due to open in July 2025, providing an extra 86 family units for temporary accommodation use. Following on from the success in securing 133 properties through Temporary Accommodation Purchase Programme (TAPP) 1 and 2, the Council have also secured funding from DLUHC for a third phase, TAPP3, which will deliver an extra 50 units of TA by the end of next year.

2.3 Private Housing Sector

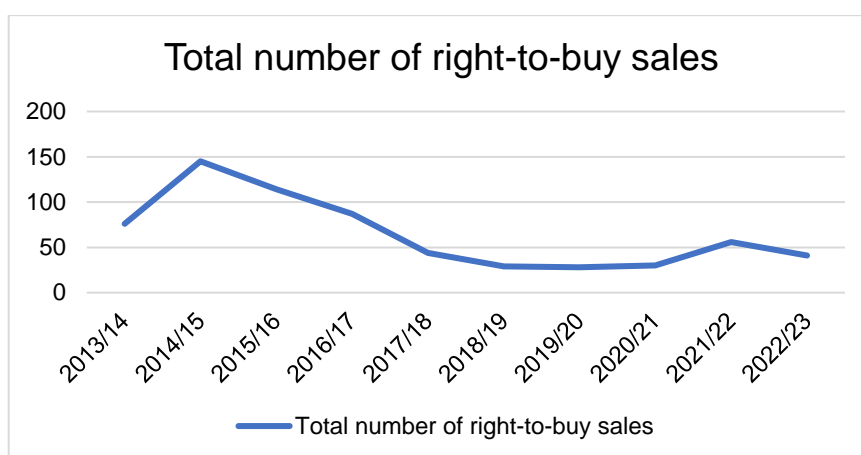
2.3.1 Housing services are working hard to improve standards in the private housing sector, ensuring Houses of Multiple Occupation (HMOs) are licensed. There are approximately 3,575 active HMO licences across the borough and the Private Sector Housing Team are on track to meet the Council's annual target to license 600 HMO properties, at the end of Q2 480 HMO properties were licensed. Whilst working in partnership with landlords is the preferred method, the Council will act where landlords are non-compliant with the service issuing Civil Penalty Notices to the value of £590,000 in the first half of this year.

2.3.2 The service is about to start a project to find unlicensed Section 257 HMOs as it estimates there to be approximately 1,000 such premises in Camden. Work is being planned to renew the current discretionary additional HMO scheme which is due to end December 2025.

2.4 Right to Buy

2.4.1 Right to Buy sales have reverted back to relatively low levels of sales completed prior to the increased discount introduced in 2012, with 46% less sales made in 2022/23 compared with 2013/4. The Council has secured additional funding from DLUHC to buy back properties sold under right-to-buy as part of Camden’s Temporary Accommodation Purchasing Programme (TAPP3).

2.4.2 Under TAPP1 and TAPP2 the Council bought back 133 properties, and once TAPP3 is completed this total is likely to be 183 new homes.



2.4.3 Despite low sales figures, applications for right to buy homes has remained high over the last few years, with applications slowing during the year to date so far.

Year	RTB 1 Apps Received	RTB Completions
21-22	226	56
22-23	204	40
23-to date	80	17

2.5 Management of empty council homes (voids)

2.5.1 The Housing directorate has made reducing void properties a priority, leading to the establishment of the Moving Homes Team. Consequently, void property management has shown improvement, with the number of average void turnaround days decreasing from 228 days in Q3 22/23 to 180 days in Q2 23/24. While there was a slight increase from 160 days in August to 202 days in September, this was primarily due to the ongoing work to return some of the Council’s longest-standing vacant homes back into use. As properties with longer

void periods are brought back into use, the average number of void days may intermittently rise.

2.5.2 The Repairs improvement plan has identified 15 streams of work which includes a workstream on improvement to void performance. This work has begun with stakeholders across the various services with the overall aim to reduce the number of days properties remain void.

	Q3 2022-23	Q4 2022-23	Q1 2023-24	Q2 2023-24	Change Q3 2022 to Q2 2023
Average re-let times for empty	228	232	206	180	21% reduction in days void

2.6 Rent arrears

	Q4 2022-23	Q1 2023-24	Q2 2023-24
Rent arrears	£15,293,089	£17,104,480	£17,935,141
Collection rate	97.37%	94.72%	95.95%
% of tenants in 7 weeks+ arrears	15.22%	15.44%	16.12%
Number of tenants on UC	6,076	6,399	6,594
Total arrears by tenants on UC	£ 7,140,272	£8,930,423	£9,523,126
% of tenants on UC direct payments (as of all UC claimants)	33%	33%	33%
Number of tenants claiming full housing benefit (HB)	2,463	2,423	2,393
% of tenants claiming full HB in arrears	11%	11%	11%
Number of tenants claiming partial HB	6,647	6,571	6,553
% of tenants claiming partial HB in arrears	42%	44%	45%
Number of tenants not claiming HB	13,259	13,337	13,423
% of tenants claiming no HB in arrears	60%	60%	61%

2.6.1 Rising rent arrears remains a key challenge for the Council, with tenants struggling with additional financial pressures from rising heating charges, rent charges and increased cost of living. Whilst the arrears have increased, data in recent quarters shows a slow-down in the rate of growth. In September 2022, the Council set up a rent pilot to have a focussed team supporting residents with rent arrears. Following a review of this pilot, it is being extended as part of the Council's approach to meeting the challenge of growing arrears.

2.6.2 Camden have been working with other London boroughs with low arrears to pull together an action plan to improve the Council's rent arrears performance. Some of the actions include reviewing Camden's escalation policy and process; looking at changing and improving systems so that staff can manage cases more preventatively; and increasing the efficiency of Camden's payment systems so that it is easier to residents to pay off their arrears.

2.7 Anti-social behaviour (ASB)

2.7.1 Anti-social behaviour remains a key priority for many of Camden's residents, particularly as the Council had seen the seasonal increase in ASB cases over the summer, with 56 cases opened in July, and 32 cases per month in both August and September.

2.7.2 In response to this, Housing is working with colleagues in Contact Camden and Community Safety to form an operational ASB task force to tackle issues and jointly improve processes such as the case escalation procedures and how the Council maintains contact and communication with residents reporting ASB.

2.7.3 Anti-social behaviour is also a new reporting requirement of the Social Housing (Regulation) Act 2023 and is a key tenant satisfaction measure. Housing services are working towards ensuring the services' reporting arrangements are compliant with these regulations, aiming to ensure that high-quality data can be provided to the Housing Regulator in the upcoming financial year.

2.8 Fire Safety

2.8.1 Ensuring the safety of Camden residents and those the Council are a landlord for is of paramount importance, and fire safety is central to this. The number of outstanding fire risk assessments (FRAs) and fire safety actions is falling each quarter. As of October 2023, Housing have completed 97% of the fire risk assessments on Camden estates. Housing is prioritising the completion of fire risk assessment actions, actively monitoring and reporting them at both the Fire Risk Compliance Safety Panel and the Housing Safety and Regulatory Board.

2.9 Domestic violence and abuse (DVA) and violence against women and girls (VAWG)

2.9.1 During 2022/23, 11% (236) of homelessness cases reported domestic abuse as the main reason for loss of accommodation. DVA is disproportionately a gendered issue; in 85% of DVA homelessness cases the main applicant self-identified as a woman. Transgender applicants also are disproportionately affected, with 25% of all transgender homelessness applicants reporting fleeing domestic violence and abuse as the reason they are homelessness.

2.9.2 Strained resources, a housing crisis, and a national reduction in specialist housing provisions adds to an already challenging environment for survivors attempting to leave abusive situations. Infrastructure which enables and sustains a safe and survivor-led response within housing services is essential for

transformation to take hold. As such, Housing is working to achieve Domestic Abuse Housing Alliance (DAHA) accreditation and have been working with a full time DAHA Coordinator since March 2023.

2.9.3 In this area, work to co-produce a DVA Housing Policy and procedure with survivors and professionals is firmly underway and a DVA Homelessness working group has been established to work on procedural change. The Council is carrying out forensic analysis of services, such as a full case review of 290 DVA cases in housing management, and the newly established DVA data management group is working on a DVA dashboard to ensure service compliance and scrutiny.

2.9.4 Moving forward, a DVA points panel is being trailed for 3 months to assess and review applications made for domestic abuse. It is anticipated that this learning will inform changes to the Allocation Scheme. Work is being planned to ensure the sustainability of the Council's DVA multi-disciplinary team. This will depend on further resourcing DVA champions and a dedicated DVA Coordinator role in Housing Management services.

2.10 Complaints and members enquiries

2.10.1 How the Council responds to enquiries and complaints leaves a marked impression on residents and service users, and there is ambition across the service to make concerted improvements in this area. For the last quarter (July to September) Housing services responded to just over a quarter (28%) of Stage 1 complaints within the target time of 10 days; and in the same period, half (49%) of all member enquiries were responded to within the same target time.

2.10.2 The service is taking actions to improve responses to complaints and members enquiries, including routing all tenancy management complaints and members enquiries to one team from December for better co-ordination and ensuring holding responses are sent where enquiries require responses from multiple teams and may take longer than the target time. Housing will be conducting an analysis of where complaints are currently being held up and reviewing some Ombudsman complaints to understand the subsequent learning that has taken place arising from them. Such learning will be built into service development and transformation plans.

2.11 Tenant participation and engagement

2.11.1 Involving residents in council services is widespread across the Council, and the new social housing regulatory framework places additional emphasis on how tenants are involved in shaping their services, holding their landlord to account, having their voices heard, and being informed about performance.

2.11.2 The door-knocking exercise as part of the intensive tenant participation programme, work to increase the support that community organisations can offer to tenant groups, and the development of ongoing consultative groups are examples of developments in tenant involvement.

2.11.3 Tenants have told us they would like to see a tenant conference, and this is being planned for next year where there will be discussions on topics that tenants decide are most important to them, as well opportunities for wider consultations around how residents would like to have a greater input into their services and how any potential barriers to this can be overcome.

2.12 Conclusion

2.12.1 The cost-of-living crisis is having a continued and disproportionate impact on those whose health, employment and financial resilience is comparatively low and for those whose housing security is tenuous. Service improvements across Housing are therefore very much focussed on seeking to ease the pressures residents are experiencing in these respects, within an over-stretched budget envelope. Significantly, Housing services are also looking to improve how it uses data to help it monitor progress and look for early corrective actions as necessary.

2.12.2 Feedback on the format of the report and the measures presented is welcomed.

2.13 Environmental implications

2.13.1 This report provides an update on housing services activity and performance in Camden and therefore there are no environmental implications arising for the Council.

3. COMMENTS OF THE DIRECTOR OF FINANCE

3.1 The Director of Finance has been consulted and has no comments to add.

4. COMMENTS OF THE BOROUGH SOLICITOR

4.1 The Borough Solicitor has been consulted and has no comments to add.

Report ends

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LONDON BOROUGH OF CAMDEN	WARDS: All
REPORT TITLE: Property Management Update	
REPORT OF: Director of Property Management	
FOR SUBMISSION TO: Housing Scrutiny Committee	DATE: 14 November 2023
<p>SUMMARY OF REPORT:</p> <p>This report provides an update on a range of property management services: repairs including damp and mould; building and fire safety; planned maintenance and retrofit; the Asset Management Strategy and roll out of the CCTV network across Camden's estates. It also provides the November 2023 update on fire risk assessment actions.</p> <p>The work outlined in this report supports a number of the ambitions set out in We Make Camden, in particular making sure Camden has enough decent, safe, warm, and family-friendly housing to support its communities.</p> <p>LOCAL GOVERNMENT ACT 1972 – ACCESS TO INFORMATION: No documents that require listing were used in the preparation of this report.</p> <p>CONTACT OFFICER: Lisa-Marie Bowles, Principal Policy and Projects Officer 020 7974 6775 lisa-marie.bowles@camden.gov.uk</p>	
<p>RECOMMENDATIONS:</p> <p>The Housing Scrutiny Committee is asked to comment on the report and advise on any updates they would like to receive in the future.</p>	

Signature: 

Date: 2 November 2023

1. INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 This report provides an update on repairs including damp and mould, building and fire safety, planned maintenance and retrofit, the planned asset management strategy and roll out of the CCTV network across Camden's estates.

2. HOUSING REPAIRS SERVICE

- 2.1 The repairs service has seen sustained demand post-pandemic, with increased volumes related to the Council's proactive approach to damp and mould, along with the Council's fire safety work and responses to disrepair claims which have increased across the sector.
- 2.2 The table below shows the order volumes and key indicators related to the service, along with data on how residents are contacting the Council. The Council has continued to make sure that residents can contact it in a way that is most convenient to them such as What's App, SMS (text message), web chat or telephone calls for emergencies. 78.6% of orders in quarter two were raised online or through messaging systems. The overall increase in repair volumes is reflected in the number of repairs awaiting completion. This reflecting the cumulative impact of disrepair works and damp and mould orders.

	22/23 Q3	22/23 Q4	23/24 Q1	23/24 Q2
Volume of calls to repairs line	51,045	45,013	31,113	27,083
Repairs telephony response time	95%	96%	96%	94%
% orders raised online/ SMS/ webchat/ What's App	54%	71%	74.7%	78.6%
Day to day (D2D) repairs awaiting completion	5,777	6,572	6,823	6,926
D2D emergencies completed within target	98%	98%	97%	95%
All D2D repairs completed on target	98%	95%	96%	82%
Live disrepair cases	554	565	651	727

- 2.3 The Council will always make sure residents can reach it on the telephone in the event of an emergency or if they are vulnerable and / or do not have access to the other means of communication. The table below shows the calls received in this financial year and how they have been answered.

Repairs telephone service	Calls Offered	Answer %	Average Time to Answer	% Answer under 2 mins
Q1	31,113	96%	00:00:58	85%
Q2	27,083	94%	00:01:02	83%

- 2.4 It is the case that the Housing Repairs budget is under extreme pressure with the cost of damp and mould casework expected to be £2.8m this financial year. The Council also expects a pressure of £2m from disrepair cases (much of which is fees payable to solicitors and to a lesser degree compensation to residents). As a result the Council is looking very closely at the repairs it is required to do as landlord and those that fall under the responsibility of tenants and leaseholders. Further communications will be issued on this and the Council has already published some videos to help residents complete simple jobs [Home repair videos - Camden Council](#)

- 2.5 With the pressures outlined above it is even more important that the Council listens to residents and understand how it can improve its services and be as efficient as possible. Councillors will already be aware of the positive work by the Housing and Property Resident's Panel. Already, there is an enthused group of residents helping officers to shape future policy direction, firmly focused on improving customer needs and demands and having a wider awareness of its challenges as an organisation.
- 2.6 Due to this new partnership way of working, a new Resident Complaints Oversight Panel concept will be introduced. Fully supported by the wider Property Customer Services and Engagement Team, this panel of up to five members will meet at least bi-monthly to review the current level of stage one, stage two, and ombudsman cases and review the trends that have been identified. The Panel will carry out a lessons-learned approach and will meet with senior managers to report on improvements to avoid repeated issues. The panel recruitment will commence in the Autumn, with a plan to have this group in place for January 2024.
- 2.7 The work of the Complaints Oversight Panel will be fully tracked and shared with the Director of Housing, the Director of Property Management, the relevant Heads of Service, the Housing Transformation Group and Departmental Management Teams. The Panel will produce regular lessons learned reports, including a quarterly portfolio outcomes report. Where possible, the output of this work will be made available on the Council's website. This new concept aligns with the Housing Ombudsman's recommendations, where it expects the Council to include residents in the areas that directly affect them and continue along the Council's agreed path of being more open and honest about the decisions we make and how it helps improve overall customer satisfaction. At a recent meeting with the Housing Ombudsman, it is clear that they expect the Council to be providing and acting upon lessons learned better. Often the Housing Ombudsman feels the Council's replies do not always include the proactive work the Council is doing and instead focuses on reasons why the service failed. However, unless the Council deals with the root causes, it cannot hope to offer a more consistent service. This will be a key delivery target for this panel.

Damp and Mould

- 2.8 Following the Council's proactive communications campaign to encourage residents to contact it if they had damp and mould in their property, the Council has actioned and closed over 6,100 reports of damp and mould since December 2022.
- 2.9 Over 5,000 properties had a mould inspection and over 2,000 have had a subsequent mould wash was carried out. 72 cases were classed as 24-hour emergency requests, and 15 households required a decant move due to the seriousness of the mould in the property.
- 2.10 The commitment of having a business-as-usual damp and mould operation in place by the end of August 2023 has been achieved, which has been down to a clear and managed way of working across operations and back-office functions. The Council currently has 430 active cases on hand, and the Damp and Mould

Team is working hard to action these as a matter of urgency before the expected winter peak of cases.

- 2.11 The Council continues to proactively engage with residents through its ongoing outbound call campaign via our provider, KWEST. If the Council has had no further contact following an initial report of mould, or there have been two no-access attempts, then the Council will send a letter to the resident and advise them that as we have not heard from them, it will close their case and request they contact the Council again. However, the Council passes these 'closed cases' to our outbound call provider, KWEST, who will try to call them to confirm this is still the case. Recent feedback from KWEST is that approximately 25% - 30% are still reporting mould or damp, so another appointment will be booked.
- 2.12 The Council has also been contacting again approximately 1,000 households designated as high-risk vulnerable residents, as it did earlier this year, to check if they are having any damp or mould issues. The Council acknowledges that there has been a high volume of cases and it has not always co-ordinated its actions in the best way. The Council now has all casework managed by one team and will look to closely co-ordinate actions in the future.
- 2.13 Since January, the Council has had 16 Ombudsman cases where damp and mould were listed as a factor and recently received a severe maladministration finding on a case related to 2021, prior to the Council introducing its new approach in December 2022. The Council will carry out a review and provide a copy of the final report to the Housing Scrutiny Committee. Members of the committee can then discuss and agree how it will oversee the implementation of recommendations made following the review. The Council will also provide a copy of its findings to the Ombudsman.

Moving forward

- 2.14 Recognising the need to continue providing this service as part of the Council's operational demand but aware of budget constraints, it has changed the operation and how it works.
- 2.15 The Repairs Service reviewed the operation of the previous 23 staff who were separately covering inspection and mould wash tasks, and now has 12 on-the-ground staff members who cover both elements of the work. This is proving to be a more efficient approach in terms of staff time and also for residents.
- 2.16 As part of this revised approach, the Repairs Service has made diary changes to allow the inspection and any mould wash ideally to be completed on the first visit. This slightly extended appointment time from 45 minutes to 1 hour means the Repairs Service can reduce the need for further appointments and eliminate the mould during the first visit.

3. RESIDENT AND BUILDING SAFETY

- 3.1 Since 2021 the Council has continued preparation for the implementation of the Fire the Building Safety Acts. The Building Safety Act 2022 sets out a range of new duties for high-rise residential buildings (18 metres and/or 7 storeys) and creating

the Building Safety Regulator (BSR) within the Health and Safety Executive. Camden as an early adopter has been proactive in delivering these additional requirements to meet the implementation timelines set out by the government and the BSR. for implementation in line with the Regulator's transitional timeline. The Council's delivery programme has included:

- Installation of way finding signage in 18+ metre buildings
- Installation of secure information boxes in 18+ metre buildings
- Provision of external wall design & construction materials to the London Fire Brigade (LFB) for 18+ metre buildings
- Fire door inspection regime for 11+ metre buildings
- Lift and fire safety equipment fault reporting to LFB for 18+ metre buildings
- Provision of information about the importance of fire doors to residents of all Council homes

3.2 Camden is also carrying out specialist Fire Risk Appraisal external wall façade checks (FRAEW) in line with government guidance to identify the risks posed by external wall systems and works that might reduce such risks; 54 FRAEWs will be completed in 2023.

3.3 A specialist building safety team has been established with the appointment of 10 experienced Building Safety Managers are preparing Building Safety Case reports (BSCs) on 167 council high-rise blocks for submission to the Building Safety Regulator (BSR). The Council has registered all 167 high-rise buildings with the BSR and continues participation in government fire and building safety working groups to track progress on a range of secondary regulations and guidance yet to be issued.

3.4 In addition to appointing specialist Building Safety Managers the Council has been developing fire and building safety information and training for staff and where appropriate, residents, including:

- Mandatory health & safety training, including a new fire and building safety module is undertaken by all council staff every two years, and by all new staff at induction.
- Tailored fire safety and communal areas safety training for estate services caretakers
- Accountable Persons training for relevant property and housing staff groups, heads of service and the Corporate Management Team
- An on-line fire safety information hub for staff
- Dedicated home fire and building safety web pages for residents providing advice, support and information, and links to services provided by the London Fire Brigade, access to individual building fire risk assessments, and information about the Council's fire safety investment programme
- Newsletters, letters and leaflets to all council homes about fire doors, communal area safety, high rise building registration and building safety case submission
- British Safety Council Fire warden training for Tenant & Resident Association (TRA) representatives and community volunteers with responsibilities for the management of TRA halls and community buildings

- 3.5 The Fire Safety Act/Regulatory Reform (Fire Safety) Order 2005 (RRO) requires the Council to carry out fire risk assessments (FRAs) of all properties where there are non-domestic areas. The completed fire risk assessments generate actions that Camden needs to consider to address or reduce fire risk. To meet this requirement the Council carries out Fire Risk Assessments on a cyclical basis with all properties having an FRA within a three-year period (high risk every year, medium risk every two years, low risk every three years). The total programme consists of 3,291 FRAs and the appointed consultant aims to complete all assessments in the recommended timescales, subject to resource availability and access in the case of street properties / TRA halls.
- 3.6 As set out in the report to the previous meeting of the committee, there has been a high volume of actions generated by the new FRAs carried out since 2017 and while the Council has addressed over 40,000 actions since 2020. However, it had 9,000 overdue actions at the end of 2022/23, of which 400 were high-risk. This led to the Regulator of Social Housing (RSH) issuing a Regulatory Notice to the Council in July 2023 concerning this, and also the rate of delivery on smoke and carbon monoxide detectors.
- 3.7 The Council fully accepts the need to address the issues in the Notice and is working with the Regulator on its action plan to make sure a similar backlog does not accrue in future. The number of overdue actions has been steadily reducing as we focus on the oldest and highest risk actions first and by 23 October 2023, the number of overdue high-risk actions had fallen to 64, the current position of all FRA actions is set out in the table in **Appendix 1**. The appendix is in the format requested by the Regulator of Social Housing and our monthly updates will follow this format in future.
- 3.8 The Council is installing CO and smoke detectors in its homes. At present, 88% of homes with a gas appliance have a known CO detector, with the full installation programme due to finish by December 2023. Currently 82% of homes have smoke detection confirmed in place, with the installation programme of hard-wired detection due to finish by March 2024 (subject to access). Legal action may be required to address the no access cases encountered to date. The latest position is confirmed below:

	Tenanted homes with relevant appliances	CO alarms	Tenanted homes	Smoke detectors
Number required	13,706		23,548	
Total installations		12,053		19,296
% installed		88%		82%

4. BETTER HOMES AND RETROFIT

- 4.1 A wide range of Better Homes schemes are in progress, with some larger estate wide projects such as Tybalds soon to complete. Other schemes are being commissioned including the third and final phase of the Bourne Estate external works. In total, Better Homes external works projects that are on site or being

procured for delivery this year and next total £60.5m in value and will benefit over 3,400 homes.

- 4.2 The Mechanical and Electrical Programme has a wide range of projects being commissioned or on site including lifts and communal heating upgrades, with schemes valued at £78.2m benefitting 3,309 homes. This includes the large scheme at the Weedington Estate and the recently completed installation at the St. Silas estate. These heating projects are critically important as they improve energy efficiency, provide reliability for residents and reduce the impact of *ad hoc* component replacement or the cost of temporary boilers on the repairs budget.
- 4.3 A good example of this is the new heating system that the Council is commissioning at Rowley Way – the current system is not fit for purpose and needs to be replaced, costing the Council at least £200k each year to repair. The new system will reduce running costs by 69% and carbon emissions by 60%. Extensive resident engagement has been carried out and the Council has explored and costed a range of options with the heating sub-group established by the TRA. This work identified that new heating pipework and improved glazing needs to be installed as first phase and a renewable heating source installed as a second phase (e.g. a communal heat pump). This £14m scheme is being finalised and will now proceed to the procurement stage.
- 4.4 The fire safety programme continues to progress, noting that procurement of the latest work packages took longer than programmed due to market conditions and some contractors not being able to deliver at tendered rates. The bulk of the work relates to front door replacement, the installation of hard-wired alarms within flats and some within communal areas where needed. The Council is also installing additional emergency lighting where this is required.

Retrofit

- 4.4 The Council is progressing its retrofit pilots and is working with a range of specialists and contractors to design and deliver works, making sure the Council evaluates the impact of completed works. This includes detailed studies of thermal performance and air tightness. Demonstrator projects and pilot work includes:
- Deep retrofit of 10 street properties. Planning permission requirements have been completed, tendering of these works is in progress (deep retrofitting is a process where you look at a property's overall energy efficiency and use a combination of measures to improve it. The aim is to ensure the property is operating in the most efficient way possible)
 - Deep retrofit of 5-7 Belsize Grove, which comprises 58 homes – these works are progressing well and will see these solid wall homes improve from SAP Band E to Band B. This block has an older demographic with a minimum resident age of 55, the works will therefore be of significant benefit.

- Energy efficiency works at Brookes Court, these works are progressing and will see a range of fabric measures installed into 22 homes bringing them up to a minimum EPC C.
- Internal wall insulation to 50 homes with solid walls included as part of the Somers Town Future Neighbourhoods Project grant funded by the GLA, and for an upcoming bid, we are proposing a study to review and provide options on Phoenix Court which currently has electric storage heaters.
- Discussions with “Energiesprong” (meaning “Energy Leap”) on a demonstrator project to carry out deep retrofit of a small block as a prototype project using their technology and repayment model (comfort charge). The GLA have allocated ‘United Living’ as the principal contractor via their RE:NEW framework
- Camden has secured £3.6m of central government grant funding to retrofit 283 homes in 2023/24 & 2024/25. The grant will focus on Curnock Estate and our very worst energy rated street properties, bringing them to a minimum EPC C standard.
- Henderson Court Solar Panels – a tender is being prepared to install a smart solar panel project at this sheltered block. The proposed system automatically alternates the generated energy so it is not sent into the grid but used on site. The system will connect to the landlord’s electrical supply as well as residents’ electrical supplies reducing theirs and the Council’s electrical costs.
- Better Homes and Voids – a small pilot is taking place to see how retrofit measures can be incorporated into current BH/void works packages, measures typically include adding internal wall insulation and mechanical ventilation.
- Cost of Living works – where residents are identified in need of assistance and are not currently in a programme of works, the team looks to retrofit measures such as secondary glazing / wall insulation to improve thermal comfort and reduce heating costs, additional advice is also provided by the Home Energy Advice Officers where they can intervene on the resident’s behalf with energy suppliers to reduce debt costs / payments / provide tariff support
- Work continues with data scientists and institutional investors on a new financial model to deliver retrofit at scale. This work was outlined at the Core Cities Conference in London and the Council will provide further details to the Housing Scrutiny Committee in future reports.

5. ASSET MANAGEMENT STRATEGY

- 5.1 The Property Asset Team undertakes stock condition surveys periodically to help inform its investment requirements and priorities. At the time of the last survey which concluded in 2018/19, it was identified that there was a gap of c.£180m between the investment required and the resources available. This means that the Council has had to prioritise schemes that are brought forward and focus on the

main building elements such as roofs and windows. The Council has also had to divert resources to fire safety works with £69.1m set aside for investment in this area over this financial year and next.

- 5.2 This year the Property Asset Team has been carrying out its latest round of stock condition surveys, with surveys completed September 2023. This data is being quality checked and will be used in conjunction with other key data sets such as repairs history, void costs and housing needs to inform the wider asset strategy. Crucially the Property Asset Team will be looking at the investment needed against the resources available, this to work out priorities within the capital programme and the options available to bridge the investment gap.
- 5.3 In early 2024 we will consult residents and members on the survey findings and the options available as part of the asset management strategy. This will lead to a revised programme and strategy being presented to members in 2024/25.
- 5.4 In parallel, we will continue to refine our approach to stock condition data capture and the Council is likely to move to a continuous “rolling” stock condition survey process, whereby a proportion of the stock is inspected every year. This will see a greater focus on internal surveys being carried out.

6. HOUSING CCTV NETWORK

- 6.1 This year has seen a huge leap forward for Camden’s CCTV service. The Council is now running a combined CCTV Control Room 24/7 with its own inhouse team of operators and supervisors. The new CCTV control room covers all of our cameras in housing, public space and corporate buildings. This has led to a higher level of training and more engagement with external partners including the Police and local business improvement districts. Over the last 12 months Camden’s CCTV service has been utilised in the enforcement of suspected criminal activity and has contributed to some successful arrests and location of missing persons, recovery of stolen mobile phones and identification of weapons.
- 6.2 The CCTV Service has also been externally audited and awarded a Stage 1 Surveillance Commissioner’s camera compliance “kite mark” for our processes and policies. This is a major milestone for the CCTV service making us one of only eight Councils that have it, and one of only 100 organisations across the country. The Council is now preparing to take the stage 2 audit early next year.
- 6.3 The housing CCTV upgrade has seen the completion of our new dedicated CCTV wireless network across the Borough. The Council has carried out surveys on 49 out of the 54 estates and anticipate on completing the final 5 in the next few weeks. The Council has completed installation works on 12 estates across the borough (about 22% of the total estates) and another 7% of the estates are in varying stages of completion. The Council has installed more than 261 new high-definition CCTV cameras on housing estates (about 37% of the estimated total number of cameras). The quality of these cameras continues to impress everyone who sees them – especially at night-time. Installation has taken longer than we had hoped due to component availability and contractor resourcing levels – this being addressed with the contractor.

6.4 A new CCTV information dashboard has been introduced following a successful trial, this information is shared with residents via District Management Committee reports so they can clearly see activity that the CCTV team deals with.

7. COMMENTS OF DIRECTOR OF FINANCE

7.1 Expenditure on housing property management is both revenue and capital. Revenue costs include day-to-day repairs. Capital expenditure in a property management context involves the installation or replacement of assets such as windows, roofs, kitchens, bathrooms, boilers and lifts. It also includes the majority of fire and building safety works.

7.2 All this expenditure forms part of the Housing Revenue Account (HRA) and therefore the vast majority is paid for from rental income from tenants and leaseholder service charges. A small amount of capital works – fire safety works on the Chalcots and Cromer Estates and some energy efficiency projects – are funded by government grant. Otherwise the Property Management Capital Programme is almost entirely funded by annual revenue contributions.

7.3 During the period 2016 to 2020, the government obliged local authorities with housing stock and housing associations to reduce their rent by 1% per year. This decision has cost Camden an estimated £105m in rental income since 2016 which could have been used to invest in the stock. Over a similar period, the Council has had to find additional funding for fire and building safety works, £208m capital since 2017 and an annual revenue budget of £4.5m. None of this was funded by government. As a result, resources have had to be diverted away from the Council's Better Homes programme of capital investment in its stock. These resources were already lower than they needed to be because of the four years of enforced rent reduction. In a report to this Committee in January 2020, the Council estimated that the Better Homes programme had budgets of £334m to address the estimated investment need of £516m – a shortfall of £182m.

7.4 More recently inflation has increased the cost of revenue and capital works considerably, reaching a 40 year high in November 2022 with the Consumer Price Index (CPI) at 10.7%. The lack of resources, new fire and building safety requirements and inflation have combined to cause considerable overspends on revenue repairs in recent years, in turn depleting the HRA's reserves. This is financially unsustainable over the medium term.

7.5 In this financial year 2023/24, the revenue repairs budget is £55.4m. As at the end of September, forecast expenditure was £61.0m, an overspend of £5.5m or 10%. The main causes of overspend are damp and mould and disrepair cases. These are pressures which have emerged in recent years as a direct result of the lack of funding for capital investment. The Council will take action to minimise the repairs overspend during the rest of the financial year as described in para 2.4 above.

7.6 The 2023/24 capital budget for Property Management is £128.6m (excluding housing buybacks). Of this £57.9m is for the Chalcots Estate and is largely funded by government grant. As at the end of September, forecast expenditure was £129.3m, an overspend of £0.7m or 0.5%.

7.7 Sections 4 and 6 provide updates on the retrofit and CCTV roll out. The energy efficiency budget for the period 23/24 to 25/26 is £11.4m some of which is funded by grant as described in paragraph 4.4. However, the cost of retrofitting all of the Council's housing stock has been estimated at around £700m, hence the need for a new financial model to deliver retrofit at scale. The CCTV roll-out has so far cost £2.3m, with another £3.0m budgeted between 23/24 and 26/27.

8. COMMENTS OF THE BOROUGH SOLICITOR

8.1 The Borough Solicitor has been consulted and has no further comments to add.

9. ENVIRONMENTAL IMPLICATIONS

9.1 The new CCTV cameras are more efficient as they provide data directly back to the control room and engineer travel to visits are not needed to download data.

9.2 The Better Homes programme are being done to the latest regulations which require a higher energy performance to reduce heat loss. Similarly, the wall insulation removed and reinstated at Cromer and Chalcots will be more thermally efficient than when originally installed, this is because Building Regulation requirements on thermal performance / energy efficiency gradually increase as the UK moves towards becoming carbon net zero.

9.3 The Retrofit demonstrators will be delivering significantly more carbon savings per annum as they are grant funded under the Social Housing Decarbonisation Fund requiring all homes to achieve a minimum EPC C standard. 5-7 Belsize Grove will see some homes which were EPC F, becoming EPC B delivering reductions over 60% in energy costs and CO2 emissions.

Report Ends

Appendix 1 – Fire risk assessments (FRA) and FRA actions

Workstream		Blocks in FRA programme	Blocks with FRA completed in target time	Blocks with FRA outside target time	% of blocks with FRA in target time
FIRE SAFETY	Fire Risk Assessments in high-risk buildings	168	164	4	98%
	Fire Risk Assessments not in high-risk buildings	3,123	3,026	97	97%
	Overall Fire Risk Assessments	3,291	3,190	101	97%
<p>Comments: Position on FRAs updated 23 October 2023. The appointed consultant seeks to adhere to target times but there can be delays – e.g. due to resourcing or access issues (street properties / TRA halls where universal key yet to be fitted). All blocks have an FRA in the Council's currently approved format. The target time is set by the Council as follows: Category One - Purpose built blocks of flats over 10 stories in height, sheltered accommodation, hostels and/or where determined by the overall assessment of risk. Review/complete annually. Category Two - Purpose built blocks (below 10 stories in height) and/or where determined by the overall assessment of risk. Review/complete every 2 years Category Three - Street properties and/or where determined by the overall assessment of risk. Review/complete every 3 years</p>					
		No. of high-risk actions	No. of medium risk actions	No. of low-risk actions	
	Not overdue	-	1,822	1,087	
	Overdue FRA remedial actions (<3 months)	1	926	360	
	Overdue FRA remedial actions (3-6 months)	1	457	213	
	Overdue FRA remedial actions (6-12 months)	2	954	282	
	Overdue FRA remedial actions (12 -24 months)	-	1,663	1,188	
	Overdue FRA remedial actions (24 months +)	60	1,497	1,290	
<p>Comments: Position on actions updated 23 October 2023. All high-risk actions are scheduled to be completed by the end of November 2023, subject to access. Approximately 2,800 actions are being delivered by the repairs service this financial year and just over 4,500 capital works actions will be delivered this financial year and next.</p>					

LONDON BOROUGH OF CAMDEN	WARDS: All
REPORT TITLE Update from Cabinet Member for Better Homes	
REPORT OF Cabinet Member for Better Homes	
FOR SUBMISSION TO Housing Scrutiny Committee	DATE 14 November 2023
<p>SUMMARY OF REPORT</p> <p>Here Councillor Meric Apak, Cabinet Member for Better Homes, provides an update to the Committee, including on rents, voids, and repairs.</p> <p>Local Government Act 1972 – Access to Information</p> <p>The following documents have been used in the preparation of this report:</p> <p>No documents that require listing have been used in the preparation of this report.</p> <p>Contact Officer:</p> <p>Gavin Haynes, Gavin.Haynes@camden.gov.uk Director of Property Management & Glendine Shepherd, Glendine.Shepherd@camden.gov.uk Director of Housing London Borough of Camden 5 Pancras Square London N1C 4AG</p>	
<p>RECOMMENDATIONS</p> <p>That the Committee note and comment on the report.</p>	

Signed:



Date: 2 November 2023

1. Update Regarding Rent Arrears

As outlined in the Housing Performance Update, rising rent arrears remains a key challenge for the Council. A combination of factors has meant that tenants are increasingly struggling with their finances; rising heating charges and overall cost of living means that we are seeing tenants are less able to pay rent.

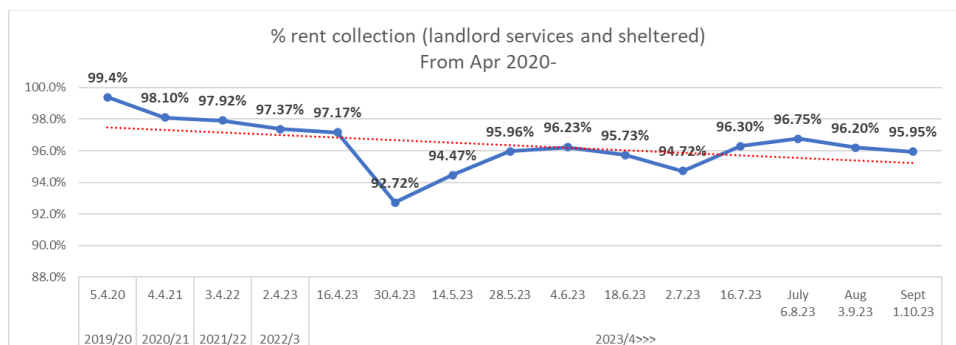
During the pandemic, there was a shift in expectation and culture around rent collection, due to the ban on eviction notices outlined in the Coronavirus Act that was in place from October 2020 to June 2021. This in combination with the impact of covid on the implementation of our generic model of tenancy management meant that rent collection did not have a focussed approach.

Approximately one year ago, the Council set up a pilot to trial a specialist rent collection team. With the recent addition of the Head of Leaseholder Services and Housing Income as well as to align with the Housing Transformation Programme, this pilot has been extended to the end of the financial year.

The Council is clear that whilst it wants to be an empathetic and caring landlord, the level of arrears is not sustainable, and rent recovery needs to be prioritised and implemented.

Performance

Rent collection is around 96% but arrears are still increasing and at the end Sept were £17.4m



Key Affecting Arrears Recovery

Impact of rise in heating charges April-Oct 2023

Tenants paying a communal heating charge: 42% (4308) were in arrears at week 52, compared with 55% (5658) at week 26. Arrears for this cohort rose by 79%, or £2.3m, the average increase being £658.

Delays with Evictions

Delays from the Court Bailiffs meant that scheduled evictions were not carried out from around April to July 23. As a result, 29 Bailiff appointments were delayed with combined arrears of £535k.

Delays in Court Applications

Court applications were on hold due to issues with Particulars of Claim that came to light during a hearing on 9 August 23, with 58 applications delayed. A revised process has been established with Legal Services and we are now clearing the backlog.

Actions

Along with the extension of a specialist rent team, a rent arrears improvement plan was created by the service and includes a thorough approach to reviewing how the Council can implement a proactive but supportive approach to rent collection.

These actions are grouped under the following themes:

- Ensuring tenants have access to the support they need
- Improving the systems that support rent collection
- Reviewing the services' internal rent collection policies and processes
- Establishing a rent-first, performance driven culture across teams
- Reviewing roles and responsibilities within the rent collection process

The actions in this plan will help the Council to ensure cases that 'can't pay' are supported to maximise their incomes quickly, but will also enable teams to have access to enforcement measures that means tenants who 'won't pay' are encouraged to do so more quickly.

Key Activities and Outcomes

Payment System

From October 23 officers in the rent team are able to take payments over the phone from customers – previously these would have been transferred to another team or automated system for payment with a greater risk of these not being made.

Process

Analysis of arrears recovery activity is being undertaken. We have reduced timescales getting cases to enforcement stages where appropriate and have a focus on ensuring all cases are at the correct stage of recovery. We are planning a targeted drive to increase the level of home visits.

Systems

The escalation policy built into Northgate has been amended to ensure it aligns to the reviewed processes.

We are speaking to suppliers of IT systems that help to prioritise and target resources to make the maximum impact using specialist software and algorithms to set case load in a more comprehensive way than traditional housing management systems.

2. Update Regarding Voids

The Council is currently undertaking a comprehensive repairs improvement programme which includes a dedicated workstream on void improvement performance.

As of 1st October 2023, the Council had 876 general need void units of which 491 are expected to be returned for re-letting purposes, the other 385 are mainly on regeneration sites.

Void Status	Number of units
Pre-Repair Stage (awaiting or in progress survey, work specification; asbestos survey/removal etc)	117
Repair Works in Progress Survey & works specification completed/works in-progress	213
Lettings Stage In process of advertising, CBL, viewing, offer verification or direct offer	161
Held voids Reasons for Held voids include HS2 voids, regeneration, legal reasons, etc	385
Total	876

Data correct as of 1st October 2023

Breakdown of Void Property by Size

The table below provides a breakdown of the void properties due to be returned for reletting purposes by bed-size.

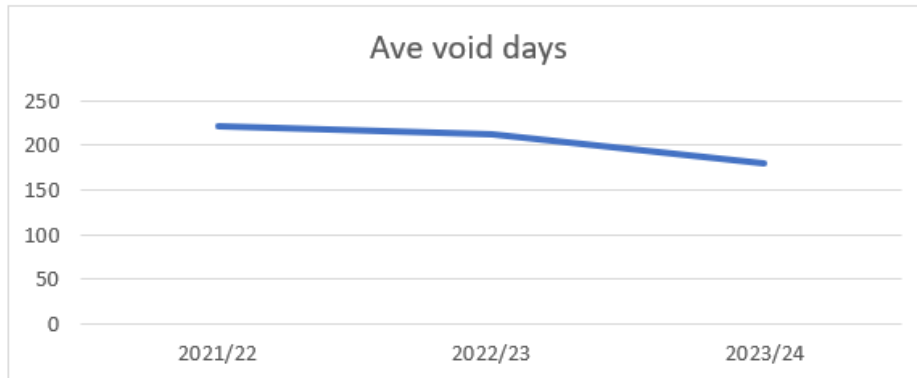
Bed Size	%
Studio/1 Bedroom	56%
2 Bedroom	28%
3 Bedroom	12%
4 Bedroom +	4%

Void Turnaround Times

The average turnaround time for voids is reported against a target of 100 days in the corporate performance data dashboard.

Whilst the average full key to key time has improved, from 221 days in 2021 to 180 in 2023, and 25% of voids are now completed within 100 days, much improvement is needed to consistently reduce the average to below 100 days. Please note that the Council continues to review and bring back long-term void properties and this is reflected within the average end to end times.

It should be noted by members that many performance indicators 'stop the clock' for major repairs on voids. Therefore, benchmark data, including that submitted by the Council, can show lower turnaround times that exclude this type of work from the calculation. The table below shows the trend for average full key to key time for void properties.



Key issues impacting void turnaround times

- **Root Cause Analysis**

Detailed work is being undertaken by the housing and property teams to examine processes and identify any remaining issues that are slowing down the key-to-key time. Speeding up end to end times is one of the highest priorities for the housing transformation programme.

- **Systems and Data**

There are knowledge gaps across the services regarding how voids are captured, categorised, and managed within the IT system. The current void module requires further development introducing a span of control and guidance to ensure consistent practice across the services. Further data cleansing is also required to ensure clearer and accurate reporting.

- **Accountability and Tracking**

There is a requirement for clear procedures and accountability across the various teams involved in the process, along with a mechanism to clearly track and report on individual works/voids against agreed target times.

- **Actions to deliver Improvements**

Key areas of focus in the weeks ahead are:

- Improvements to works delivery whether by the in-house team or supply chain support. The new Head of Repairs & Operations is looking at this with the team with the time for void repairs ranging between 56.3 days in quarter 1 of this year and 72 days in quarter 2.

- The redesign of the Allocations and Lettings service, with the aim to streamline the work of the service and improve service delivery across the key collection, allocation and relet process.

Other examples of improvement work which the service is currently delivering include:

- The service has fully re-introduced face-to-face viewings for all viewings, more than 300 since February 2023.
- To offset high numbers of refusal or non-attendance at viewings, up to ten households are shortlisted to attend each property viewing.
- A dedicated team, Moving Homes Team (MHT) has been created to act as the single point of contact to oversee the re-letting process. The MHT team has improved the acceptance rate from 45% to 93% at the first viewing. Although further improvements are required, the number of days comprising the lettings stage has been reduced by 40% in last 12 months.
- Void properties are normally viewed when works have been completed. The letting stage of the process is currently being reviewed with a pilot in place to commence the lettings stage at a much earlier stage and before works are completed.
- A working group made up of data and business colleagues has been established and work has started to interrogate and update the system void data across all of the void stock.
- A new void procedure has been drafted which sets out clear accountability across the various teams involved in the voids process. Reporting mechanisms to monitor progress are currently being developed.

3. Update Regarding Repairs

As noted elsewhere in the agenda, the repairs service is managing a very high volume of orders within a challenging environment. The market wide issues on labour availability and contractor capacity are affecting all London boroughs and the Council is fortunate to have a well-established in-house team.

Officers have also made sure that despite these increased volumes residents can contact the service in the most convenient way for them, and the benefit of this is that we can handle the volumes we receive in the most efficient way. Further work is also underway on the website's "front-end" for repairs – this will make it even easier to raise repairs quickly.

The financial pressure on the repairs budget is significant – our proactive work on damp and mould has generated over 5,000 mould surveys and a projected £2.8m worth of works this financial year. Disrepair cases continue to climb due to very aggressive marketing by private solicitors and the additional financial pressure from

claims this year is projected to be £2m. Much of the financial impact from disrepair is due to solicitors' fees with residents seeing very little compensation. We need to do all we can to make sure we work with residents to resolve problems quickly and minimise the fees paid to private companies out of the Housing Revenue Account (HRA).

More broadly I need to remind the committee that there are structural financial issues affecting the HRA. The fallout from the Government mandated rent reductions that have reduced our rental income by £105m since 2016 and the absence of funding for new burdens on building safety that are costing £4.5m per annum. Allied to this we have seen £208m in Council capital resources diverted to fire and building safety works since 2017. All of this widens the gap between the investment we would like to make to our homes and the resources available.

The Council will have to act soon to make sure it can manage these pressures and minimise their impact on the reserves of the HRA. This will look at:

- Strict control on any discretionary work undertaken (such as decoration)
- Resource levels within the repairs team and the diary wait times – making sure we prioritise the most urgent works but lengthening the time for non-essential works
- Making sure we target our capital resources at the most urgent works and do fewer large repairs on a reactive basis (e.g., kitchen replacement, roof renewal)

I will be reviewing the detail and options regarding the above in the weeks ahead and will brief the Housing Scrutiny Committee and the District Management Committees on the recommended approach.

Repairs Update Concerning Lifts:

The Council has invested significantly in its lifts over the past decade with 361 replaced and a further 21 due to be replaced next financial year. This has been a priority area of investment, and the Council has seen a marked improvement in performance as the older lifts have been removed from the housing stock. The Council has a bespoke specification for its lifts that help them to cope with the wear and tear experienced in busy housing blocks.

The Council services its lifts monthly or bi-monthly depending on their age and performance is very strong on the servicing regime. Our insurer also checks the Council's lifts on a strict programme to make sure that the Council is compliant with the HSE's Lifting Operations and Lifting Equipment Regulations (LOLER).

Sometimes when lifts go out of service, they take some time to repair if specialist equipment is required or if there is a hard to detect fault such as water entering the shaft or lift pit. There are so many types of lifts holding all spares is not practical, however, officers make sure that commonly used items are retained locally by the contractor Apex. I have worked with officers on how we communicate with residents when we have problems with our lifts – making sure residents are kept up to date.

I recently asked for information on how our lifts perform in terms of call-outs and the results are interesting. We have a small number of lifts with a very high number of call-outs – typically in our taller buildings – and a large proportion of lifts with a small number of call-outs each year. Of course, when any lift is out of service it causes significant inconvenience – so we have to remain very focussed on contractor performance – however we can also see that many lifts operate as we would expect, and this is thanks to the investment we have made and the bespoke specification we have put in place:

Number of call outs 1/11/22 to 31/10/23	Number of lifts	% of lifts
35 - 45 call outs	3	0.5%
30 - 34 call outs	3	0.5%
25 - 29 call outs	6	1.1%
20 - 24 call outs	12	2.1%
15 - 19 call outs	32	5.7%
10 - 14 call outs	40	7.1%
5 - 9 call outs	154	27.5%
1 - 4 call outs	233	41.6%
0 call outs	45	8.0%
Out of contract (e.g. being replaced or under warranty)	32	5.7%
Total	560	100.0%

Looking ahead officers will continue their close contract monitoring and also the utilisation of remote monitoring to detect faults before residents report them. I will also ask officers to continue prioritising investment to address any remaining lifts with recurring problems – also getting third party advice from specialists when needed.

REPORT ENDS

LONDON BOROUGH OF CAMDEN	WARDS: All
REPORT TITLE: Work Programme – Housing Scrutiny	
REPORT OF: Director of Property Management	
FOR SUBMISSION TO: Housing Scrutiny Committee	DATE: 14 th November 2023
<p>SUMMARY OF REPORT: This report provides an update on the Committee’s work programme for 2023/24 and provides an update on action requested at previous meetings of the Committee.</p> <p>Local Government Act 1972 – Access to information No documents that require listing were used in the preparation of this report</p> <p>Contact Officer: Gavin Haynes, Director of Property Management, 5 Pancras Square, N1C 4AG, 020 7974 1955, gavin.haynes@camden.gov.uk</p>	
<p>RECOMMENDATIONS:</p> <p>The members of the Housing Scrutiny Committee are asked:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> (i) to consider any proposals for items that should be included in the work programme and to confirm the work programme for the year ahead. (ii) Approve a Chair of the Homelessness Panel and decide whether a new panel member should be appointed (para 3.4) 	

Signed:



Director of Property Management

Date: 1 November 2023

1. **INTRODUCTION**

- 1.1 The committee has been set up with the following terms of reference:
- To scrutinise the Council's policies and the provision, planning, financing, management and performance of services relating to housing provided by the Council and other service providers.
- 1.2 A draft committee workplan is attached to this report (Appendix A). The committee may wish to make further suggestions or amendments to the workplan for the year ahead.

2. **CABINET FORWARD PLAN – Housing**

- 2.1 The Committee is also invited to consider what, if any, forthcoming key Cabinet decisions it wishes to look at in advance of those decisions being taken. Forward Plan items under the Committee's remit are set out at Appendix B.

3 **PANELS**

- 3.1 The Scrutiny committee may establish a time limited, task focussed Panel. The Panel is chaired by a member of the committee and is able to request contributions and evidence about local housing services from a wider range of contributors including Partners, expert advisors and local residents. A report is made by the Panel to the Scrutiny Committee on its findings at the end of its work. Updates are provided to the Committee by the Chair of the panel whilst its work is ongoing.
- 3.2 Committee members are reminded of the constraints on Council resources at this time and have previously committed to run these Member-led panels with only limited officer support in order to ensure an efficient and cost-effective process.
- 3.3 The Homelessness Panel was set up in September 2023 to examine resident understanding and perceptions of homelessness and the experiences of accessing joined up, holistic support for those who have been or are currently homeless.
- 3.4 The Housing Committee needs to appoint a new Chair of the Homelessness Panel following the resignation of Cllr Richard Cotton and decide whether a new panel member should be appointed so that the panel has four members rather than three.

4 **CO-OPTEEES**

- 4.1 In addition to council members, the committee has previously decided that three co-optees should sit on the committee. These arrangements are subject to annual review.

5 **ACTION TRACKER**

- 5.1 The actions arising from the last meeting (January 2023) are attached at Appendix C.

6. **COMMENTS OF THE BOROUGH SOLICITOR**

- 6.1 The Borough Solicitor has been consulted and has no comments to make on the report.

7. **COMMENTS OF THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR OF CORPORATE SERVICES**

- 7.1 The Executive Director of Corporate Services has been consulted and has no comment to add.

8. **ENVIRONMENTAL IMPLICATIONS**

- 8. There are no Environmental Implications relating to this report.

DRAFT WORK PROGRAMME

**Housing Scrutiny Committee draft work programme
2023/24****Meeting date: Monday 18th December**

- **Housing Services** (Housing Needs) *Report to include: allocations, rough sleeping, sheltered housing.*
- **Housing Supply:** *Report to include CIP delivery including small sites (Cabinet report), Temporary Accommodation Purchasing Programme, private rented sector*
- **Update on fire safety and regulatory standards**
- **HRA Budget Update**
- **Cabinet Member better Homes – Update**
- **Work programme**

JANUARY 2024

- **HRA rent setting** (Cabinet report)
- **Tenancy arrears and rent collection**
- **Cost of Living update**
- **Update on fire safety and regulatory standards**
- **Cabinet Member Better Homes – Update**
- **Work programme**

FEBRUARY 2024

- **CIP annual report**
- **Report of Cabinet Adviser: Leaseholder billing and service charges**
- **Homelessness Scrutiny Panel (provisional date)**
- **Update on fire safety and regulatory standards**
- **Cabinet Member Better Homes annual report**
- **Work programme**

Appendix B: Forward Plan items under the Committee's remit (1 November 2023 – 29 February 2024)

Item	Summary	Decision-making body	Indicative decision date
Camden Capital Works Framework Procurement (All Wards), SC/2023/41	A report proposing the procurement of a framework for the delivery of capital works.	Cabinet	20 th December 2023
Housing Revenue Account (HRA) Budget and Rent Review 2024/2025	To consider the Housing Revenue Account budget for 2024/25 including housing rents and service charges.	Cabinet	24 th January 2024

NB: A report on Resident Safety was scheduled to go to Cabinet in December 2023 however this has been deferred until the Government publish the remaining secondary legislation. The Resident Safety report is expected to be put back on the forward plan after April 2024.

APPENDIX C – HOUSING SCRUTINY COMMITTEE ACTION TRACKER (SEPTEMBER 2023)

Meeting	Item	Action	Action by	Status
11/9/23	Building Safety Act & Regulatory Standards	Officers were working with the Regulator of Social Housing (RSH) regarding the way forward for the Council following the regulatory notice, and they would share the action plan arising from the regulatory notice once it had been signed off by the Regulator of Social Housing.	Director of Property Management	The Council received further comments on the action plan from the Regulator on 26 October 2023. There is a meeting 8 November 2023 where these will be discussed with the Regulator. The finalised action plan should be available mid to late November and a copy will be provided to committee members.
		Officers would provide members with a copy of the briefing information being provided to private rented sector landlords.	Director of Property Management	A copy of the Spring Landlord newsletter was sent to Committee members on 30/10/23. A further update on prospective regulatory change will be included in the winter newsletter.

		<p>The Council had also been working with specialist third party advisors to develop its approach to the implementation of the fire and building safety regulatory framework. This would lead to a third-party audit of the Council's processes so that it could meet British Standard 9997. The results of this undertaking would be shared with members when it was available.</p>	<p>Director of Property Management</p>	<p>The audit is in progress and will conclude early 2024.</p>
		<p>Officers would provide further information regarding the key issues arising from the estate action initiatives.</p>	<p>Director of Housing</p>	<p>The work has covered 15 of the largest estates in the borough and knocked on the doors of over 3,300 tenants.</p> <p>Most people spoken to have expressed that they enjoy living on their estate. A majority of residents talked about the sense of community on their estates and that they can talk to their neighbours. That said, a small number of residents reported feeling lonely or isolated. On most of the estates,</p>

				<p>residents have also talked favourably about caretakers and the service they provide.</p> <p>Anti-social behaviour (ASB) is a significant issue across the majority of estates that have been visited so far, meaning tenants are adjusting their behaviours. In some cases, crime and ASB is not being reported for fear of retribution or perceived lack of action in response. The most common issues are drug dealing and taking (in “secret pockets” – out of sight of CCTV and patrols) and people illegally accessing the estate to sleep or defecate under stairwells.</p> <p>Repairs are an issue for some of tenants, but not everyone. Some tenants talked about having repairs outstanding, but are tolerating them and not reporting. Some are struggling to use the Council’s reporting systems. This is frustrating for them, or they are not reporting. Where there are ongoing repair issues, for example, the cause of the problem isn’t always addressed.</p> <p>Greening of estates is another theme. Many residents have appreciated where this has already taken place and would like to know how they can get involved with, or start, a similar initiative themselves.</p> <p>Residents have also fed back positively about the programme of engagement. Many people commented on how much they value speaking to</p>
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				<p>people face-to-face. More recently at the Estate Action Days, officers providing information, advice and guidance on the cost-of-living crisis have been accessed by more residents. This is understandable as the days get colder and energy costs remain high.</p>
		<p>THAT members of the scrutiny committee receive a monthly update on performance of fire safety actions and any progress made and possible risk. This will also include updates on all areas of compliance (repairs/estate service/landlord service and capital works); the installation of hard wired smoke and carbon monoxide detectors; whether all buildings have had the FRAEW test; the BS9997 third party audit (evidence to be provided that this has been undertaken (4.10)); the outstanding high risk actions; the Building Safety Case reports on</p>	<p>Director of Property Management</p>	<p>The format for the monthly update has been clarified with the Regulator and the first edition of this will be included in the report to the November meeting of the Housing Scrutiny Committee.</p> <p>Updates will also be provided on Building Safety Cases and the audit as they are completed.</p> <p>A copy of the Equalities Impact Assessment (EIA) for the Communal Areas policy will be provided to members of the committee.</p> <p>A copy of the EIA was sent to members of the Committee on 27th October.</p>

		the Council's high rise blocks; and on the clearing of combustible items with a focus on how the Council would support vulnerable residents to achieve this;		
11/9/23	Council's Corporate Performance quarter 4 end of Year 22/23	Officers agreed to provide further information regarding the 'Cost of Living' support being provided by the Camden Advice Network (e.g. where the support was based, types of concerns being presented, number on waiting lists to access advice and how long on average are they on a waiting list for, what happens to those on agency waiting lists). Also, further information to be provided regarding accessing the temporary	Director of Housing	The requested information regarding cost-of-living support from the Advice Network; accessing temporary accommodation and support; and storage on council estates was sent to committee members on 1 November 2023.

		accommodation homes the council has, the support provided through that process and storage available on estates		
		Officers would also provide further information regarding rough sleeper support provision (e.g. numbers contacted, where they were located, what support they were provided with, repeat person contact)	Director of Public Safety/Director of Housing	An update will be provided to members of the Committee before the meeting under separate cover.
11/9/23	Work programme	Officers agreed to set up visits to the Council's temporary accommodation sites for members of the scrutiny committee to attend.	Director of Housing	Officers will set up these visits, and will look for suitable diary dates during December.

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