

THE LONDON BOROUGH OF CAMDEN

At a meeting of the **HAMPSTEAD DISTRICT MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE** held on **THURSDAY, 5TH DECEMBER, 2024** at 6.30 pm in the Taplow TRA Hall, Taplow, Adelaide Road, London NW3 3NU

REGISTERED DMC MEMBERS PRESENT

Toyin Majiyagbe (Chair)	Taplow TRA
Annie Ward (Vice-Chair)	5-7 Belsize Grove TRA
Arun Kumar (Vice-Chair)	Abbey Green TRA
Donna Baillie	15 Belsize Avenue TRA
Sunnuva Gulkett (sub)	15 Belsize Avenue TRA
Nafisa Ali (sub)	5-7 Belsize Grove TRA
Sara Bell	Alexandra & Ainsworth TRA
Brenda Das Nevas	Alexandra & Ainsworth TRA
Tom Muirhead (sub)	Alexandra & Ainsworth TRA
Brian George Richardson	Arkwright Mansions TRA
Hasan Shah	Burnham TRA
Kinga Salgado	Brassey Road, Barlow Road
Ray Choi (sub)	Brassey Road, Barlow Road
Jeremy Yankey	CASP
Janet Obi-Keller	Hilgrove Estate TRA
Janice Smart	Lymington Road
Fatima Abubakur	Mortimer Crescent TRA
Mary Ryan	Sidney Boyd TRA
Lynda Stuart	Webheath TRA

COUNCILLORS PRESENT

Councillor Sagal Abdi-Wali (Cabinet Member for Better Homes)
Councillor Matthew Kirk

OTHERS PRESENT

Paul Tomlinson

OFFICERS PRESENT

Daniel Bailey	Green Space Project Officer
Celestine Fairhall	Neighbourhood Manager
Stanton La Foucade	Tenant Participation
Katie Hawthorn	Housing Change & Transformation
Lydia Roberts	Housing Policy and Change Lead
Deana Taziny	Neighbourhood Operational Manager
Michael Webb	Head of Finance, Supporting Communities
Donna Alexander-Morrison	Committee Services

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

MINUTES

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

RESOLVED –

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

It was also noted that Blashford TRA and the names of the representatives Casey Okezie and Pamela Holmes-Gunsell, had been omitted from the A list.

2. APOLOGIES

Apologies for absence were received from Nevenka Martin and Pamela Holmes-Gunsell.

3. ANNOUNCEMENTS

Agenda Packs

The Chair raised concerns that for the past few meetings DMC members had not received the printed agenda packs.

4. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST IN ITEMS ON THIS AGENDA

There were no declarations.

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

There was no urgent business.

6. MINUTES

RESOLVED -

THAT the minutes of the last meeting be agreed as a correct record.

7. HAMPSTEAD DMC PROGRESS REPORT - ACTION POINTS UPDATE

It was also noted that Brenda Das Neves, Alexandra & Ainsworth TRA had been omitted from those listed as present at the last meeting on 12th September 2024.

8. HOUSING REVENUE ACCOUNT (HRA) BUDGET 2025/26

Consideration was given to a report of the Team Leader, HRA and Capital Projects, Supporting Communities. The report provided an update on the Housing Revenue Account (HRA) 2025/26 Budget Setting progress ahead of the January Joint DMC meeting, at which DMC representatives would be asked to provide feedback on proposals.

Members of the DMC raised the following points during consideration of the report:

- What was the amount being paid in legal fees and compensation in relation to disrepairs?
- Had there been any rebate or savings from the heating pool and would these savings be included in the proposed charges?
- What was the cost per kilowatt of gas and what was the hourly cost?
- The lifts in Blashford had been broken for over 4 months, had any financial compensation been set aside for the inconvenience caused to those living there? The lifts were a lifeline for the elderly and those with medical conditions. If the contractors had been more efficient the work would have been done by now. The complaints from residents were not being taken seriously.
- Are heat pumps going to be imposed on residents who need replacement boilers?
- New lights with sensors had been installed in Sidney Boyd Court, however they remained switched on for long periods and this was costing money, could the sensors on the lights be adjusted?
- Residents in Webheath echoed the comments about lighting.
- There had been an ongoing issue since 2012 with lighting being left on in communal spaces for long periods of time. The timers for the lighting should be seasonal, so that the lights were not on when they were not needed, particularly in the summer months. The issue had been raised year after year and was an opportunity for savings to be made, instead of asking for rent increases.

- It was not felt that the Council had a grip on finances and payments to contractors, with the view that contractors were being paid 3 times the average cost of the work they had been asked to do.
- There should be more efficient heating instead of the waste that was taking place.
- The proposals to sell off Council properties seemed to be a last resort; other savings should be considered before getting to that stage. There were empty properties while people needed homes.
- There was a flaw in the system for billing leaseholders that meant they had to wait six months after the bills had been issued for information about costs. There was concern from leaseholders that they were being asked to pay for works without a process for checks and balances.

The DMC requested and it was agreed that information about agenda planning for 8th January joint DMC meeting would be made available before the end of the year.

9. HOUSING TRANSFORMATION

Consideration was given to a report of the Director of Housing, Supporting Communities that provided the DMC with the progress of the Housing Transformation programme, awareness of key pieces of work and immediate priorities within the programme.

The following points were raised in response to the report:

- Housing repairs were a major issue in Camden, but why had they been included alongside domestic violence in the report?
- Why was extracting information about repairs so complex and why was the Council repeatedly paying for the same problems to be fixed again and again? What were the issues with the repairs process and why had they not been addressed?
- The charts on pages 41 to 43 of the report included abbreviations without any explanation about what they represented. The information presented in reports should be clearer and more transparent so that the DMC could make an informed response to the proposals.
- There were areas that had not had housing managers for months. What was happening about the shortage of housing officers and the Council's duty of care responsibilities. It was unclear from the information what structures were in place to support tenants and resident associations (TRAs).
- Housing staff were overstretched, unwell and also being impacted by the staff shortages.
- Antisocial measures were not working because there were no housing officers.
- TRA representatives were being seen as the point of call for tenant and social work issues because there were no housing officers to report the issues to. This was not the role of TRA reps or their responsibility but who

else were tenants and residents to turn to? A great deal of work was being carried out by TRA reps doing the work of paid housing staff with no recognition of their role.

- A reason for staff shortages could be fewer staff having to take on more responsibility and workloads. The housing department was in need of a more effective staffing structure. TRAs had heard repeatedly about changes that would bring improvements and were sceptical about any improvements.
- All residents should receive information about the Housing Transformation.
- There were clearly workflow issues in the housing department about progress on issues such as lifts being out of order. How were issues tracked and who was responsible for ensuring that the work was completed?

Officers provided the following information in response to the points raised by the DMC:

- Housing repairs issues and domestic violence had not been grouped together. They had been mentioned alongside each other as examples of the planned range of work and the corporate approach of the Transformation programme.
- It was agreed that the structure charts that had been provided were unclear and that they would be updated and recirculated.
- The Housing Transformation recruitment of permanent staff had been prioritised to be completed early in 2025.
- The resources that had been available in the past were no longer available. The Housing Transformation process would address how to work with limited resources in an effective way.

10. CABINET MEMBER BETTER HOMES REPORT

Consideration was given to a report of the Cabinet Member for Better Homes.

Councillor Sagal Abdi-Wali, spoke to some of the points and concerns that had been raised in response to the Housing Transformation agenda item. It was clarified that the report had reflected the scope of work that would take place as part of the transformation. Housing repairs and domestic violence had been described as being *under the same umbrella*, as examples of the range of work and the corporate approach across the Council to address issues in housing. Another example of this was the soon to be tested planned changes to the housing repairs IT system, that would give access to tenants to track and monitor progress on their repairs.

The following points were then made in response to the Cabinet Member:

- Questions had been raised for a number of years about the approach of housing contractors and the issues that had not been addressed by the Council.
- As a group who were aware of the longstanding issues with repairs, had any DMC representatives been asked to participate in the testing of the new IT system?

- The Housing Ombudsman had identified a dismissive approach to housing complaints in Camden, what had been the Council's response?
- Residents had not received any acknowledgement that the issues they had been raising had been confirmed by the ombudsman and they continued to be frustrated by the same responses from the Council and lack of progress.

Councillor Abdi-Wali noted the comments and confirmed that there was still work to be done and improvements made about how complaints were dealt with.

11. HAMPSTEAD DMC BUDGET REPORT

Consideration was given to a report of the Tenant Participation Coordinator for a bid request from Harben Estate TRA for £40,000 match funding for green improvement works. The presentation included a summary of the bid and illustrations of the proposed scheme.

During consideration of the proposals the DMC commented on the requirement for bid requests to demonstrate value for money and that this should include at least three quotes for any works, in order to make an assessment of the proposals. The £40,000 bid amount was large and not enough information had been submitted. A vote by show of hands was taken and the bid was declined. It was recommended that further work on the bid requirements take place and that this should include; obtaining additional quotes for the proposed works, looking at the implications for leaseholders and how phase two of the proposals would be funded.

12. LOCAL ISSUES

The following local issues were raised by DMC representatives:

Alexandra and Ainsworth TRA

There were ongoing issues with the heating system. The approach from GEM was unhelpful and there was a lack of information about the contract. Clarification from GEM about how the heating system was required.

In response the DMC Chair agreed to raise the matter with officers to get a response on what was happening.

Abbey Green TRA

A response from officer about progress on the CCTV cameras or lifts was still outstanding.

Burnham TRA

It was requested that Councillor Abdi-Wali, Cabinet Member for Better Homes meet the tenant representatives at Chalcots. Why had Burnham TRA not been included on the Appendix A list of representatives? Why had incorrect and inconsistent information been provided about the lifts? Providing a named housing officer with contact details would help with making progress on outstanding issues.

5-7 Belsize Grove TRA

There were issues with the single lift that served five floors and there were a number of elderly and dependent tenants in the building. A visit by the Mechanical and Engineering Operations Manager had been promised but had not yet taken place. Why was the system for reporting issues based on individuals have to raise matters, which was more challenging when the complaint was a communal issue like lifts?

Sidney Boyd TRA

The process for communicating repairs was an issue in itself The main lift for the building had been out of action for six months. The main gate had been broken for six weeks. There was sewage leaking into the TRA room which prevented it from being used and had affected the TRA being able to raise income. Why was the building stock being allowed to deteriorate?

There had been some improvements with parking and sheds.

Brassey Road, Barlow Road and Hall Oak Walk TRA

The heating meters had been useful but far more heat was being used in the buildings than was needed, which was adding to costs. The system should provide more efficient usage and why had the matter not been referred to the Mechanical & Engineering Operations Manager?

The DMC Chair would meet with Ray Choi Brassey Road, Barlow Road and Hall Oak Walk TRA to discuss the matter.

DMC Members thanked the Chair and spoke about the positive outcomes that they had been able to achieve as tenant representatives.

The Chair thanked all the officers and the British Sign Language interpreters for the support provided to the DMC meetings.

13. PROPERTY SERVICES AND HOUSING MANAGEMENT - REPAIRING AND LETTING OUR PROPERTIES - INFORMATION ITEM

This agenda item was not considered.

14. KPIS/DASHBOARD - INFORMATION ITEM

This agenda item was not considered.

15. CCTV PROGRAMME - INFORMATION ITEM

This agenda item was not considered.

16. PROGRESS REPORT ON THE REGENERATION STRATEGY FOR REGIS ROAD

This agenda item was not considered.

17. DATES OF FUTURE MEETINGS

The following meeting dates were noted:

- Wednesday, 8th January 2025 (Joint DMC meeting)
- Thursday, 13th March 2025

18. ANY OTHER BUSINESS THAT THE CHAIR CONSIDERS URGENT

There was no such business.

The meeting ended at 8.50 pm.

CHAIR

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MINUTES END