

## **THE LONDON BOROUGH OF CAMDEN**

At a meeting of the **HAMPSTEAD DISTRICT MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE** held on **WEDNESDAY, 8TH JANUARY, 2025** at 6.30 pm in Committee Room 1, Town Hall, Judd Street, London WC1H 9JE.

### **REGISTERED DMC MEMBERS PRESENT**

Toyin Majiyagbe (Chair)	Taplow TRA
Annie Ward (Vice-Chair)	5-7 Belsize Grove TRA
Malcom Brinsley Bush	Abbey Road Community Housing
Sara Bell	Alexandra & Ainsworth TRA
Brenda Das Neves	Alexandra & Ainsworth TRA
Tom Muirhead (sub)	Alexandra & Ainsworth TRA
Janet Obi-Keller	Hilgrove Estate TRA
Andreas Yennadiou (sub)	Hilgrove Estate TRA
Annabella Adomoto-Mensah (sub)	Lymington Road
Janice Smart	Lymington Road

### **COUNCILLOR OBSERVERS PRESENT**

Councillors Nancy Jirira (LD) and Nanouche Umeadi (L)

### **OTHER COUNCILLORS PRESENT**

Councillors Steve Adams (C) and Richard Olszewski (L)

### **OFFICERS PRESENT**

Jason Blackhurst, Head of Strategic Finance and Business Partnering  
Thomas Broad, Consultation and Engagement Manager  
Tony Castle, Head of Repairs and Operations  
Maria Jacobs, Head of Neighbourhoods, Housing Services  
Donna Alexander-Morrison, Deputy Manager 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**

It was noted that there had been some issues with the postal distribution of the printed agenda. DMC members that had not received the agenda were asked to let the clerk have their contact details.

**RESOLVED –**

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

**2. APOLOGIES**

Apologies for absence were received from Arun Kumar, Ray Choi, Pamela Holmes-Gunsell, Nevenka Martin, Casy Okezie, Ade Osinuga, Mary Ryan Kinga Salgado, Lynda Stuart and Jeremy Yankey.

**3. ANNOUNCEMENTS**

No announcements were made.

**4. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST IN ITEMS ON THIS AGENDA**

No declarations were made.

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

There was no urgent business.

**6. JANUARY DMC HRA BUDGET 2025/26 AND RENT SETTING REPORT**

Consideration was given to a report of the Director of Finance that summarised the financial position of the Housing Revenue Account and the draft recommendations on rent and service charges to be considered by the Cabinet in January 2025. This included a joint briefing for all the District Management Committees (DMCs).

Each DMC then met separately and their views were sought on the report and the draft recommendations. The following points were raised and discussed during Hampstead DMC's consideration of the report:

- There were concerns about the selling off of Council properties. That that the best Council properties would be sold, leading to a year on year reduction in

the best homes, resulting in fewer tenants and an increase in the number of leaseholders. Were these proposals a short cut to selling off Council estates?

- What was the tipping point in terms of the number of leaseholders deciding or being able to pursue a Right to Manage? Would this make the position of Council tenants vulnerable?
- In a time of national council housing shortages, why is Camden selling off Council properties and how does this sit alongside the government's policy to provide and build new homes?
- The Chair reminded the DMC that they had been consulted about the sale of the most structurally unsound properties as a possible option for some time and that the Council had now reached the time of making that difficult decision.
- The proposals to sell properties should have been clearer about the type of properties to be sold, that they were costly to repair and structurally unsound.
- Concern was expressed by some DMC members about the continued reliance on gas central heating, with no green future proofing or alternative heating proposals. There were options for solar panels on listed properties and these should be considered. Other DMC members spoke about the solar panels that had been installed at 5-7 Belsize Grove and that it would have been helpful for the DMCs to hear about the retrofit and green fuel proposals taking place across the borough.
- Dealing with void properties should be more effective given the shortage of Council properties. Some people were desperate for flats while others appeared to be rejecting flats for trivial reasons.
- The Council should reconsider whether it should be getting rid of larger properties, because new build properties were small and not suitable for larger families.

The following comments were made in response to the points raised by members of the DMC:

- The decision to consider selling Council properties had not been an easy one. The houses that would be sold were properties that were the most expensive/costly for the Council to repair, given the current financial position that the Council, like many others, was facing. The proposals to sell them would produce capital without having to borrow money.
- The properties proposed for sale were freehold street properties. There were already large estates with a mixture of tenures. It was not the Council's intention to sell off Council estates.
- It was clarified that the proposals to sell the properties did not pose any risks to Council tenancies. It was also confirmed that there was legislation governing the Council's responsibilities as the freeholder for the buildings they owned, which included any leaseholder arrangements.
- With regard to the sale of properties and reaching the threshold for 'Right to Manage' – signposting to where general information about 'Right to Manage' and 'Enfranchisement' options for leaseholders was available, would be provided to the DMC.

**Action By: Director of Housing**

- In December 2024, as part of the Housing Investment Strategy, the Cabinet had agreed to a pilot scheme for a retrofit proposal for solar panels on Council properties.
- The Council was talking to the government about additional funding for new build properties. Part of these discussions would involve the Council demonstrating that the housing schemes were viable as well as providing the land on which to build them.
- As a regulated landlord the Council had followed the agreed lettings policy. Allocations were based on priority criteria and there were some delays in the process due to ensuring that the necessary checks and inspections were carried out.

The DMCs considered each of the Rent and Service Charge Setting consultation questions and discussed:

- That the joint presentation to all the DMCs had been helpful in setting out the proposals and that the increase proposed for the charges had not been as drastic as had been anticipated.
- There had been changes to the security patrols. It now provided a service of targeted response to reported activity and not regular patrols, which was different to how the service had operated in the past.

In response to comments raised the DMC was advised that, if there were instances of street patrols not responding that this should be reported. If there were instances of criminal behaviour, it should be reported to the police via a call to 101 or 999.

The DMC concluded that while there was overall support for the report there were some fees and charges that they were not in favour of. Having voted on each of the proposals it was

**RESOLVED –**

THAT Hampstead District Management Committee agreed with the recommendation for the rent increase: CPI+1% (2.7%)

**RESOLVED –**

THAT Hampstead District Management Committee agreed with the recommendation to increase Tenant Service Charge - Caretaking: 5% (59p)

**RESOLVED –**

THAT Hampstead District Management Committee agreed with the recommendation to increase the Tenant Service Charge - CCTV: 7% (8p).

**RESOLVED –**

THAT Hampstead District Management Committee agreed with the recommendation to freeze Tenant Service Charge Communal Lighting.

**RESOLVED –**

THAT Hampstead District Management Committee did not agree with the recommendation to increase the Tenant Service charge - Communal Mechanical and Engineering Maintenance: 5% (7p).

**RESOLVED –**

THAT Hampstead District Management Committee did not agree with the recommendation to increase Tenant Service Charge - Grounds Maintenance: 12% (27p).

**RESOLVED –**

THAT Hampstead District Management Committee did not agree with the recommendation to increase Tenant Service Charge - Responsive Housing Patrol: 7% (5p).

**RESOLVED –**

THAT Hampstead District Management Committee agreed with the recommendation that Heating Pool Charges: Reduce charges on scales by 35%.

**7. ANY OTHER BUSINESS THAT THE CHAIR CONSIDERS URGENT**

There was no urgent business.

The meeting ended at 8.30pm.

**CHAIR**

**Contact Officer: Donna Alexander-Morrison**

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**MINUTES END**