

THE LONDON BOROUGH OF CAMDEN

At a meeting of the **CAMDEN TOWN DISTRICT MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE** held on **WEDNESDAY, 14TH SEPTEMBER, 2022** at 6.30 pm in the Conference Room, 3rd Floor, Crowndale Centre, 218 - 220 Eversholt Street, London, NW1 1BD

REGISTERED DMC MEMBERS PRESENT

Fran Heron (Chair)	Ampthill Square TRA
John Wood (Vice-Chair)	Walker House TRA
Steven Christofi (Vice-Chair)	Regents' Park TA
Jackie Haggett	Ampthill Square TRA
Zain Alam (Sub)	Ampthill Square TRA
Richard Caylor	Bayham Place TRA
Jim Mansfield	Bridgeway Street TRA
Sonia Uddin	Camden Studios TRA
David Perris	CASP
Monir Hussain	Churchway TRA
Amy Lame	Coopers Lane Estate TRA
David Auger	Clarkson and Mornington TRA
Wolfram Westendorf	Godwin and Crowndale TMC
Sherryl Murphy (sub)	Mayford TRA
Helia Evans	Ossulston TRA

OTHER RESIDENTS PRESENT

Paul Tomlinson

OTHER COUNCILLORS PRESENT

Councillor Meric Apak, Cabinet Member Better Homes

OFFICERS PRESENT

Ododo Dafe	Head of Housing Transformation
Sharon Calvey	Head of Estates Management
Scot Reid	Head of Property Customer Services and Engagement
Jo Adams	Landlord Services Manager
Sarah Moore	Tenant Participation

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

MINUTES

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

The DMC considered the list of registered tenant and resident associations (TRAs) provided by the Tenant Participation Service listed at Appendix A to the agenda.

The DMC noted that Monir Hussain was now the DMC representative from Churchway TRA, and the CASP representative was David Perris.

RESOLVED –

THAT the 'A' list and the information provide above be noted.

2. APOLOGIES

Apologies for absence were received from Rienzi Trento (Ossulton TRA), Brian Gardiner (Churchway TRA), and James Butler (Coopers Lane Estate TRA).

3. ANNOUNCEMENTS

Death of Queen Elizabeth II

The meeting stood for a minutes silence in respect of the death of Queen Elizabeth II.

Dave Lincoln

The Chair advised the meeting of the sad passing of Dave Lincoln who had been Ampthill Square TRA Treasurer for the last 20 years.

Additional documents

The meeting was advised that the following additional documents had been circulated for information:

- Information from the Director of Finance on DMC Budget
- Revised Camden Town DMC Budget report
- Information on Estates Management
- A Safer Neighbourhood Board Report from Mrs Helia Evans
- Information in relation to Universal Credit

This information related to items elsewhere in the agenda.

4. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST OF ITEMS ON THIS AGENDA

There were none.

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

There were none.

6. MINUTES

RESOLVED –

THAT the minutes of the meeting held on 15th June be approved as a correct record.

7. CAMDEN TOWN DMC ACTION POINT UPDATE

Consideration was given to the Action Tracker update.

The meeting noted the information that had been circulated in relation to Estates Management.

The meeting asked that officers sought to include the views of tenants and residents in relation to the lifts performance update information and that they were kept informed of what was going on.

ACTION BY: Danny Waite, Head of Repairs and Operations

RESOLVED –

THAT the report be noted.

8. HOUSING SERVICES REPORT

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

Finance Strategy HRA Update

Councillor Meric Apak, Cabinet Member Better Homes and officers advised that the paper was a summary that outlined the Council's position in preparation for budget setting for 2023/24. It described what was happening globally and nationally – a cost of living crisis, inflationary building costs (running at approx. 25%), and rising utility

costs created significant challenges for the Council and tenants alike and this was central to its thinking in relation to the budget setting this year.

After the report was written, a Government consultation had been launched which was seeking feedback from social housing providers and tenants to gather views on a rent cap in 23/24 (& possibly also in 24/25) at 3% 5% or 7%. The proposal, if implemented, would override the rent standard which permitted a raise of CPI plus 1% as described in the report. The Council was not yet able to confirm what the rent, service charge or heating charges increase levels would be proposed for 23/24, the rent cap consultation created significant uncertainty around income options, and it was important to wait for cost forecasts during autumn, especially for utilities as this was a volatile market. The rent cap could leave the Council with a budget shortfall of approximately £20M, something that it would not be able to meet with efficiencies alone. This would mean that the Council would have to consider options regarding slowing down the works programme, or service cuts. Neither option came without massive implications for tenants and residents and the Council did not want to go down this route, but unless the Government was going to provide local authorities with resources to fund the gap then the Council would be left with no other option, as it would still be legally required to balance this budget.

The Council would be willing to listen to tenants proposals regarding how it would be able to meet this budget gap.

The Council, along with other local authorities were lobbying the Government on these matters, but as yet the Government had not provided a response. The outcome of this consideration from the Council would be shared at December DMC meetings.

The Council recognised that this would be a challenging winter and understood the level of concern within the community regarding future rent levels and possible service reductions would have for tenants. Information had been and would continue to be made available regarding the support that was available to tenants and residents (as set out in Appendix 1) during this difficult time.

Voids Improvement Programme Update

Officers advised the meeting that there were a number of reasons why some properties took longer than others to be brought back into use. These included the condition of the home itself once the keys had been returned, to the availability of repairs staff to turn the property around. The current system was actively monitored by officers to see where the issues were at each stage of the voids letting process, so they could be addressed. When this related to a misunderstanding by the tenant in relation to what the property was actually like, and whether it met their needs, then consideration would even be given to the wording on the advert to see if had been clearly explained.

Officers recognised that there were still improvements that could be made to the voids letting process, and as a result of this they would be setting up a voids focused

team, made up from neighbourhood housing officers who would work collaboratively with repairs and allocations colleagues to turn round void homes quicker.

Officers were seeking to make improvements to the way the current allocations system was working. The choice based lettings approach had some issues (including the no limit on the number of refusals), and further work would need to be undertaken to see what improvements could be made to the allocations system, as well as analysing the impact any changes could have on tenants.

The Council acknowledge that moving home could be very stressful and that support was sometimes needed to help tenants through this.

The outcomes of the proposed systems changes would be shared with the DMCs when they were available.

Housing Repairs & Contact Centre Update

Officers advised the meeting that the repairs teams always sought to ensure that non-emergency leaks were dealt with before the current 20-day target.

Officers would contact Amptill Square TRA directly regarding the tenant with the water leak problem along with the issue in relation to the lifts.

ACTION BY: Danny Waite

Officers were looking at Council's operational relationship with leaseholders, and this would seek to address the right the Council had to access a leaseholder's property.

Tenants wanted different ways to access and report service issues to the Council. Officers were continuing to bring forward ways that tenants could do this and soon this would include a WhatsApp reporting and live video calling. Officers were finding the live-chat and SMS facilities were proving very popular with tenants and residents that needed to report a repair.

The meeting then adjourned at 8.00pm for 10 minutes.

CCTV & Responsive Security Patrol

The DMC expressed its concerns in relation to the level of ASB and drug abuse happening in the area, and felt that tenants and residents had lost confidence in the Police and Housing Security Patrol's ability to deal with these issues. They were also concerned that information was not yet available regarding the effectiveness of the CCTV cameras that Camden Town DMC had paid for out of DMC funds.

The Chair agreed to seek a meeting involving the Cabinet Member for Safer Communities (Councillor Pat Callaghan), Cabinet Member Better Homes (Councillor Meric Apak) and appropriate officers to see how these issues could now be addressed as the current approaches were not working.

ACTION BY: Fran Heron

Landlord Services Performance Update

Officers recognised the huge challenge in undertaking the commitment to visit every tenant over the next 12 months, but they felt that it would give tenants a valuable opportunity to provide the authority with information about their concerns, along with whether they needed any additional support. It would also allow the authority to engage with tenants regarding ensuring their homes were as fire safe as they could be.

Officers were advised that the two Neighbourhood Managers serving the Camden Town DMC area had moved into other roles, and officers were currently going through a recruitment process to fill these two positions.

Caretaking Performance Update

The DMC noted the information circulated at the meeting regarding Estate Services.

Estate Parking Enforcement

Officers advised the meeting that progress in relation to having a boroughwide scheme – Traffic Management Order, were proving to be incredibly challenging, due to the complexities of applying the legislation to housing land. As a result of this, officers were seeking to take forward the proposal but in smaller packages, starting with 7 estates specifically chosen because they had a high level of concerns in relation to this issue. The residents on these estates would then be consulted on the proposals, the consultation would then be assessed before a decision was taken.

The Council still wanted this approach to apply across the borough as a whole, but it would take time to progress.

Small Sites Programme Update

The DMC expressed its disappointment that the final decision-making regarding whether a scheme would be taken forward would be made by the Council and not be the decision of tenants living on the estate.

Housing Resident's Panel Update

The DMC were not in a position to make any nominations to the panel at this time, but asked officers to write to DMC and TRA representatives to ask if they were interested in putting forward their names.

ACTION BY: Sarah Moore

RESOLVED –

THAT the report be noted

9. CAMDEN TOWN DMC BUDGET

Consideration was given to the report of the Head of Tenancy Services.

The DMC noted the additional information that had been circulated by the Director of Finance regarding the DMC budget making process, along with the revised DMC budget report.

The DMC noted that the response from the Director of Finance had not met their expectations and they wished to see them addressed. The Chair of the DMC agreed to seek to set up a meeting with DMC representatives and the Director of Finance to settle these matters.

ACTION BY: Fran Heron

The DMC also asked that officers provide a response to the actions identified at the special DMC meeting held on 8th March 2022.

**ACTION BY: Head of Tenancy Services
and Director of Finance**

The DMC asked that a special meeting be arranged to allow for the consideration of TRA bids and this take place at the end of October or early November. TRA representatives were advised to contact their neighbourhood officers to work with them to put forward any proposals in time for this meeting.

**ACTION BY: DMC
representatives/Landlord Services/Sarah
Moore**

The DMC asked that future budget reports contain an update in relation to the Bridgeway Court TRA scheme.

ACTION BY: Neighbourhood Manager

The DMC noted that there were no new bids to be considered at this meeting.

RESOLVED –

THAT the report be noted.

10. LOCAL ISSUES

Safer Neighbourhood Board report

Consideration was given to the Safer Neighbourhood Board report.

The DMC asked that they be provided with a new organisational chart regarding the Police and Council staff involved in tackling Community Safety, along with some information on the projects identified in the report.

**ACTION BY: Carole Stewart, Director of
Community Services**

RESOLVED –

THAT the report be noted

11. LOCAL OMBUDSMAN COMPLAINTS DMC CHAIRS PROPOSALS

Consideration was given to the report of the DMC Chairs.

RESOLVED –

THAT the report be noted

12. UPDATE FROM THE CABINET MEMBER FOR BETTER HOMES

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

Councillor Meric Apak, Cabinet Member Better Homes, agreed to provide a response to the issues that Mrs Helia Evans wanted to have addressed once she had put the request in an email for him to consider.

**ACTION BY: Mrs Helia Evans/Cabinet
Member Better Homes**

Councillor Apak, advised the meeting that the proposal to ensure that neighbourhood housing officers carried out a home visit to every tenant was another important way that the Council was seeking to engage with its housing tenants. This would be a huge undertaking and would be a valuable way of seeking to address tenants concerns on a variety of issues.

RESOLVED –

THAT the report be noted.

13. ANY OTHER BUSINESS THAT THE CHAIR CONSIDERS URGENT

There were none.

The meeting ended at 9.15 pm.

CHAIR

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MINUTES END