

THE LONDON BOROUGH OF CAMDEN

At a meeting of the **KENTISH TOWN DISTRICT MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE** held on **TUESDAY, 13TH SEPTEMBER, 2022** at 6.30 pm in the Remote meeting via Zoom

REGISTERED DMC MEMBERS PRESENT

Derek Jarman (Chair)	Kennistoun, Willingham, Rosemary & Margaret TA
Momota Khatun (Vice-Chair)	St Pancras Way Estate TRA
Jane McWilliams (Vice-Chair)	Brookfield Estate TRA
Steve Barton	Holly Lodge TRA
Runa Begum Miha	Wittington TRA
Josh Cedar	Holly Lodger TRA
John Cowley	Camden Square TRAs
June Dodds	Peckwater Estate Tenants Association
Helen Duff	Ingestre Road Tenants Association
Jane Hickson	Leighton Crescent TRA
Chukwudi Onyebuchukwu	Kenbrook House TRA
Helen Jack	Lissenden Gardens Tenants Association
Andrew Peirce (sub)	Camden Association of Street Properties

OTHER RESIDENTS PRESENT

Joanna Hill	Maiden Lane TRA
Pauline Stafford	Maiden Lane TRA
Gail Matthews (observer)	Kenbrook House TRA

COUNCILLOR OBSERVERS PRESENT

Councillors Cameron Aref-Adib, Richard Cotton, Sylvia McNamara, and James Slater

OTHER COUNCILLORS PRESENT

Councillors Meric Apak, Cabinet Member for Better Homes

OFFICERS PRESENT

Hugh Boatswain	Tenant Participation
Claire Bowman	Neighbourhood Manager
Tara Cookson	Neighbourhood Manager
Ododo Dafe	Head of Housing Transformation
Oliver Jones	Head of Green Spaces
Stanton La Foucade	Tenant Participation
Wayne Head	Principal Caretaking Manager
Dermot Mullan	Landlord Services Manager
Danny Waite	Head of Repairs and Operations

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

MINUTES

1. REMOTE MEETING

RESOLVED –

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

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

The DMC considered the list of registered tenant and resident associations (TRAs) provided by the Tenant Participation Service listed at Appendix A to the agenda and those TRAs whose registration had lapsed, which were listed at Appendix B.

RESOLVED –

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

3. APOLOGIES

Apologies for absence were received from Costa Costa (Brookfields Estate TRA) and John Webb (Kennistoun, Willingham, Rosemary & Margaret TA).

4. ANNOUNCEMENTS

The Chair announced the sad news of the passing of Her Majesty the Queen, a one minute silence was observed in her memory.

5. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were none.

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

There were no items of urgent business.

7. MINUTES

Consideration was given to the minutes of the previous meeting.

Matters Arising

A DMC Member sought an update on the work that had been undertaken to improve accessibility to the repairs service for those who were deaf. The Head of Repairs and Operations provided an overview of the work that was planned in this area and advised that work was ongoing.

RESOLVED –

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

8. KENTISH TOWN ACTION POINTS UPDATE

Consideration was given to the actions arising from the previous meeting.

The Action Points Update was noted.

9. HOUSING SERVICES CONSOLIDATED REPORT

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

Finance Strategy HRA Update

The Landlord Services Manager introduced the report.

The Cabinet Member for Better Homes advised the meeting that a recent Government consultation had sought feedback from social housing providers and tenants on a proposed rent cap in 2023/24 of 3% 5% or 7%. The proposal, if implemented, would override the rent standard which permits a raise of CPI plus 1%. Currently inflation was at 10%. The Housing Revenue Account was valued at £200 million, so inflation at 10% meant there would be a £20 million shortfall.

The meeting was informed that in order to minimise raising service charges, efficiency savings would have to be realised, major works would need to be reduced and services cuts would be required. However, this would create problems in the future, as without regular maintenance programmes, repairs would become more expensive.

Further advice would be sought from officers and more detail would be provided to the DMC at the next meeting.

The Cabinet Member for Better Homes assured DMC Members that the Council would give residents as much help as possible, within the limits of its powers.

The following information was provided in response to questions:

- Service charges, including community heating, would remain the same for the rest of the financial year, as these charges had already been set.
- Information had been circulated to residents, which included advice on the financial support that was available to residents.
- Previously, targeted support advice was given to residents, however due to the emerging cost of living crisis concerned residents had been asked to contact the council, as such a new phone line had been set up.
- There was a team of advisers who had specialist knowledge in the financial support that was available to residents.
- This financial support did not always come from the Council's budget, as alternative support options were available to residents.

Voids Improvement Programme Update

The information provided in the report was noted.

Housing Repairs and Contact Centre Update

Danny Waite, Head of Repairs and Operations, gave the meeting an overview of the report, highlighting that work had continued on improving online services. Telephone was still the predominant way residents reported repairs, however alternative methods were becoming more popular and soon WhatsApp would be available.

The meeting was informed that the number of repairs had continued to increase, compared to previous years, possibly due to more residents spending more time at home because of increased home and hybrid working arrangements.

Responding to a question, the Head of Repairs and Operations stated if resource challenges continued to be an issue, work would be undertaken to make sure that repairs were carried out as efficiently and effectively as possible. For example, a leak team had been set up to specifically target repairs that involved leaks, as, if these kinds of repairs were not addressed swiftly they often led to more serious problems.

Capital Works Programme Update

Information was sought on the tendering process for the fire safety works that were due to be undertaken. The Landlord Services Manager advised that he would obtain this information from relevant Officers and circulate.

ACTION: Landlord Services Manager

CCTV and Responsive Security Patrol

The Landlord Services Manager introduced the report giving a general overview of progress of the CCTV installation project, which had continued to progress. DMC Members were reminded that they were welcome to go on estate walk abouts and discuss CCTV needs.

It was noted that the data presented in the report used the old ward boundaries, which had changed in May 2022. It was requested that the ward boundaries be updated in future reports.

ACTION: Head of Security/ Landlord Services Manager

Caretaking Performance Update

The information provided in the report was noted.

Estate Parking Enforcement

The Landlord Services Manager advised that work had continued on the Traffic Management Orders and a more detailed update would be provided at the next meeting.

Landlord Services Performance Update

The Landlord Services Manager introduced the report, highlighting that the team structure in Landlord Services was changing, and two focused rent teams were to be trailed alongside eight housing neighbourhood teams. The trial was in response to the implications that arose due to Covid and increasing rent arrears, and was due to start imminently.

The Landlord Services Manager advised that there would also be a large-scale tenant visiting programme, which would give a better picture of how residents were living as certain things were not picked up on over phone and email. Responding to a question the Head of Housing Transformation advised that the visits would be well rounded, and provide an opportunity to look at residents' wellbeing, repairs and other tenancy or local issues. In response to a follow up question, the Head of Housing Transformation confirmed that visits would also provide an opportunity to obtain next of kin details.

The meeting noted that 51% of residents in rent arrears were on Universal Credit and questioned whether the Government is aware of this and if any action would be taken to support those on Universal Credit who were in rent arrears. The Landlord Services Manager explained that this was an area that the new rent team would focus on, and resources would be targeted into helping those in rent arrears. When home visits were undertaken, these concerns would be discussed with residents, as appropriate.

Grounds Maintenance and Tree Management

Oliver Jones, Head of Green Spaces, introduced the report, providing a brief overview of the key information.

The meeting noted that lots of new trees had been planted on estates and a DMC Member noted that the residents on the Peckwater Estate had been fully involved in this process and helped choose the trees and where they would go. However, some estates had not been as involved in the process and it was noted that information on how to maintain and care for the trees had not been forthcoming. In future it was hoped that each TRA would be able to be more involved in this process.

ACTION: Head of Open Spaces

Responding to a question, Officers advised that trees were inspected every three years and work was carried out as appropriate, but ad hoc work was undertaken if a report was received. However, there was a shortage of tree surgeons and officers in London, which was creating issues with carrying out works.

A DMC Member advised that there had been suspected tree root damage to their property. The Head of Green Spaces noted that the service was aware of this issue but requested that the DMC Member send further detail via email.

Housing Complaints Quarter One Update

The information provided in the report was noted.

Small Sites Programme Update

The information provided in the report was noted.

Housing Residents Panel Update

The Landlord Services Manager introduced the report and invited the meeting to nominate two DMC Members to go through the recruitment process for the role.

Stanton La Foucade, Tenant Participation Co-ordinator, advised that the recruitment process required potential applicants to submit an application. A shortlisting activity would take place, and then a round of interviews with the most suitable candidates.

Several DMC Members expressed interest in the role and Jane McWilliams was nominated by the DMC to apply for the role. Other DMC Members were asked to consider the role and put themselves forward if they wished.

10. KENTISH TOWN DMC BUDGET REPORT

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

Tara Cookson, Neighbourhood Manager took the meeting through the bids received, highlighting that the bid from Castle Road TRA would not be considered, as they were not in attendance to support the bid, having attended Gospel Oak DMC instead.

The Chair noted that there had been some delays in TRAs receiving payments and sought reassurance that this had been resolved. The Neighbourhood Manager confirmed that payments would be sent in a timely manner going forward.

The DMC was reminded that all bid requests for the current financial year needed to be received before the next meeting.

RESOLVED –

THAT the following bids requests be approved:

Raglan Street TRA	Gerda security panels for LFB drop key access to 3 communal door entrances on the estate	£2,611.50
St. Pancras Way TRA	Allotment project	£4,900.00
St. Pancras Way TRA	Winter project for children	£2,000.00
Brookfield TRA	Gardening project for estate	£1,300.00
Brookfield TRA	Rotary driers	£ 900.00
Brookfield TRA	Christmas project	£3,400.00
Maiden Lane TRA	Annual Fireworks event	£3,900.00
Maiden Lane TRA	Boys group activities	£1,100.00
Maiden Lane TRA	Security for community garden	£1,731.75
Maiden Lane TRA	Seniors group	£2,000.00
Maiden Lane TRA	Girls group activities	£1,100.00
Holly Lodge TRA	Bike shed repairs	£4,000.00

11. KENTISH TOWN INFORMATION REPORT

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

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

The meeting was informed that the St Pancras Way TRA had successfully secured £140,000 in funding towards the community hub, and the GERDA secure plates had been installed at the Peckwater Estate. Work had continued on the refuse storage

area at Leighton Crescent, and discussions with the nearby Church were underway as the structure was close to the Church entrance, so a solution was to be sought so that the bin store did not impact churchgoers.

The report was noted.

12. HOUSING OMBUDSMAN COMPLAINTS - DMC CHAIRS UPDATE

The Chair introduced the paper and requested an update on the progress of the Council's annual complaint report and when the DMC might have sight of it. The Landlord Services Manager agreed to seek an update on the progress of the report.

ACTION: Landlord Services Manager

The paper was noted.

13. UPDATE FROM THE CABINET MEMBER FOR BETTER HOMES

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

Councillor Apak, Cabinet Member for Better Homes, gave an overview of his report, providing a brief explanation of key areas that he had been focused on within the report. The Cabinet Member for Better Homes invited DMC Members to give suggestions for areas the report could cover.

The meeting considered empty properties and the allocations process. Responding to a question, the Cabinet Member for Better Homes advised that it was likely not permissible for vacant properties to be advertised as being in the catchment area for popular schools. However, officers would seek further information on this approach.

ACTION: Head of Housing Transformation/ Landlord Services Manager

A DMC Member expressed concern about a broken pedestrian gate at Kenbrook House as this had meant that the estate was not secure and antisocial behaviour had been taking place. The Neighbourhood Manager advised that the Major Repairs Team were aware of the issue and that she would ensure that this was progressed.

ACTION: Neighbourhood Manager

The report was noted.

14. ANY OTHER BUSINESS THAT THE CHAIR CONSIDERS URGENT

There was none.

Kentish Town District Management Committee - Tuesday, 13th September, 2022

The meeting ended at 8.48 pm.

CHAIR

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MINUTES END