

THE LONDON BOROUGH OF CAMDEN

At a meeting of the **HOUSING SCRUTINY COMMITTEE** held on **TUESDAY, 17TH JANUARY, 2023** at 6.30 pm in Committee Room 1, Crowndale Centre, 218 Eversholt Street, London, NW1 1BD

MEMBERS OF THE COMMITTEE PRESENT

Councillors Samata Khatoon (Chair), Sagal Abdi-Wali, Richard Cotton, Nasrine Djemai, Eddie Hanson, Nancy Jirira, Nanouche Umeadi, and Craig McLeish and Houria Pacha (co-opted members)

MEMBERS OF THE COMMITTEE ABSENT

Councillor Kemi Atolagbe and Fatoumata Diallo (co-opted member)

ALSO PRESENT

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. GUIDANCE ON HYBRID MEETINGS

RESOLVED –

THAT the hybrid meeting procedure set out in the agenda papers be agreed.

2. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies were received from Fatoumata Diallo (Co-opted Member) and Councillor Danny Beales, Cabinet Member New Homes, Jobs and Community Investment for items 8 and 9.

3. 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.

4. ANNOUNCEMENTS

Broadcast of the meeting

The Chair announced that the meeting was being broadcast live by the Council to the Internet and could be viewed on the website for twelve months after the meeting. After that time, webcasts were archived and could be made available upon request. Those who had asked to address the meeting were deemed to be consenting to having their contributions recorded and broadcast and to the use of those sound recordings and images for webcasting and/or training purposes.

Housing Revenue Account Budget item 11

The Chair advised the meeting that an addendum had been circulated in relation to this item.

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

There were none.

6. MINUTES

Consideration was given to the minutes of the meeting held on 12th December 2022.

RESOLVED –

THAT the minutes of the meeting held on 12th December 2022 be approved and signed as a correct record.

7. DEPUTATIONS

There were none.

8. COMMUNITY INVESTMENT PROGRAMME ANNUAL REPORT

Consideration was given to the report of the Director of Development, which was presented by Neil Vokes, Director of Development, who gave the following key responses to questions:

- The Council engaged extensively with the Greater London Authority (GLA) and had in recent years secured significant grant funding to build affordable homes. In 2018 the Council secured £30.8M in grant funding to deliver 308

social rent homes. Of the 308 social rented homes, 101 had been delivered, 56 were under construction and 151 would be started within the 2022/23 financial year. All CIP schemes had a business plan and went through a rigorous scrutiny process to ensure they all delivered best value at each stage of the process. Project costs were benchmarked against other data from other local authorities using an industry standard approach. Camden was a founding member of the Beacon Partnership cost benchmarking club, where local authorities shared tender returns on a confidential basis, enabling club members to benchmark build costs across local authorities. Officers were not able to access data from private developers but would look into whether this could be obtained and used to compare against local authority data.

- All CIP schemes sought to follow the guiding principles which set out how the scheme would be delivered and how the decisions would be made. In the Agar Grove scheme, tenants wanted change as they were living in homes that were not fit for purpose as they were often suffering from damp, mould and living in overcrowded homes. The new homes built met the Passive House standard and tenants and residents there were already seeing energy bills being reduced by 70%. Tenants living on the West Kentish Town Estate had voted in favour of redevelopment because of poor living conditions.
- Before September 2022, CIP's target was to deliver 3,050 new homes, of which 1,100 would be social rented homes. Since CIP's inception, the programme had made significant progress in meeting this target, delivering 1,290 new homes, of which 618 are social rented homes. In September 2022, the Cabinet agreed to extend the programme's scale and ambition and a new target of 4,850 homes, including over 1,800 social rented homes, was set. To deliver on this target, the programme had sought approval of a number of large-scale projects. Phase 2a of Agar Grove and West Kentish Town were approved by Cabinet in July 2022, with Bacton Phase II and Camley Street being approved by Cabinet in September 2022. A Cabinet decision on the first phase of Small Sites was expected in 2023, which will be followed by a decision on Wendling and St Stephen's Close in late 2023 or early 2024. The new targets represented a significant increase in the number of homes which would be delivered. As with previous CIP schemes, new ones would include a mixture of housing tenures, including private sale units to cross-subsidise the delivery of affordable housing, social rented units and a range of intermediate rent homes. In addition to homes, the expanded CIP programme would also deliver new community facilities, family hostel accommodation and new temporary accommodation alongside affordable workspace.
- Projects were also subject to a rigorous governance process with a dedicated CIP governance structure within the Council and opportunities for member engagement throughout design and delivery. All projects were approved by the Cabinet and an annual update was brought to members of scrutiny committees. In addition, Ward Councillors were extensively engaged to ensure CIP delivered on local resident needs.
- The programme delivered widespread benefits to Camden residents. As well as creating new high-quality homes and buildings, CIP schemes created additional income for the Council through residential and commercial rents

that helped fund Council services. While some of the other benefits could be quantified (e.g. reduced heating and cooling costs or potential additional rental income from activities in a new community building), many of the benefits delivered by CIP schemes were difficult to monetise. For instance, a scheme that replaced an outdated community facility with a new modern one would lead to more community groups using the centre and new community connections being formed. Replacing poor quality homes with new homes that provided a bigger living space and more bedrooms provided unqualifiable gain for peoples and families health and well-being.

RESOLVED –

THAT the report be noted.

9. SETTLEMENT AND INDEMNITY AGREEMENT WITH HS2 LTD. FOR MITIGATING IMPACTS OF HS2 WORKS ON CARTMEL, CONISTON AND LANGDALE

Consideration was given to the report of the Cabinet Member, New Homes, Jobs and Community Investment, which was presented by David Burns, Director of Economy, Regeneration and Investment, who gave the following key responses to questions:

- The Council would be helping leaseholders access their own property valuers to get a valuation on their property, and though not a formal Compulsory Purchase Order (CPO) Scheme the Council was following the same approach when seeking to buy back these homes. Also when required the Council would be working with resident leaseholders to undertake a shared equity offer.
- The vacated estates would not be fit for purpose for many years due to the on-going noise, vibration and daily disruption, so the Council would not be seeking to use these sites to house people even on a temporary basis. The Council was though considering whether the empty estates could be used during the day by arts projects or other community groups.
- Officers were always seeking to get further resources from HS2 to compensate the local community and the Council in general for the disruptive works that were affecting the area.
- Officers were working with private tenants living in the estates to discuss with them where they were going to move to, this would include whether they would be interested in moving to a Camden Living home. This offer may mean that they may have to move out of the area, and should this be the case then officers would discuss with them how they could be supported through this.
- The Local Lettings plan to be adopted followed the approach being taken to the Community Investment Programme Local letting scheme plans.

RESOLVED –

THAT the report be noted.

10. REVIEW OF THE CAMDEN MEDIUM TERM FINANCIAL STRATEGY

Consideration was given to the report of Cabinet Member for Finance and Cost of Living, which was introduced by Daniel Omisore, Director of Finance, and he along with Councillor Meric Apak, Cabinet Member Better Homes and Glendine Shepherd, Director of Housing, gave the following key responses to questions:

- Part of the proposed savings proposals for the HRA related to the temporary removal of some of the spring clean budget, which would be reinstated at the end of the Chalcots Estates project. Also, the Better Homes works programme was still being taken forward.
- The resources being used to help tackle rough sleeping and homelessness were fully committed, the only area where they were underspent related to the budget allocated to compensate private rented sector landlords to take homeless people and take households out of temporary accommodation as the market had dried up, so it was felt that the underspend should be put back to the centre to reduce the overall budget in line with recent spending.
- Camden always sought to engage and support rough sleepers so that they were offered routes off the streets, however not everyone living on the street wished to be helped in that way.

RESOLVED –

THAT the report be noted.

11. HOUSING REVENUE ACCOUNT BUDGET, RENT REVIEW 2023/24

Consideration was given to the report of Cabinet Member for Better Homes along with the addendum regarding the heating pool proposals and the views of the Housing District Management Committees (DMCs), which was introduced by Councillor Meric Apak, Cabinet Member Better Homes, and he along with Glendine Shepherd, Director of Housing, gave the following key responses to questions:

- The Council wanted to ensure that the views of tenants and residents were considered before the Cabinet determined the proposed rent, service charges and heating pool increases, and the DMCs were Camden's vehicles that enabled these views to be brought forward.
- The resources provided by the Government to fund the removal of the cladding on the Chalcots Estate would not cover the whole cost of the works being undertaken there, along with the costs associated with the evacuation of the buildings and the support costs attached to this. The Council was also

having to find resources to meet the new Building Safety Act requirements as these were not being funded by Government.

- The Welfare Rights Team provided a valuable service to tenants and residents, who sought to ensure they were able to access as much benefit as they were entitled to. The team would signpost people to appropriate support when people were referred to them. The Council also had an advice bus that would go out to neighbourhoods and provide support and advice to people who visited them.
- The specific income team that had been set up would work with individual tenants to ensure that they were able to pay their rent, which would include making a specific repayment plan if necessary.
- The Heating Pool budget was a ring-fenced budget that historically had run a surplus, that was either given back to tenants or reinvested into energy efficient measures. Though it was hoped that heating charges would come down, the current proposals for the heating pool budget meant it would be running a deficit that still needed to be paid off and this was unlikely to happen in just one year.

RESOLVED –

THAT the report be noted.

12. CORPORATE PERFORMANCE REPORT QUARTER 2 2022-23

Consideration was given to the report of the Executive Directors, which was introduced by Gavin Haynes, Director of Property Management, and he along with Councillor Meric Apak, Cabinet Member Better Homes, gave the following key responses to questions:

- Officers recognised that better communications needed to be undertaken in relation to when damp and mould work would be undertaken for tenants individually, and appropriate measures would be put in place to ensure that this was done. Each case would be surveyed, assessed, prioritised and then included in the appropriate programme of works.
- Officers would provide an update regarding whether the outcomes of damp and mould visits were captured as part of the feedback evaluation, along with any developing themes.

ACTION BY: Director of Property Management (SR)

- Most of the survey work regarding damp and mould was now being undertaken by an in-house team, with external surveyor's only being used for more specialised cases.
- The aim of the work that was being undertaken regarding damp and mould cases was to ensure that the route course was dealt with.

- The estates walkabouts taking place before each Housing District Management Committee cycle would continue to be undertaken.

RESOLVED –

THAT the report be noted.

13. CCTV, RESPONSIVE SECURITY PATROL AND ASB UPDATE

Consideration was given to the report of the Director of Property Management, which was introduced by Gavin Haynes, Director of Property Management, and he gave the following key responses to questions:

- Officers agreed to provide an update regarding the position on Westcroft Estate regarding CCTV installation, progress on the Responsive Security Patrol seeking additional powers, and whether Origin Housing in Phoenix Road had appropriate CCTV in place.

ACTION BY: Director of Property Management (GD)

- The Council still had in place a number of CCTV cameras that were old and needed to be replaced, and often these only recorded information locally and were not part of the overall network. The CCTV renewal programme would change this, so cameras would be part of the boroughwide network, provided a higher quality image, and could be reviewed and checked by the control room.

The scrutiny committee welcomed the proposals regarding the renewal of the CCTV network across Camden's estates and the work being done by the Responsive Security Patrol.

RESOLVED –

THAT the report be noted.

14. WORK PROGRAMME AND FORWARD PLAN

Consideration was given to the report of the Director of Housing

The Chair advised the meeting that the following item should be added to the agenda for future meetings:

February 23

Cabinet report – the Small Site Phase One

Programme of meetings (new items in bold)

21ST FEBRUARY 2023

Draft agenda

- Annual portfolio report: Better Homes
- Report of the Cabinet Adviser (Rough sleeping: homelessness prevention, temporary accommodation, and the review with public health of homelessness provision)
- Report of the Cabinet Adviser (Estates Mission)
- State of the Borough report
- **Cabinet report – the Small Site Phase One**
- Work programme

Yet to be programmed

- Allocations Policy (Policy review and service redesign)
- Leaseholder services
- Landlord Licensing Scheme update
- Camden Housing Strategy
- Housing Transformation Update

RESOLVED –

THAT the report work programme be revised as outlined above.

15. ANY OTHER BUSINESS THAT THE CHAIR CONSIDERS URGENT

There were none.

The meeting ended at 8.25 pm.

CHAIR

Housing Scrutiny Committee - Tuesday, 17th January, 2023

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MINUTES END