

THE LONDON BOROUGH OF CAMDEN

At a meeting of the **HOLBORN DISTRICT MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE** held on **TUESDAY, 6TH DECEMBER, 2022** at 7.00 pm in the Hybrid: Meeting via Zoom and at The Beryl Allen Hall, Bourne Estate, Portpool Lane, London EC1N

REGISTERED DMC MEMBERS PRESENT

Peter Wright (Chair)	Gordon Mansions RA
Geoff Bury	Gamages TA
Nick Jones	Flaxman Court TRA
Candice Liebeck	Riverside (Birkenhead) TRA
Judith Milner	Langdon House RA
Charise Outram	Bourne Estate TA
Roz Perrott	Brunswick TRA
John Pope	Medway Court TRA
Mark Quinlan	Trentishoe TRA
Ian Schofield	Dudley Court TRA
Richard Walker	Red Lion RA

OTHER RESIDENTS PRESENT

Albert Beale	South Bloomsbury TRA
Michael Bruscini	Gamages TRA
Francesca Di Fonzo	Bourne Estate TA
Andrey Kobilnyk	Glynde Reach
Kim Quinn	
Melanie Tew	
Zeena Zakaria	Powis Estate TRA

COUNCILLOR OBSERVERS PRESENT

Councillor Lotis Bautista

COUNCILLOR OBSERVERS ABSENT

Councillors Julian Fulbrook, Stephen Stark and Sue Vincent

OTHER COUNCILLORS PRESENT

Councillors Meric Apak and Awale Olad

OFFICERS PRESENT

Jason Blackhurst	Head of Finance (Corporate Services)
Hugh Boatwain	Senior Tenant Participation Officer
Ododo Dafe	Head of Housing Transformation
Cheryl Hardman	Principal Committee Officer
Stanton La Foucade	Tenant Participation Co-ordinator
Stephanie Marsh-Aldis	Neighbourhood Manager
Dermott Mullan	Landlord Services Manager
Dilip Shah	Principal Caretaking Manager
Glendine Shepherd	Director of Housing
Vicky Wemyss-Cooke	Committee Services Manager

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 Holborn 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 and Leaseholder Engagement Team listed at Appendix A to the agenda and those TRAs whose registration had lapsed, which were listed at Appendix B.

It was noted that Red Lion Square Residents Association had been renamed Red Lion Residents Association.

ACTION: Hugh Boatswain, Senior Tenant Participation Officer

In response to a question about Tybalds TRA, the meeting was informed that it was hoped the TRA might be relaunched in January 2023.

RESOLVED –

THAT the ‘A’ and ‘B’ lists be noted.

2. APOLOGIES

Apologies for absence were received from Julia Pascal (Flaxman Court TA), Carolyn Gelenter (Brunswick TRA), Tomina Duta (Powis Estate TRA), Ruth Bonazza (Derby Lodge TRA) and Councillor Julian Fulbrook.

3. ANNOUNCEMENTS

There were no announcements.

4. DECLARATIONS BY MEMBERS OF INTERESTS IN RESPECT OF ITEMS ON THIS AGENDA

There were no declarations of interest.

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

There were no items of urgent business.

6. MINUTES

A representative of Brunswick TRA commented that a question on lengthening leases was related to Camden Council's lease from Lazari Investments and the impact on tenants rather than to residents' leases from Camden Council. Officers offered to attend a Brunswick TRA meeting to discuss the issue.

ACTION: Dermott Mullan, Landlord Services Manager

The comments made about the rubbish being left by residents were specifically concerned with how caretakers could prevent residents from piling up rubbish rather than how the rubbish could be dealt with. Officers agreed to discuss preventative measures with the Brunswick TRA representative.

**ACTION: Dermott Mullan, Landlord Services Manager
Dilip Shah, Principal Caretaking Manager**

A representative of the Bourne Estate TA requested that her query on installation of CCTV on the Bourne Estate be included in the Minutes. It was noted that the data on CCTV footage requests indicated that Bloomsbury, Holborn and Covent Garden, and Kings Cross had the highest number of requests. Officers agreed to investigate and report back on whether Bourne Estate was prioritised for CCTV installation.

**ACTION: Dermott Mullan, Landlord Services Manager
Graeme Dyson, Head of Security**

It was requested that the line regarding language support to residents be reworded into Plain English.

RESOLVED –

THAT the minutes of the meeting held on 21st September be approved and signed as a correct record, subject to the following amendments:

- (i) From "In response to questions about lengthening a lease on a property, officers confirmed that these were not normally extended where the lease still had more than 40 years remaining. Further details on next steps for leaseholders could be provided to Brunswick TRA representatives".

To "In response to questions about **Camden Council** lengthening a lease on a property **whose freehold was held by Lazari Investments**, officers confirmed that these were not normally extended where the lease still had more than 40 years remaining. Further details on next steps for leaseholders could be provided to Brunswick TRA representatives".

- (ii) From: "In response to comments about residents leaving large bags of rubbish by the rubbish chute, blocking a door, and attracting rats and mice, representatives were asked to send details to the Principal Caretaking Manager. Councillor Sue Vincent suggested that evidence was required and that Environmental Health Officers be involved".

To: "In response to ~~comments about~~ **a query about how caretakers could prevent** residents leaving large bags of rubbish by the rubbish chute, blocking a door, and attracting rats and mice, representatives were asked to send details to the Principal Caretaking Manager. Councillor Sue Vincent suggested that evidence was required and that Environmental Health Officers be involved".

- (iii) From: "The Chair noted that a timescale for installation of the new housing CCTV was still awaited".

To: "**In response to queries about installation of CCTV on the Bourne Estate,** the Chair noted that a timescale for installation of the new housing CCTV was still awaited".

- (iv) From "Staff within Landlord Services would still be able to provide linguistic support across the teams in the model structure".

To: "Staff within Landlord Services would still be able to provide ~~linguistic~~ **language** support **to residents** across the **rearranged** teams in the **new** model structure **as staff still worked together to support residents**".

7. ACTION POINTS UPDATE

Consideration was given to the action points update.

With regard to the update on Spring Cleaning at the Brunswick Estate, the representative requested a firm date. The TRA representative noted that they had been previously told they would be consulted on the works. Officers advised that a further update would be provided in January 2023 but an earlier update would be requested.

ACTION: Susanne Afra, Head of Capital Works

In response to a question about the Spring Cleaning, officers explained the process by which the programme was developed. The Trentishoe TRA representative would be advised whether Trentishoe Mansions was included.

ACTION: Susanne Afra, Head of Capital Works

The Riverside (Birkenhead) TRA representative stated that since a Spring Clean two years previously, the paint had peeled off and it now looked as bad as before the Sprint Clean. Officers agreed to investigate.

ACTION: Susanne Afra, Head of Capital Works

The Langdon House TRA representative commented that the Bourne Estate Phase 3 project manager had not updated the TRA as stated in the action tracker.

ACTION: Susanne Afra, Head of Capital Works

There was a discussion about the padlocks attached to gates at Langdon House by an emergency contractor during a repair and the lack of keys. Officers suggested that if the keys could not be found and the padlock had been removed from the gate, the padlock could be disposed of. The Chair commented that a central list for keys could be useful.

In response to queries about major works on Powis Estate, officers commented that the project manager was the best person to provide updates.

The Riverside (Birkenhead) TRA representative was advised to send details of repairs to the Head of Repairs & Operations for an update.

ACTION: Candice Liebeck, Riverside (Birkenhead) TRA representative

The Landlord Services Manager commented that residents on Birkenhead Estate had felt that the previously agreed bid for the garden was not appropriate for the estate. He was considering whether the replacement plans were within the scope of what had been agreed.

In response to queries about whose responsibility it was to report broken lighting, it was confirmed that caretakers should report this. The Principal Caretaking Manager agreed to investigate broken lighting on the Birkenhead Estate.

ACTION: Dilip Shah, Principal Caretaking Manager

There was a discussion about repairs conducted at Trentishoe Mansions. The issues had been raised at a TRA meeting with a Neighbourhood Housing Officer in attendance. Officers were already following this up.

Concern was expressed about damp and mould at a flat in Brunswick Estate. Officers agreed to discuss this with the TRA representative.

ACTION: Dermott Mullan, Landlord Services Manager

RESOLVED –

THAT the action points update was noted.

8. HOUSING SERVICES REPORT

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

HRA Budget 23/24

Jason Blackhurst, Head of Finance (Corporate Services), introduced the report and explained that Appendix B was a template of the consultation questions to be answered at the January meeting.

In response to a question about the energy forecast information, it was clarified that LASER buys energy in bulk in advance. Central government had intervened in the energy market until the middle of 2023 and it was not clear what further intervention would take place after that. Without that announcement it was difficult for LASER to know whether to buy ahead. The current deal on energy purchase would run out at the end of the financial year.

The Cabinet Member for Better Homes commended the finance team for having adopted the forward buying policy. Some councils had not done this and had to raise charges to tenants and leaseholders already.

Albert Beale stated that South Bloomsbury TRA had conducted an AGM and should not have been deregistered for not holding an AGM in 2020 and 2021 due to Covid-19. He commented that Councillor Sue Vincent had attended as an independent observer. The Senior Tenant Participation Officer responded that he had not been sent the required paperwork.

In response to a query about the table on page 31 of the agenda pack, the Head of Finance (Corporate Services) explained that in accountancy income was shown as a negative figure.

The Bourne Estate TRA representative made suggestions for savings. It was suggested that the Council be stricter on leaseholders so that they were accountable for repairs. This would prevent further damage and escalating costs.

There had been a number of leaks into the Bourne Estate hall resulting in damage to the bathroom, ceiling, floor and doors. Officers confirmed that action was taking place within the Leaseholder team and Legal Services. A leak hub was being developed so that issues were dealt with as quickly as possible. There were particular challenges as, unless the leak directly impacted on the leaseholder's flat, the Council may not get an answer. There were also absentee leaseholders. Officers were working with the legal team to get access as quickly as possible to leaseholder flats. It was explained that leaseholders were responsible for costs in some cases, dependent on a number of issues.

In response to a question about differences between access to leaseholder and tenants' flats, it was explained that within a tenancy agreement there was a requirement for reasonable access. This was not the case for private ownership.

The Bourne Estate TRA representative made a further suggestion for savings through the use of more durable paint. Communal areas had recently been redecorated using matt paint which had been demolished in a week.

It was further suggested by a representative that savings could be achieved by employing more staff to speed up finalisation of voids. Officers commented that recruitment was challenging at present and there were vacancies that had not been filled.

The Cabinet Member for Better Homes requested that DMC representatives consider the suggested savings for comment at the January meeting.

Repairs

Danny Waite, Head of Repairs & Operation, introduced the report.

The Bourne Estate TRA representative commented that call centre staff could be very rude and it was concerning that this could be the experience of vulnerable residents. The Head of Repairs & Operation responded that calls were regularly monitored and feedback about poor service could be followed up.

The Bourne Estate TRA representative also noted that on five occasions the repairs team had not turned up as agreed. The Head of Repairs & Operation accepted that at times residents had not been informed when officers were on sick leave and there were situations where officers had gone to the site and immediately left without trying very hard to access the property. However, there were also occasions when residents had insisted they were in the property but later admitted they had popped out. A new system of "Govmetrics" text messages had been introduced so that residents could be contacted quickly. This had seen a reduction in incidents where the repairs team have missed the resident. The Bourne Estate TRA representative commented that nobody had turned up that day to the community hall and there had been no messages.

Housing Transformation

Glendine Shepherd, Director of Housing, introduced the report.

In response to a query about why the Council needed information on its tenants, it was agreed that more information was not needed for most residents but some required support such as with evacuation or mental health problems. There was also a need to know about sub-letting and hoarding. Tenancy visits also allowed tenants to know who their Neighbourhood Housing Officer was.

Representatives considered that communications between team and between the Council and residents needed to be improved. The Director of Housing agreed and was aiming to improve communications across the board. Initially the intention was to get the service areas right and next steps would include co-location.

In response to concerns about tenancy visits adding to the pressured workloads of Neighbourhood Housing Officers, the Director of Housing highlighted the specialist teams being created. Voids and income collection had been stripped from Neighbourhood Housing staff to free up their time for tenancy management. Neighbourhood Housing Officers would also be expected to work within their patches and not regularly work from home.

The Director of Housing took on board the expressed need to support TRAs differently.

RESOLVED –

THAT the DMC provided feedback and made recommendations on the budget report and commented and asked questions on the Repairs and Housing Transformation reports as summarised above.

9. HOLBORN DMC BUDGET

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

The Senior Tenant Participation Officer explained that the chairs provided by the developer when the hall was built were not fire retardant and the screws kept coming out. The tables also needed constant maintenance with a handyman coming in every month to fix it. Gamages TRA representatives offered to take the tables if they were fire safe.

DMC representatives noted that previously funding had been refused for parties where TRAs had funds in the bank. The Bourne Estate TRA representative explained that the previous treasurer had died and the bank was not cooperating with the TRA. In response to queries about a special projects bid, it was explained that the DMC bid was for permanent supplies such as a gazebo and decorations. The special projects bid was for food and presents for the children.

There was a discussion about requirements to consult with officers clarifying that the current rules was for as many residents to be consulted as possible, giving a snapshot of views.

It was suggested that grants for seasonal events be described in a more secular way.

Concern was expressed about the excessive cost of the bike sheds. The Bourne Estate TRA representative explained that the sheds had been recommended by Camden's cycling officer. Security was essential with high crime rates. There was

also some urgency due to Fire Risk Assessment works. The Red Lion RA representative offered to share information on alternative bike sheds.

With regard to the need to replace plastic pots, officers confirmed that other estates would need to implement the communal areas policy in compliance with Fire Risk Assessment works.

RESOLVED –

- (i) THAT Birkenhead Estate TRA be granted £5,000 to purchase and fit Gerda Locks to the four blocks;
- (ii) THAT Bourne Estate TRA be granted £6,046.80 including VAT to replace tables and chairs in the TRA hall;
- (iii) THAT Bourne Estate TRA be granted £1,270 funds for Eid and Christmas celebrations;
- (iv) THAT Bourne Estate TRA be granted £7,960 for a wellbeing project to include fitness classes, coffee mornings and other events;
- (v) THAT Bourne Estate TRA be granted up to £13,000 to install bike sheds to increase storage, following further investigation into alternative bike sheds and discussion with the Camden cycling officer; and
- (vi) THAT Bourne Estate TRA be granted £1,050 to purchase terracotta pots to replace plastic ones.

10. DMC COMPLAINTS SURVEY UPDATE

Consideration was given to the update from the DMC Chairs.

RESOLVED –

THAT the update was noted.

11. UPDATE FROM THE CABINET MEMBER FOR BETTER HOMES

The Cabinet Member for Better Homes expressed confidence in the Director of Housing and the Head of Repairs & Operation's commitment to working together on improving communications, information sharing and a more joined up approach.

12. LOCAL ISSUES

There were none.

13. ANY OTHER BUSINESS THAT THE CHAIR CONSIDERS URGENT

There were no items of urgent business.

The meeting ended at 9.20 pm.

CHAIR

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MINUTES END