

THE LONDON BOROUGH OF CAMDEN

At a meeting of the **HOLBORN DISTRICT MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE** held on **WEDNESDAY, 11TH JANUARY, 2023** at 6.30 pm in the The Council Chamber, Crowndale Centre, 218 Eversholt Street, London, NW1 1BD

REGISTERED DMC MEMBERS PRESENT

Peter Wright (Chair)	Gordon Mansions RA
Albert Beale	South Bloomsbury TRA
Carolyn Gelenter	Brunswick TRA
Sam Horsburgh	Bourne Estate TA
Judith Milner	Langdon House RA
Charise Outram	Bourne Estate TA
Julia Pascal	Flaxman Court TRA
Mark Quinlan	Trentishoe TRA
Zeena Zakaria	Powis Estate TRA

COUNCILLOR OBSERVERS PRESENT

Councillors Lotis Bautista and Sue Vincent

COUNCILLOR OBSERVERS ABSENT

Councillors Julian Fulbrook and Stephen Stark

OTHER COUNCILLORS PRESENT

Councillors Meric Apak

OFFICERS PRESENT

Emma Cardoso	Team Leader (HRA & Capital Projects)
Cheryl Hardman	Principal Committee Officer
Dermott Mullan	Landlord Services Manager
Dipti Shah	Business Partner

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.

RESOLVED –

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

2. APOLOGIES

Apologies for absence were received from Ian Schofield (Dudley Court TRA), Geoff Bury and Michael Bruscini (Gamages TRA), Richard Walker (Red Lion RA), Roz Perrot (Brunswick TRA), and Sarah Friday, Alex Gordon and John Pope (Medway Court TRA).

3. ANNOUNCEMENTS

Youth Services

The Chair proposed that before the next meeting of the DMC in March, a meeting should be held with Youth Services.

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

There were no interests declared.

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

There were no items of urgent business.

6. JANUARY DMC HRA BUDGET 2023/24 AND RENT SETTING REPORT

Passing of Lidia Venegas

The meeting held a minutes silence regarding the passing of Lidia Venegas a homeless person who had sadly died in Kentish Town.

Emma Cardoso, Team Leader (HRA and Capital Projects) took the meeting through the report and supplementary information as part of a briefing for all DMC representatives, after which Holborn DMC convened separately to discuss the options set out in the report.

The Chair noted that the supplementary paper would be published online shortly for people not in attendance to read online. DMC representatives had been advised about the significance of the meeting.

Rent and Service Charge Consultation

Concern was expressed about the level of increases and how those over the threshold for benefits would manage. However, it was understood that the Council was facing increased costs.

The representative for Brunswick TA had calculated that Brunswick Estate paid £250,000 per year for caretaking and faced a further increase in the charge. In response to a question, officers explained that salary increases for caretakers and estate managers were agreed nationally but were not large. The proposed increased service charge was to pay for whole service cost increases to enable the caretaking service to be maintained at current levels. A breakdown of how the caretaking funds were spent was requested to aid understanding of the service charge.

ACTION: Dilip Shah, Principal Caretaking Manager

In response to a query as to why the Council was seeking to compete with the private sector on garage rents, officers commented that there had not been an increase in garage rents since 2009. Comparisons had been made with the level of rents in other local authorities. The cost of maintaining the garages had increased since the last rent rise.

There was a discussion about the contract with Veolia and how waste collection from paladin bins was charged for across Council Tax and service charges. The Chair suggested that an examination of contracts, including how they were working, what was being paid for and whether the charges were reasonable, could be conducted with other DMCs.

ACTION: Peter Wright, Chair of Holborn DMC

The representative of Powis Estate TRA commented on an additional bill received at the end of year for works but with no breakdown as to what work had been done or who requested it.

It was noted that the rent for a one bedroom flat in the Brunswick Estate was equivalent to the average rent for a four bedroom flat in Camden and it was queried why the rents were higher there. The finance officer commented that the rents presented in the table were the average across all Camden's housing stock. The rents would differ across different properties. It was acknowledged that the range of rents for each of band of property would be useful in future papers and this would be fed back.

In response to concerns about residents struggling to pay their rent or service charges, officers suggested that they contact their Neighbourhood Housing Manager for advice. Information previously provided on the support available could be reshared with DMC representatives.

ACTION: Dermott Mullan, Landlord Services Manager

It was noted that there were voluntary and community sector organisations such as churches that provided support including white goods. A list of useful organisations could be collated and circulated.

ACTION: Dermott Mullan, Landlord Services Manager

There was a discussion about the forward purchase of bulk gas to the end of the financial year and query about how there could therefore be a deficit for 2022/23. Officers confirmed that the heating pool budget was a ring-fenced account for the residents in the heating pool. Any deficit would be paid by those residents in future years. The Team Leader (HRA & Capital Projects) explained that energy was bought via LASER in tranches. The heating pool reserve had been used in 2022/23 to limit price increases over winter but the price of gas exceeded use of the reserve resulting in a deficit.

It was suggested that work be undertaken to encourage the switching off of heating or appliances rather than leaving them on all day. Comments were made about heating being on constantly in communal areas such as TRA halls. Officers informed the meeting that a meter roll out programme was underway.

ACTION: Dermott Mullan, Landlord Services Manager

RESOLVED –

- (i) THAT the DMC noted the contents of the report and the Chair asked to formally feedback its views to the Joint DMC (Housing Summit);
- (ii) THAT, on being put to the vote, the DMC:
 - a) Supported the rent increase of 7%;
 - b) Supported the increase of the tenant service charge – caretaking by 54p;
 - c) Objected to the increase of the tenant service charge – CCTV by 5p;
 - d) Supported the increase of the tenant service charge – communal lighting by £1.64;
 - e) Supported the increase of the tenant service charge – communal M&E maintenance by 13p;
 - f) Supported the increase of the tenant service charge – grounds maintenance by 15p;
 - g) Supported the increase of the tenant service charge – Responsive Housing Patrol by 3p;
 - h) Supported the increase to garage rents by £2; and
 - i) Supported Heating Poll option 2: 175% increase with one-off credits to reduce to 150%, defer deficit into future years

The separate Holborn DMC discussion of the proposals finished at 20:00.

7. ANY OTHER BUSINESS THAT THE CHAIR CONSIDERS URGENT

There was no urgent business.

Holborn District Management Committee - Wednesday, 11th January, 2023

The meeting ended at 8.40 pm.

CHAIR

Contact Officer: Cheryl Hardman

Telephone No: 020 7974 1619

E-Mail: cheryl.hardman@camden.gov.uk

MINUTES END