

Motion on Direct Labour Force

In view of increasing energy bills and repair and maintenance costs, this DMC resolves to call upon Camden Council to acknowledge the vital importance of the direct labour repair team in Camden, to strengthen the direct labour force, to increase apprenticeships for young men and women and to maintain the Holmes Road repair depot as a model and centre for repair excellence in Camden.

Background note:

Camden Council's direct labour force has a long and proud history. In St Pancras & Somers Town ward, direct labour built Park View House (then known as Cecil Rhodes House), for example. We know direct labour is cheaper and more efficient than using external contractors. Direct labour can also provide excellent long-term training and apprenticeships for local people.

Holmes Road depot, built in 1976 and expensively refurbished in 2017-2021 and one of the finest works depots in London, is under threat. Under a deal with Yoo Capital to develop the Holmes Road site, the depot will have to be re-provisioned – even after Camden spent more than £8m refurbishing it. The rumour is that it will be located near York Way. However, moving the depot will take years and £millions and there is a risk that the depot will close and never re-open and that the skilled direct labour force will disappear with it.

In order to provide the skilled labour force under democratic control that is needed for net zero as well as fulfilling Camden's repairing obligations, we need to keep and strengthen our direct labour force and to keep Holmes Road depot. It will help us to save money, to develop local economies and to provide training for future generations.