

## **THE LONDON BOROUGH OF CAMDEN**

At a meeting of the **CAMDEN TOWN DISTRICT MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE** held on **WEDNESDAY, 8TH JANUARY, 2025** at 6.30 pm in the Council Chamber, Town Hall, Judd Street, London WC1H 9JE

### **REGISTERED DMC MEMBERS PRESENT**

Fran Heron (Chair)	Ampthill Square TRA
John Wood (Vice-Chair)	Walker House TRA
David Perris (Vice-Chair)	CASP
Paul Tomlinson	Ampthill Square TRA
James Mansfield	Bridgeway TRA
Wolfram Westendorf	Godwin and Crowndale TMO
Rienzi Trento	Ossulston TRA

### **OTHER RESIDENTS PRESENT**

Juber Ahamad	Ossulston TRA
David Auger	Resident

### **COUNCILLOR OBSERVERS PRESENT**

Councillor Edmund Frondigoun

### **COUNCILLOR OBSERVERS ABSENT**

Councillors Shah Miah and Andrew Parkinson

### **OTHER COUNCILLORS PRESENT**

Councillors Steve Adams and Richard Olszewski

### **OFFICERS PRESENT**

Gavin Haynes	Director of Property Management
Sinéad Burke	Head of Property Asset Management
Gerry Crowley	Head of Allocations, Lettings and Private Housing Services
Michael Webb	Head of Finance (Supporting Communities)
Jo Adams	Landlord Services Manager
Olivier Goma	Neighbourhood Manager
Mahie Melad	Tenant Participation
Nikos Mountain	Finance

**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 Camden Town 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 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 list of tenant and residents' associations as set out at Appendix A and their representatives be noted.

### **2. APOLOGIES**

Apologies for absence were received from Brian Gardiner and Monir Hussain (Churchway TRA), Suzie Lai and Simon Lepper (Clarkson and Mornington TRA), Mahboobur Rahman and Rashida Khan (Coopers Lane Estate TRA), Priya Mandavia (Phoenix Court TRA) and Richard Caylor (Bayham Place TRA).

### **3. ANNOUNCEMENTS**

There were none.

### **4. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST OF ITEMS ON THIS AGENDA**

There were none.

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

There were none.

### **6. JANUARY DMC HRA BUDGET 2025/26 AND RENT SETTING REPORT**

The DMC went through the proposals outlined for consideration as set out in the template from the Director of Finance.

#### **Rent Increase**

Following a vote, it was determined that the proposed increase should not be supported.

**Increase Tenant Service Charge - Caretaking:**

Following a vote, it was determined that the proposed increase should be supported.

**Increase Tenant Service Charge - CCTV:**

Following a vote, it was determined that the proposed increase should not be supported.

**Increase Tenant Service Charge - Communal Lighting:**

Following a vote, it was determined that the proposed increase should be supported.

**Increase Tenant Service Charge - Communal M&E Maintenance:**

Following a vote, it was determined that the proposed increase should not be supported.

**Increase Tenant Service Charge - Grounds Maintenance:**

Following a vote, it was determined that the proposed increase should not be supported.

**Increase Tenant Service Charge - Responsive Housing Patrol:**

Following a vote, it was determined that the proposed increase should be supported.

**Comments on heating pool proposals**

Following a vote, it was determined that the proposed increase should be supported.

**Officer responses to questions**

The Council had developed an Asset Management Strategy to enable it to ensure it was delivering quality homes for people to live in. In order to ensure that Council homes continued to be fit for purpose £1bn worth of investment would need to be undertaken. This figure had been revised to a deliverable level of £670M which allowed for the prioritising of investment on regulatory requirements and the safety of residents in their homes. The total funding the Council had to meet this investment

need was £370M, meaning that the Council had a shortfall of £300m which it proposed to fill by releasing approximately 60 high-cost homes a year for sale. It was anticipated that high-cost homes would mainly be street properties that required exceptional levels of investment and did not represent good value for money. It was not expected that many homes would be sold in the first year of the 5-year programme, as the authority would be using its existing resources to fund this investment programme. The funding arising from this investment programme would not be used to resource the purchase of ex-right to buy homes, as the family friendly purchasing programme was being used for this purpose.

The Housing Welfare Rights Team provided a valuable service to both tenants and residents seeking assistance in accessing benefits and help with their own financial management, along with enabling tenants to pay any debits they had with the Council. This was a service that all housing providers had in place, and both adult social and children's services had similar support services in place. The adult and children support services could be accessed by private rented sector tenants if they met the eligibility criteria. Registered Social Landlords had their own money advice teams in place to support their tenants.

Tenants on housing benefits were able to access Camden Living Homes, and a number were already living in these homes. They would though be required to meet the eligibility criteria.

The Council was required to ensure that the HRA could be fully funded annually.

The Council had taken the view that communal heating systems were better for tenants, as not only was the lifetime better (approx. 30 years) than individual boilers (approx. 15 years), but also communal heating systems were easier to access to undertake appropriate gas safety checks. As part of any new replacement programme an assessment would be undertaken as to whether the communal heating system should continue, or whether tenants should be offered the opportunity to have individual boilers installed instead.

### **Other issues**

The DMC felt that though the Council was facing budgetary pressures, it had not provided accurate data to justify its budgetary proposals; had not sought enough savings from eliminating waste and inefficiencies (e.g. void performance), and this should have happened before seeking any increases; needed a funded cyclical maintenance programme as it was having an impact on the existing housing stock, with the failure to do this type of work had led to a degradation of the quality of the fabric of existing homes, and increased the cost of keeping homes fit for purpose; further work should be undertaken to ensure that the Responsive Security Patrol service was delivering, if further resources were required to support this service then this should be sought; the DMCs should have been able to offer comments on the investment priorities and programme and the Capital Investment Programme that

supported these programmes; and whether the heating pool approach still provided value for money.

DMC representatives identified different views on the quality of the caretaking services that tenants were receiving, though they recognised the pressures caretakers were under when they had to cover a number of estates. They also felt that supervision needed to be improved in order to ensure a better overall consistent service. The DMC felt that further consideration on the performance of the caretaking service should be undertaken at a future meeting.

**ACTION BY: Chair of the DMC**

That in future HRA Budget and spending reports should avoid referencing the cumulative rental loss due to the rent reductions, as it failed to give the full picture or add anything to the discussion. Also, greater transparency should be provided so that tenants and residents could make informed decisions. The authority should give further consideration regarding how it could seek to address the HRA budget deficit more strategically over the long term, rather than the annualised existing approach.

**ACTION BY: Director of Finance**

Officers would provide a link to the Cabinet papers for the meeting on 15<sup>th</sup> January 2025 regarding the Housing Investment Strategy Proposals.

**ACTION BY: Mahie Melad**

Officers would also provide information on the principles and processes that would apply when considering a home for sale.

**ACTION BY: Sinéad Burke**

Officers would ensure that response was provided regarding the Heating Pool issues raised by John Wood.

**ACTION BY: Michael Webb**

Officers were asked for information regarding the benefits in kind provided by contractors with sites on estates, along with the impact on rental loss.

**ACTION BY: Gavin Haynes**

Officers would provide an update regarding the new CCTV Camera installation programme.

**ACTION BY: Gavin Haynes**

The Chair then reported this information to the other DMC representatives.

**RESOLVED –**

THAT approval be given to the views set out above.

**7. ANY OTHER BUSINESS THAT THE CHAIR CONSIDERS URGENT**

There were none.

The meeting ended at 8.30 pm.

**CHAIR**

**Contact Officer: Gianni Franchi**

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**MINUTES END**