

THE LONDON BOROUGH OF CAMDEN

At a meeting of the **HOUSING SCRUTINY COMMITTEE** held on **TUESDAY, 24TH FEBRUARY, 2026** at 6.30 pm in Committee Room 1, Town Hall, Judd Street, London WC1H 9JE

MEMBERS OF THE COMMITTEE PRESENT

Councillors Kemi Atolagbe (Chair), Meric Apak, Joseph Ball, Tommy Gale and Nancy Jirira and Charles Bertlin, Larissa Hope and Victor Seedman (co-opted members)

MEMBERS OF THE COMMITTEE ABSENT

Councillors Richard Cotton, Eddie Hanson and Samata Khatoon

ALSO PRESENT

Councillor Sagal Abdi-Wali, Cabinet Member for Better Homes

Councillor Nasrine Djemai, Cabinet Member for New Homes and Community Investment (Item 7)

Councillor Rebecca Filer, Cabinet Adviser for Tenant Engagement in the Private Rented Sector (Item 8)

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. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors Richard Cotton, Eddie Hanson and Samata Khatoon.

2. 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.

3. 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.

Re-ordering of the agenda

The meeting agreed that item 8 should be moved to the start of the meeting, followed by items 7, 9 and 10.

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

There were none.

5. MINUTES

Consideration was given to the minutes of the meeting held on 12th January 2026.

RESOLVED –

THAT the minutes of the meeting held on 12th January 2026 be approved and signed as a correct record.

6. DEPUTATIONS

There were none.

7. COMMUNITY INVESTMENT PROGRAMME (CIP) ANNUAL REPORT 2025

Consideration was given to the report of the Executive Director Investment Place and Opportunity.

Councillor Nasrine Djemai, Cabinet Member New Homes and Community Investment, took the meeting through the report and she along with David Burns, Executive Director Investment Place and Opportunity, gave the following key responses to questions:

- The video that was played to the meeting showed examples of the work that had been undertaken through Camden's Community Investment Programme (CIP) and was available to view at [Scrutiny_FINAL.mp4](#)
- Officers agreed to ensure that future reports would provide specific information of the annual delivery changes, so progress could be assessed and scrutinised, this would include the number of new homes built and available for use in the last 12 months; the number of planning applications that were in the pipeline or had been approved for CIP schemes; progress on building of homes; bedroom number of homes built; the reasons for any delays to schemes; along with more detail on the social value schemes being delivered.

ACTION BY: Director of Development

- Information on the progress on the delivery of schemes depended on where they were in the programme cycle, which could give the impression that progress had slowed down.
- The Housing Delivery Taskforce report that was going to Cabinet on 25th February outlined how the Council could take forward housing options in the future. The proposals covered issues regarding better land use (including the height of buildings); improving the existing housing stock; better help for downsizing; types of tenures; and work with partners to deliver more homes.
- The Council was working to ensure that it provided the right environment for the regeneration and development of housing sites in the borough, which would allow for the provision of Council and affordable homes.

The scrutiny committee welcomed the report, and they recognised the role that CIP had played in building Council homes and regenerating whole communities in Camden. Also, the scrutiny committee supported the progress that was being made in delivering the West Kentish Town CIP scheme, which they felt would play an important part in improving the lives of families living on the estate.

RESOLVED –

THAT the report be noted

8. REPORT OF THE CABINET ADVISOR FOR TENANT ENGAGEMENT IN THE PRIVATE RENTAL SECTOR HOUSING

Consideration was given to the Report of the Cabinet Adviser on Tenant Engagement in the Private Rented Sector.

Councillor Rebecca Filer, Cabinet Adviser on Tenant Engagement in the Private Rented Sector, took the meeting through the report.

The scrutiny committee welcomed the key findings that had been identified around the growth in the number of the residents that were now private renters; the transient nature of this group of residents; that Camden now had some of the highest private rents in the country which posed a significant challenge to renters; that these high rents impacted on the quality of life for many private renters as it placed pressure on their personal finances; and that with the Renters' Rights Act coming into force Camden should do more to fully engage with private renters.

The scrutiny committee noted that 36% of residents across Camden were now private renters, and that the socio-economic background of private renters was varied across the borough with largest group being higher managerial & professional, along with full-time students. Private rented sector households also tended to be one-person households, and this came with its own challenges.

The scrutiny committee welcomed the recommendations proposed by the Cabinet Adviser regarding improving awareness and communication for the private rented sector, using data to strengthen support pathways and the understanding of the private rented sector in Camden and the proposals to deepen partnerships.

The scrutiny committee noted the good work the Council and the Camden Federation of Private Tenants were doing in seeking to share information and advice to tenants living in the private rented sector; the changes to the sector following the Renters Right Act, and the need for residents to be informed of their rights; the need for proactive enforcement of these rights and the role the Council would play; and the creation of an annual Private Renters week in Camden which would help raise the profile of the private sector housing in Camden.

The scrutiny committee thanked the Cabinet Adviser for the report.

RESOLVED –

THAT the report be noted

9. HOUSING OMBUDSMAN RECOMMENDATIONS AND REPAIRS UPDATE

Consideration was given to the report of the Director of Property Management.

Scot Reid, Head of Housing & Property Engagement & Customer Service, took the meeting through the report and he along with Gavin Haynes, Director of Property Management, gave the following key responses to questions:

- Officers recognised the importance that good communication flow with tenants and residents regarding reported repairs and complaints played in the way that tenants and residents felt about the Council and its housing services' performance. In seeking to address this the Council had put in place significant investment in staffing, training and through working with the

residents' members of the Oversight Panel to improve the quality of responses. This had led to a marked improvement in customer satisfaction with their respective case management. Future proposals included sending proactive SMS texts to tenants regarding service issues, as was currently being done regarding lift breakdowns. This not only helped keep tenants informed but also avoided tenants needing to contact the call centre to report or seek information on the progress of a service issue. An automated process (that would be available out-of-hours) was being looked into through the Made Tech system, as currently such a process still required an officer being available to input and action the process.

- The importance of ensuring the right operative was sent to deliver the work was recognised, and the Council was putting in place further measures to ensure that systems enabled this to be done, along with ensuring that appointments were not missed. Officers were looking at the information provided regarding why appointments were missed, along with whether systems needed to change to ensure data information was correctly recorded (e.g. a repair being resolved by an operative but the system not recognising it because the operative was late, so was recorded as a missed appointment).
- It was recognised that the move from a Stage 1 complaint to a Stage 2 complaint often related to the tenant being unhappy with the level of compensation being offered by the Council.
- The Housing Ombudsman initial report, along with the Council's own Housing Transformation programme, had helped bring forward cultural changes which had led to improvements in the way housing services were now being delivered.
- Officers agreed to ensure that future update reports would provide a breakdown of the 'other' category regarding the types of cases handled.

ACTION BY: Director of Property Management

- The scrutiny committee could consider whether it wished to have a presentation from the resident Oversight Panel at a future meeting regarding the work that panelists had been doing.
- The Housing Investment Strategy would seek to deliver a programme of works that would address housing infrastructure issues on estates in Camden. This would include a programme of work regarding the installation of new boiler plant, or whole system renewal that would seek to address the loss of hot water on a number of estates this winter. Information regarding the internal review following the loss of heating and hot water at the Brunswick Estate and other estates would be sent to members for information.

ACTION BY: Director of Property Management

- Performance against statutory Awaab's Law timescales was being measured through specific measures, and currently 100% of cases were being

acknowledged and triaged by the Rapid Response Team and the Damp and Mould Team on time.

- The Council was seeking to put in place new contractual proposals regarding the repairs contract so more than 1 contractor would be in place. This would allow the authority to assess performance against the others and change contractors if necessary.

The scrutiny committee welcomed the progress that had been made by housing services in improving its communication flow with tenants and residents, along with the way it handled Stage 1 complaints. It also noted the good work being done by officers in the call handling team based at the Holmes Road depot.

RESOLVED –

THAT the report be noted

10. ANNUAL REPORT FROM CABINET MEMBER FOR BETTER HOMES

Consideration was given to the report of the Cabinet Member for Better Homes.

Councillor Sagal Abdi-Wali, Cabinet Member for Better Homes, took the meeting through the report and gave the following key responses to questions:

- The Housing Scrutiny Committee meeting on 9th December 2025, considered the Council's Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Strategy, that built on the 2019 strategy and reflected significant changes since the pandemic. The new strategy was developed in partnership with housing, health, social care, employment, and voluntary sector organisations. It incorporated learning from previous reviews, the transformation programmes, and engagement with people with a lived experience. The new approach shifted from prevention at the point of homelessness to a whole-organisation and whole-place approach, addressing risks such as domestic abuse, financial vulnerability, and unemployment. Support was now focused on person-centred integration, recognising that housing alone was not sufficient and that co-ordinated responses from health and housing were essential. The strategy embedded a stronger focus on tackling inequality and systemic injustice. How this strategy was being progressed would be reported as part of a future update.
- The new Member induction programme would provide an opportunity to provide advice and guidance to new councillors regarding how housing services operated, along with the pathways towards accessing support for tenants to enable them to deal with housing issues without having to go through the formal Member Enquiry process.
- A working group had been set up to look at short-term lets that involved officers from Planning Enforcement, legal, leaseholder services, and neighbourhood housing managers. The purpose of the group was to use the investigative experience of the planning enforcement team to aid co-

ordination efforts to tackle short-term letting in Council-owned properties. A borough-wide communications campaign was launched in November 2025 to raise awareness of short-term lets restrictions and associated risks to leaseholders, which highlighted that a number of leaseholders were not aware of the lease conditions and legal consequences of short-term lets.

- The Council had appointed a company called Housing LIN to undertake an in-depth review of Camden's housing offer for older people. The review was expected to conclude in July 2026, and its findings would inform future policy and service development in the area.
- Officers would provide briefing to all members of the scrutiny committee regarding the new requirements for Residential Emergency Evacuation Plans.

ACTION BY: Director of Property Management

- Officers would continue to hold heads of service events as they provided a valuable opportunity to find out the key issues of tenant concern. They also provided an opportunity for officers to share service change information directly with tenants. Prior to these meetings tenants were able to have face-to-face discussions with officers regarding specific issues.
- The key areas that were being addressed over the course of the year included preparing housing services for the future assessment by the Housing Regulator; meeting the ambitions of Camden's Housing Mission, ensuring delivery of the Housing Investment Strategy; ensuring delivery of the Housing Transformation programme; ensuring statutory and regulatory requirements were being met; and reducing the housing waiting list.

The scrutiny committee welcomed the report and noted the diverse and difficult portfolio of work that the Cabinet Member for Better Homes had to address along with the excellent work regarding seeking to deal with Domestic Violence and Abuse.

RESOLVED –

THAT the report be noted

11. WORK PROGRAMME AND FORWARD PLAN

Consideration was given to the report of the Director of Property Management.

The scrutiny committee recognised that a new administration would be in place following the May local government elections. The meeting felt it would be helpful to identify some key issues that the new scrutiny committee may wish to consider during the year as follows;

- Housing Investment Strategy update

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- Tenant Satisfaction Measures, including repairs performance and missed appointments
- Homelessness and rough sleeping update
- Renters Rights Act update
- Anti-social behaviour update
- Voids Performance update

The scrutiny committee also recommended that the new scrutiny committee appoint the existing co-optees (Charles Bertlin, Larissa Hope and Vic Seedman) for the 2026/27 municipal year.

RESOLVED –

THAT the new scrutiny committee consider the issues to be discussed at future meetings as set out above, along with the recommendation that the existing co-opted members (Charles Bertlin, Larissa Hope and Vic Seedman) be appointed for the new municipal year 2026/27.

ACTION BY: Director of Property Management

Thanks

The Chair thanked all the members of the committee over the last 4 years for the work they have done in scrutinising housing services. The Chair also thanked Councillor Richard Cotton and Councillor Tommy Gale who would be standing down as councillors. The Chair then thanked officers for the help they have given the scrutiny cttee over the last 4 years.

Members of the scrutiny committee then thanked the chair for her guidance and leadership, and the Cabinet Member for Better Homes also thanked the committee for its diligence and help in seeking to improve housing services.

12. ANY OTHER BUSINESS THAT THE CHAIR CONSIDERS URGENT

There were none.

The meeting ended at 8.55 pm.

CHAIR

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MINUTES END