

**MEETING OF 10 AUGUST 2023 AT CAMDEN OFFICES RE MAX FORDHAM,  
HIGHGATE NEW TOWN HEAT NETWORK REMEDIAL WORK PROPOSALS (20<sup>TH</sup>  
JUNE 2022) [RELEASED FEBRUARY 2023]**

In Attendance

Councillors

Councillor Meric Apak (Labour Party), Cabinet Member for Better Homes (MA)

Councillor Sian Berry (Green Party), Highgate Ward (SB)

Camden Officers and Employees

Michael Capper, Contracts Manager (MC)

Insley Ettienne, Court Officer, Leaseholder Services (virtual) (IE)

Gavin Haynes, Director of Property Management (GH)

Paul McHugh, Programme Manager for Mechanical and Electrical Capital Works (PM)

Cameron Moore, Collections Team, Leaseholder Services (virtual) (CM)

John Stow, Operations Manager (JS)

Max Fordham

David Lindsey (DL)

Leaseholders

Henry Coleman, Management Committee, Highgate New Town Leaseholders Association (virtual) (partial) (HC)

Sue Dawson, Chair, Highgate New Town Leaseholders Association (SD)

Patrick Hagopian, Secretary, Highgate New Town Leaseholders Association (PH)

Ian McKay, Architects Committee, Highgate New Town Leaseholders Association (virtual) (IM)

Lucy Read, Architects Committee, Highgate New Town Leaseholders Association (LR)

Fabian Watkinson, Chair, Whittington Estate Residents Association (FW)

**NOTE:** This transcript, based on an audio recording made available to participants, has been lightly edited. Camden was given an opportunity to review the transcript and propose corrections and declined to do so.

**GH:** Introductions.

**PH:** Sue Dawson will raise selected questions from the first part of our list, as there isn't time to go through the whole list one by one. Then IM, who is an architect, will go through some of the other questions from the second part.

**SD:** Which part of the Max Fordham recommendations will be implemented, when will they be implemented, who pays for implementation, when will they fix the problems? What went wrong and why are things so patchy across the estate and are continuing to be so?

**MC:** We wrote to residents of Highgate New Town back in February with five key points that we raised in that letter of what we would actually be doing. We are going to be reconfiguring pipe work that is causing the fault in the design, so we have to re-pipe from the boilers to what we call buffer vessels, big hot water tanks.

That's one of the key recommendations of the Max Fordham report. From that we'll be able to re-commission the system because we've not got an efficient system there. Those are the two key elements that we're going to be doing there.

**SD:** Over what time scale?

**MC:** We're looking at being able to start commencing in December of this year. It will be between 6 and 12 weeks to do the works.

**SD:** So that's just the pipework.

**PH:** If we refer to the medium-term interventions that Max Fordham recommends on page 9 of their report. They have 11 recommendations, some of which you could break down into sub-recommendations within each of those sections so I suppose another way of asking the same question is are these five points an adequate summary of those 11 medium-term recommendations that Max Fordham has made; or which of those 11 recommendations that follow that section on page 9 are you not going to implement?

**MC:** I've said the key things we will implement. Max Fordham recommends what is known as an oxygen scavenger for de-oxygenating. That's in there. So when we look at those key, those key things, those are the main things we're going to do. So the other 11 we wouldn't necessarily be doing, but they could also be linked together.

**PH:** It's difficult to translate the five points into the 11 recommendations. Those are just five one-sentence lines. I wonder, David Lindsey, did you get a copy of this letter? Did you get a copy of the letter from Michael Capper to residents and do these five points sum up everything that you think ideally would need to be done?

**DL:** Okay, I can't remember whether I got that letter. I think your basic point is right, is that it would be better to be clear as to which of the 11 items were included and not. From our point of view, I mean.

**PH** (passes DL a copy of Camden's February 2023 letter): Do those five points sum up everything that needs to be done? Because it seems to me that there's quite a lot missing from that list.

**GH:** What we can do is a summary following this meeting. I think what Michael's outlining is that the work we're configuring at the moment is the pipe work to the buffer vessel, the oxygen scavenger, whatever that is, and the water treatment has already been happening, and the works on the HIUs as well. That's already in train. I think the one bit the team are keeping under review, from my understanding, is whether or not to replace.

**PM:** Number 4.

**GH:** the older standard efficiency boilers with the condensing. So that's something we're keeping under review. And the other one that we are doing is the heating controls, isn't it, making sure they're not set to hand. Whether actually the boiler management system is working as it should do.

**PM:** That's right.

**SD:** So these are fairly major works, aren't they? Would you all agree? (General murmured assent.)

**LR:** Could you just be clear what the second item that you said you wouldn't be doing as yet the item 4, what was the other item that you were not doing yet?

**MC:** So if we summarise, if we want to hear on each one of those points, what we would be doing and what we're not doing I'm happy to do that.

**GH:** I think you think boiler is going to go under review, the cost benefit on that.

**PH:** Let's put some of that off until Ian is going to take the lead. So if you wanted to go on in broad strokes before we get into the detail.

**SD:** So the majority of the work is outside of people's homes?

**MC:** Yes.

**SD:** So we can assure people that there won't be that much disruption.

During the works, how will the heating and hot water operate? Because we've had days, as you know, where we've all had to go down to the swimming baths to wash and shower and keep ourselves warm. So how will the heating and hot water operate, particularly if some of it's going to happen in December?

**PM:** Sue, I can answer that one for you. So what would happen is while the plant room works are ongoing, we would reinstate and put some temporary boilers back on site, where they used to be down in the car parking area. Therefore your heating and hot water will be continuous while the engineers are able to work in the plant room.

**SD:** Okay, so your hopes, just to summarise that bit of it, your hopes are that we will not be any more disrupted than we are at present and possibly less as the works continue and therefore improve the system?

**PM:** Correct.

**SD:** Right, that's good to hear. So what's the timescale of the implementation of these works?

**MC:** We hope to be on site in December. As Paul just said, we'll install a temporary boiler. So residents shouldn't see any loss of service as a result of that. We've not put a programme together as yet to say, well, you know, it's going to take six weeks but we're looking at six to twelve weeks.

**SD:** For the whole shebang?

**MC:** Yep.

**SD:** That's really encouraging to hear.

**LR:** But that's only the two items you've said right? To re-configure the pipework and then re-commission and it's only work outside the flats, so it's not everything. Can you just be clear about that?

**MC:** Yeah, we're not planning to do any work within residents' homes.

**LR:** Yeah, so it's not going to be everything?

**SD:** So it's not going to be everything, so that doesn't include the upgrade to the HIUs for example?

**MC:** They've been upgraded, and we continue to upgrade them.

**SD:** I don't understand that sentence.

**GH:** So the work that's been carried out already has been the new valve that was installed.

**GH:** Yeah. Okay, so that work was the work we did within the dwelling on the HIU. The work that Michael's outlined is in the plant room, isn't it, primarily, which is the re-piping of the buffer vessels. The re-commissioning of the boiler controls, that's within the plant room, isn't it? The water treatment is in the plant room.

**SD:** But the upgrades for example to the HIUs...

**PM:** That was ongoing, Sue. So what we did throughout I suppose more than 12 months of work we upgraded the HIUs, fitting of new turbines to the HIUs, and DPC valves, the ones we had access to. And then the HIUs would have been recommissioned as part of that work so that works were all carried out by GEM.

**FW:** This wasn't the time to put in, but as we've got to the HIUs, would it be worth just saying briefly?

**PH:** Let me just preface what Fabian is going to say to provide a bit more of a context for that because there was a bit of a dramatic stop press just an hour ahead of the meeting with the information that we got through Freedom of Information and what it showed. I don't know if you've had a chance but I brought some copies along in case anybody needs to see this. So we haven't seen an improvement as yet, and things were pretty bad last December. There's a couple of pieces of information that are quite interesting. The number of works order references in the 12 months from June 2022 to June 2023 were higher than in any previous year. But when I started to do a month by month comparison, the same way that they do inflation, when they look at how were the figures in June 2023 versus June 2022, there's something weird that happened in the early part of this year.

Things are considerably better now, if you go into the spreadsheets, which I offered to circulate to anybody who wants them. May and June this year are looking good, but something really weird happened in March of 2023, because the figures for that month and for February were worse than they have ever been in previous years, February and March. So that's what inflates the figures for June 22 to June 23. The figures for this year look worse than they have ever been, but they were unusually high in February and March. And I didn't have time to go back over what they were like in December.

So this is a context for the horror story that Fabian – Fabian's is about as bad as it gets on the estate. But one of the things that I think Max Fordham and anybody else dealing with this will know, well, John, you know about this because you've been corresponding with Lucy. So you know how bad things have got at her place.

Some of you have been corresponding with Fabian and trying to fix his problems. There's two themes. One is that things got really bad in the winter of 2022-23 and they stayed bad up until February-March.

And then the other thing is just how patchy the silt problem, the gunge problem is. It's not equally distributed across the whole of the estate but if you look at the relevant part of the Max Fordham recommendations in that document, it says that the data are going to be provided.

Now we only wish that Max Fordham had spoken to us, because you would have learned from the residents that we know that there are some residences that are particularly badly affected. And I think that that's crucial, and I'm sorry, I'm doing exactly what Sue doesn't want us to do, which is to make a speech, but I think that's crucial for diagnostic purposes,

to figure out what's going on and where the problem lies. You need to be able to access those sorts of data that the residents know better than anyone.

So Lucy's is a particularly bad residence in terms of getting repeated, recurrent episodes of getting the filters, the strainers silted out. Sue's properties are particularly bad.

**SD:** 26 days out of 34 in March.

**PH:** And Fabian's, so over to you. So there's two themes here. One is this winter and the other is silting.

**FW:** The thing is to say that this has now been, for me, this has been going on for 10 years because we had three years of meetings before. It's just a stress, the absolute misery this has created. And I've had major breakdown with my heating and hot water every single winter since my heating and hot water system was installed in July 2016, the misery that creates and when you try and get repairs done, the constant, more often than not people don't turn up for appointments, but that's perhaps a separate issue.

But I was just going to chip in now because the HIU was mentioned, you say you've got an ongoing upgrade of the HIU units, well we were sent a letter at the end of last year saying fair enough we want to upgrade all the HIU units to get them to work efficiently and well. So in November I made an appointment to have it upgraded. Of course the first appointment was broken, no one turned up so I had to phone again, but that's just par for the course. And it had a three-hour major upgrade, it was dismantled, everything I was told was put right so it should be working really well.

Within the next few weeks two major parts had to be replaced, the pump and the heat exchanger. And those led to me, when the temperatures outside were freezing, I had two weeks last winter in December with no hot water at all in the bathroom, and in January, again, when the temperatures outside were freezing, I had two weeks with no heating at all.

And when the heat exchanger was replaced, the engineer who came showed it to me, and it was thick with brown silt. And this was only a few weeks after it had its major upgrade. If it's not working after you've done your best to make it work, to give this major upgrade, then that gives me absolutely no confidence for the future.

**SD:** And perhaps we can, on that point, hand over to you to give us some kind of explanation, which we will then take back to other residents, because I think. I don't think that Fabian's is a particularly exceptional case. I think there's a pretty, and I think you probably all know, without us boringly reiterating it, that there is quite a chunk of people on the estate that are suffering in one way or another. So could we hand over for some explanations?

**MC:** I think in the first instance Fabian, you should not have had that experience. Our contractors are equipped, or should be equipped, with the parts that you said, the heat

exchange unit, that should have been fixed. If they didn't have it with them on the day, they should have been able to fix it the following day.

**FW:** Well they weren't, because I had to wait two weeks before anything could be done. Camden were giving priority to vulnerable tenants. And I spoke to several people and that was the message I was given all along the line. So I had two weeks with freezing flat when the temperature outside was reached with no heating. And there's been major breakdowns every single winter for the past seven years.

**MC:** Again, that should not have happened. That should not have happened. You should not have ended up without heating in two weeks. GEM have the parts to do this, we can look into this with GEM and we can see what went wrong there and again I'll repeat, I am sorry that we failed you.

**FW:** But this is happening all the time

**DL:** This is a systemic issue.

**FW:** But you have the parts, I spoke to GEM, I spoke to Camden Repairs, I spoke to everybody I could I was even cut off the phone, I was told categorically by six different people I think I spoke to in the end, that, no, Camden's policy was to give preference to vulnerable tenants and therefore two weeks' time was the earliest they could come and replace the parts.

**SD:** The point is that a good chunk of people, a good chunk of people on the estate have and are continuing to have very similar experiences. So the system is not fixed, it's not getting better and I mean I'd be really grateful to hear what you're going to do.

**GH:** So, you know, obviously, if Mike has apologised in terms of that particular...

**SB:** Well, I just wanted to add in to the mix the issue of missed appointments which appear in your account.

**FW:** More often than not.

**SB:** I would say that, and that's why I put in a written question, Meric, to your team, a proper, you know, a written question, asking for missed appointments ward by ward. It came up with Highgate not . . . . I didn't recognise the numbers. It didn't make sense to me that the proportion of missed appointments was so low because...

**MA:** I think it's down to definition.

**SB:** It's down to how they're recording it. And I think if we're not recording missed appointments, then we're not going to do anything about it.

**MA:** No, it's definition.

**FW:** I'll tell you what's happened to me often and where this might be right. I will make an appointment and say, it's an afternoon or a morning slot, you have five hours to take a whole afternoon off work to be there. And at least on three or four occasions, I've had an afternoon slot. Then the engineer's phoned up and said, I'm here in the morning, I was given the morning slot. When I've been given the afternoon slot. Then the other way round, he's said, oh no, on my thing here it says I'm coming in the afternoon and I've been given the morning slot. So I'm stuck at home for five hours and then he arrives at 2.30 in the afternoon when I've had to go back to work.

And that's happened several times.

**GH:** So, I mean, there's obviously, you know, this is what we need to bring up with GEM and make sure we're doing better on that.

**FW:** And the other thing with GEM, just one more thing to say, is it's now, first, when we, seven years ago it was quite good you could get in touch with GEM quite easily. Now I've been on hold for an hour. So when you've got your increasing cold conditions, you're on hold for an hour and you give up and you can't get through to anybody.

**SB:** So I just thought I'd chuck that in because it goes along with the whole thing of how appointments are managed.

**GH:** Yes, thank you. But just in terms of the water quality, because I think that's what Patrick was alluding to in terms of the silt in the system. So we talked about the oxygen scavenger, but also we've been talking about the inline filters. John, if you want to talk about our thoughts around inline filters and how they might assist.

**JS:** So one of the works that we plan to do is put an inline filter prior to each block. It's basically a magnet. It picks up any magnetite. That's what that black sludge is that you get that then clogs up your HIU and stops your heat exchanger giving you the right temperatures of heating.

**SD:** But that should have been implemented at the beginning, I know it's not your shout, but that surely should have been there right from day one.

**FW:** It was supposed to be a state of the art system.

**SD:** Ian, do you want to comment on that? I mean surely that, that, I mean that's just in a basic radiator system in a regular house isn't it?

**MC:** We have got, within the system we have got a filtration unit there. Unfortunately, Sue, it wasn't brought on line when it was commissioned.

**SD:** Okay.

**MC:** It's now on line, it has been on line now for over 12 months. I can say that our water quality, happy to share their water quality reports that come from independent sources and



we get two water quality reports because we've got something called an NWAL filtration system and they service this and manage that directly with them and they produce their report. That report is, we've got two reports there because I've got on line for some time and you can see within the second report we get an improvement in water quality.

We've also got a sight of where we take separate samples of the water quality and it is the best it's ever been. Again, happy to share previous water quality reports with you because they were not where they should have been. We're closer to where we . . . .

We're as good as we can get at the moment but we know we need to do better. John spoke about the filters and that's something we propose to do as well, we're looking at doing it, but if you look at the Max Fordham report, what Max Fordham report says and acknowledges that once you've got this dirt in the system, it's always difficult to get out.

So what Max Fordham says in there, or David says it in there, he says if you're going to keep going back and going back, is put an additional filter in there, I think you first did with the SpiroTek, that's within the home, that would go a long way to alleviate the problem.

Now what we've said to GEM is where you keep going back, you keep having repeat visits and it's because of the filter that's blocked, then you fit one of these additional strainers.

**SD:** So are we basically saying is that right from day one, the design was flawed, that flawed design was then implemented and installed in a flawed way, that system once installed continued to malfunction, and malfunctions now, and we are at the stage where we are implementing improvements. Is that fair or not fair?

**MC:** I think the system, the system couldn't work, because of the way the buffer vessels are parked up, could never have worked as designed and it could never have been as efficient as we wanted. You want the system to be that, Max Fordham report was clear. I think my brief I issued either makes that clear or alludes to that. We've not got the efficiency that we should have.

**GH:** Do you want to come in and say anything?

**DL:** I think the system became contaminated. We don't know how that happened. When you're working, you're putting in a new system, but you've got to keep the old system up and running while you're doing that, and then you have to do these changeovers. I think it's pretty clear that the system became contaminated. You'd expect the new system to be completely clean. And I've come across this on other projects, and it is very difficult to get stuff out. It kind of lies in the bottom of the pipes, and you push water down the pipe to try and get it out and you can't get it out. And then for some reason, you know, it moves and then it, you know, it blocks up a group of strainers on HIUs.

And so what we did on the previous project is, we, exactly what you said, we logged, you know, the faults in each individual flat, if it was a heat exchanger which was so badly contaminated that it had to be replaced or whether it was a strainer that had blocked. And

we tracked it over a year and you could see, you know, there were hot spots. So we did two things really, we addressed hot spots and as Michael was saying is that to prevent repeated revisits to flats, to prevent continuous repeat events, we put a larger filter on the inlet to the HIU which would collect debris that did come through in the short term. So you try and resolve it in the long term, but you do something to help stop repeated activity. And it is, you know, it's going to take a significant amount of time to get through that.

**SD:** And money, presumably.

**PH:** David, just a couple of points. It was never a brand new system because two of the old boilers were retained.

And then the other point that you made in the report was that there was no permanent pipework fitting that allowed the system to be flushed.

So that sounds like, when you've got those two things together, that sounds a lot like a design flaw to me.

But you don't have to comment on that part of it because I know you're talking about another professional there, but would it be fair to say that...

**DL:** You can't connect an existing part of the system into a new system without having been absolutely clear that it is clear of contamination. That's the job. That may or may not have been done, I don't know.

**SD:** Well, it didn't happen, did it? Otherwise we wouldn't be here.

**DL:** You know, you've got quite large bore pipe work, cleaning large bore pipe work is not easy. Because you need to get a lot of water through it. That may have been done properly or it may not, I don't know.

**PH:** Some of the original pipework was retained.

**DL:** The only test is that the strainer has stopped blocking.

That's the only test.

**PM:** But the trigger, Dave, to the strainers starting to block was when we had the leak in the plant room that shut down all the pumps. That caused all the pumps to shut down, that's when we started to see the blocking of the filters in the HIU. That's what I saw and that's when that started and that was as a result John, of a leak in the plant room wasn't it, that took the pumps out.

**PH:** When was that?

**SD:** Can I just ask Ian to come in?

**PM:** That was a December period wasn't it? I'd have to look back over the emails but I could give you the exact dates.

**PH:** That would be really helpful just to figure out what happened.

**JS:** Yeah. That really was the catalyst.

**PM:** Yeah that was the catalyst definitely for when we started to see all the blocking of the HIU filters was when there was a failure of the pumps caused by a leak.

**PH:** This is new information for us, so I mean this is one reason why this meeting is extremely helpful because this is the first I've heard of that.

**JS:** We had some power cuts as well.

**PM:** Yeah, that was the power cut and it took all the pumps out.

**GH:** You're right, you know, so whatever happened, you know, we all know a bit, but you've got to get to the end, and we may or may not be at the end.

**SD:** Ian, do you want...

**PH:** Can I come back just quickly before Ian....

**SD:** Sorry, Patrick.

**PH:** Was some of the main pipe work retained? Who thinks so, or doesn't think so?

**Two Camden Voices:** I don't think so.

**PH:** You don't think so?

**GH:** Sorry, Patrick, we've got a question from Ian on the screen, if we could, if that's OK.

**PH:** Sorry, Ian, over to you.

**IM:** Yeah. Okay. Yeah. As was mentioned earlier by Patrick, I'm an architect. I've been a leaseholder on the estate since 1998. Not quite as long as Fabian.

But yeah, I have been sort of trying to help out wherever I can. But I don't generally work at this sort of scale in my professional work. So my sort of knowledge on this is sort of like, you know, 'working knowledge, if you like.

But I do have a specialist knowledge around the issues of sustainability, around heat pumps and things like that, which is something I wouldn't mind talking about a little bit later. Because we have to keep our eye on the future as well as what's going on right now.

Is it a good time to start talking about some of these, because we seem to be going into technical detail.

So shall I try and outline what some of the core things that I'd like to try and get out of this discussion? Is that a good time to do that now?

**PH:** Yes, and Ian, can you try and break it into small enough chunks to give the Camden people a chance to answer them, rather than giving them the whole list now.

**IM:** OK. Well, yes, perhaps I will start at the top and work my way down. I don't know where I am. One of the key things, really, is that we just found out from Patrick's Freedom of Information request that practical completion was served in about 2018, we believe.

**PH:** May 2018.

**PM:** Yeah, that's correct.

**IM:** So one of the key things that we're kind of wondering about is how much longer are we in this, presumably there's no final completion served. So we're in a defect period, I would guess, which is elongating. So how much longer are we expecting this elongation to go on for and the duration of. And specifically, what are some of the key performance indicators, if you like, or some of the key aspects of performance that will be used to indicate whereby some day, that's all up and running, defects have been cleared? David, do you want to perhaps talk about that?

**GH:** I think there's probably a bit of, sorry if I may, so I think we've got a bit of work still to do to look at the work we're planning to do and then determine whether it's a question of the original design, a question of workmanship, but then we'll need an opinion as to whether or not we can recover them from Keepmoat once, you know, they've changed their name recently. And we've still got a bit of work to do on that, and, you know, whether the costs are recoverable. And there are no specific indicators around that, it's more a question of whether we can determine if it has been an issue with design and/or an issue with workmanship. So those are the two tests we'll be applying.

**FW:** Can I just add that when GEM engineers do come, and this has happened several times, when I make the point that the system doesn't look right. I've been told several times by GEM engineers when they come to me, 'oh well we didn't design the system, we're just here to maintain it.' And twice they've said, 'well we told Camden this wasn't a good design, but we just have to maintain it.'

**IM:** Who was responsible for the design? Or the design requirements?

**GH:** Sorry, we did do a bit of this at one of the earlier, so, it was a design and build contract. So, back then they were Apollo, then Keepmoat.

**IM:** You normally start with . . . .

**SD:** But they're now GEM, aren't they?

**PM:** TGA, I think,

**FW:** It was Alex McGuire who designed it.

**PM:** TGA.

**GH:** But in terms of that contractual relationship, that was moved, the contractor.

**PH:** Say that again. Because you said it was Apollo, then Keepmoat, but then somebody mentioned TGA, and the key person seems to be Alex McGuire, because when he changed to Floh Consultants, the contract moved to Floh Consultants, so he was the person that provided the continuity. So was he working for Apollo, or was he working for Camden? Because he was the designer.

**MC:** Whilst in the employment of TGA, whilst in the employment, I think then, Alex McGuire then left there, and then set up his own consortium, but he didn't, he didn't . . . the project was never managed by Floh. That came in, Alex McGuire and Floh came in to deal with the HIU upgrades. With a . . .

**GH:** I think we covered this in some, Cameron, forgive me, did we cover some more about this in one of our previous responses? Because we can recirculate that with some of our correspondence.

**CM:** Possibly, I'll have to have a look. I don't know off the top of my head.

**GH:** Yeah, just in terms of our responsibility for design.

**PH:** Previous response to whom? Because we've been asking this question for some time and we've never had an answer to it.

**GH:** Okay, we're now going back through to Cameron. I'm sure we answered it, but I'll double check.

**LR:** Could I ask a question, going on from Ian's question about contracts. So if you had a practical completion certificate issued in May 2018, and if it was a traditional, well, it was a design and build, but it probably had a year-long defects rectification period, which would have ended in May 2019, and now we're four years later. So if you signed that contract underhand, you've only got two more years before the liability period will run out, when you can actually bring a claim. And I don't think that's a really good deal for leaseholders like me, who have paid thousands of pounds for something which is.

Yeah, so I just wondered, because I think that's one of my really serious worries, is that we've always talked as a leaseholder group and also with our residents' group, that our main priority is just fixing what's broken in our homes.

We love where we live, we're a great community, but the problem is actually, because time is really long, and this is all very standard procurement, I mean this is all very standard stuff, so why is it taking so long, and are you aware of the line?

**GH:** The contract was under seal, so it was the partnering contract which ran for about 8 years, so it's very much under seal. You are correct to be mindful of the limitations, but you know it's 12 years.

And equally, we share the same objective to get the system working as well as it possibly can. That's the conversation I had with Patrick, we share the objective.

**PH:** And Gavin, would you mind making a concession to the lay people here because Lucy used this phrase 'signed under hand'. You've said 'contract under seal, limitation of 12 years'. I see a representative of the people of this ward who is nodding her head. We don't all necessarily speak this language so would you mind translating a bit?

**GH:** I'm not a contract lawyer, but, basically, if you enter into contract with another party, the general, I suppose, undertaking is that latent defects can be addressed within a period. And it's called underhand, which basically means a contract that isn't sealed by both parties. And that generally runs for six years. And if it's under seal, the contract is sealed by both parties, then it's the 12-year period under which latent defects can be...

**PH:** And the clock starts ticking on the 12 years after practical completion, at that point or at the point that the contract starts?

**LR:** It's the practical completion year.

**GH:** Yeah. There's a little bit of complexity when the clock starts running. And it's sometimes to do with when the date of the defect can be shown to be discovered as well.

**PH:** But potentially it could be 12 years from May 2018.

**GH:** Yes. But you know, there would just be specific considerations for each defect that's identified. When it was raised, when the contractor was notified, etc., etc.

**SD:** So who's paying for all of this? Camden, is it? Or the contractors? Who's paying?

**GH:** That's a good question. So what we'll be doing is further to what Mike was outlining today in the report, is looking at the totality of that work and determining which elements should have been encompassed within the original design in terms of the requirements that Camden has set out. But also, if elements were actually included within the design but not executed correctly, then there's a question of whether it's workmanship or design. But then there'd be a question of whether we can get them back to the site to rectify. But you know we've...

**SD:** But you haven't mentioned tenants or leaseholders in that last few sentences.

**GH:** No indeed. I mean I suppose...

**SD:** So tenants and leaseholders, let's get to the nitty gritty just for a minute, OK?

**GH:** So I think there are different layers to this, aren't there, so unfortunately if we can't recover the cost from the contractor, we have a revenue account which is funded by the tenants' rents and other charges. And then colleagues, Cameron and Insley, will advise us whether or not a cost is recoverable from leaseholders. And clearly we take their advice.

That would be determined by what's fair and reasonable, what's recoverable under the lease. There might be case law precedent that determines that. But we always look to be reasonable, and we always take the advice from our professionals within the service as well.

**SD:** And who makes the decision?

**GH:** Oh, gosh. I think there are delegations, which are with officers, so myself or Glendine. I think sometimes delegations can be with perhaps Councillor Apak as a cabinet member. But I think the bottom line is we always look to take a reasonable line.

I think because we're in this dialogue with ourselves, we probably have that dialogue just in early stage. And it was the thing that we looked to, so we can see it about that sort of deliberations.

But I don't think we're there yet in terms of getting, A), a view on whether we can recoup the cost from the contractor, and B), whether or not we can pass that cost on.

We haven't got that yet.

**MC:** Ian's got a quick hand there.

**IM:** Hi, yeah, can I return to this issue about the, it was mentioned before about district heating, on whether or not the district supply has been completely renewed. I'm just a bit surprised there's so much sludge in the system if it had been completely renewed, albeit there may be some contamination from when the changeover happened. But if there's so much sludge still ongoing, I'm concerned there's still significant areas of district supply that was not renewed, and in which case are we talking about 1970s standards of insulation and lagging on that district's supply. Does anyone know what the status is on the district's supply, in terms of lagging, in terms of what we're renewing?

**GH:** So I think what we heard was that the pipe work has all been renewed here, but the major failure is to do with the shutdown and fresh water being introduced. You wanna go back over that, Paul?

**PM:** Yeah, I guess there's two things I suppose, Ian, I can sort of put some clarity on. One was obviously that there was a shutdown. I believe it corresponds with the massive jump in work orders. So I think that shutdown when the pumps failed was around about the December period. But I'll clarify the exact date on that and that was the start of the blocked filters and when we started to see the HIUs, the problems with the filters blocking in the HIUs.

In regards to your question about existing pipework being left in, to my knowledge there was one block on the estate where there was existing pipework left remaining and that was due to, and I can't go into the resident's details, but that was due to a resident not providing access for a HIU installation and their HIU was installed in the undercroft and to keep the flow of heat into that property the existing pipework to that block was kept in situ. That has since been removed but that was only recently. So that existing pipework, steel pipework that fed that flat was probably in situ.

**GH:** But didn't the HIU go in the undercroft to isolate that flat from the rest of the network?

**PM:** It did go there to try and isolate, but again, the question I suppose Gavin is, was there any existing pipework left in situ? There was. How much contamination came from that circuit is hard to quantify, but to answer Ian's question, we definitely had existing pipework left in situ to keep the heat in flow into that flat.

**FW:** But you should never have allowed that to happen.

**PH:** Sorry, just for one second. This is sidestepping the issue that two boilers were retained. And if you retain an old boiler, my knowledge extends to the renewal of my domestic central heating system. But I don't think the principles are drastically different. That if you retain some of the old elements, there is going to be sludge in the system.

**PM:** Not if it's cleaned properly, Patrick.

**PH:** Well, but whatever you do to clean it properly, i.e. flushing, can have the paradoxical effect of actually dislodging some of the stuff that is sediment until you flush it.

**MC:** The amount of sludge that we encountered within the system would not have been due to those older boilers. It was just not the case. And just to clarify what Paul was saying there, there was never, in the original design was never to retain any of the pipework but a block has some old pipework but the HIU, what Gavin mentioned there, was a physical break so the new pipework went through a barrier of a sort and the other side of that was the old pipework so there would have been no contamination back into the new system.

**SD:** But honestly, come on guys, we can't blame one person's pipework to one system for the breakdown of the whole estate.

**MC:** And that's what I've just said, it would have no . . . .

**FW:** There was a whole network of new pipes for that person's flat on the outside, so there were loads of new pipes, but it disfigured the whole estate, and that estate were masses like an oil refinery, and that's just been replaced, as you've said now, just I think in June.

**MC:** And nor would those, you know, there would have been something in those boilers but the size of the system, it's just insignificant in comparison to the system itself. What we've encountered there is a very dirty system, that's why we took the decision to clean it. You



yourselves, as you have encountered, you've all seen the filters around there, slimy sludge, and that's not indicative of a new system. We acknowledge that.

**PH:** I think Ian wanted to come in again. Am I right?

**IM:** Yeah, yeah, I did want to, yeah. So, I mean, two points, is it now sufficiently clean, you've got better readings you say, but is it now going to be much more problem free and fit for purpose, or are you expecting there's still going to be quite a lot of cleaning, regular cleaning of filth and so forth to come?

**MC:** I think what we need to do Ian, it's a little while ago we carried out an exercise and it takes some doing and we have to drill right down into what the actual defect was at the time of attending it and we looked at how many times we've been somewhere and did we clean the strainer so we were able to say, at granular level, it takes a long time because we don't record things at that level, is that we can see from the recording that this is a strainer clean, or we can see the issue that it was a thermostat. So we discount that, we say well that's just something that's happened, these are the strainer cleans. And when we last did that, we could see it tailing off. Now if we do that again, it would take some time to do that. Because it's a matter of clicking through, doing a keyword search and it does take time.

**PM:** I suppose Patrick, there was something else that you mentioned as well, was there any rhyme or reason to the blocking of the HIU filters? And we looked at, Michael interrogated the system, and we looked at the seven distinct circuits that are on Highgate New Town and we couldn't find any rhyme or reason, so we couldn't see was it one particular circuit that was prone to blocking or anything like that.

**PH:** Yeah but it wouldn't be Paul would it? It would be, I mean I'm speaking as a layperson, it seems to me, architects, David Lindsay and others, wouldn't it be a particular residence that happens to be on the front line?

**MC:** I... I... when we looked at that data, I didn't see that, and I'm willing to accept that we could do that, we could bring that report right up to date, but it would take time.

**PH:** But then how do we explain Fabian's recurrent episodes, Lucy's recurrent episodes, Sue's recurrent episodes? Is it the relative position of the frequently blocked properties in relation to the pipe network? And why wasn't that the first question you asked after speaking to the residents and recognizing the pattern five years ago, or whenever it occurred, whichever December it was. Wouldn't that be something to look at?

**MC:** So when we looked at that data, last we looked at that data, we couldn't see that it was impacting on a block any more than the next block. Again, happy to revisit that. If that was missed, it will come up, that would come up. I can share that report with you. I think we shared a summary of that report last year, probably.

**SB:** Can I ask a question? Seems like the right time to do it.

**SB:** At the end of the report, there's quite a strong recommendation about recording of the different maintenances. You just learnt with something you did on a sort of special basis rather than an ongoing basis. To what extent are you making progress at doing that? And will you be able to share that with residents as you go along? That seems like a strong recommendation so that people can see, for example, rather than anecdotally, the evidence that the tailing off is going on ?

**MC:** We don't have a system that says, record the defect as a blocked strainer. We don't have a system in place, so we don't report that at that really detailed level. That's why you have to do a keyword search and say...

**SB:** Can it not be amended to do that?

**MC:** I think...

**SB:** To follow the recommendation?

**MC:** It's an investment, but we haven't got that as yet.

**SB:** Okay, and this is because it's a standard Camden system.

**MC:** I don't speak for anybody else but I think if you went to social housing . . . .

**GH:** I think what's recorded today is, sorry, forgive me, is a good recommendation and you're right to raise it, Councillor Berry. I think probably there's a slight cross-purpose there. So I think what Michael is saying is fault recording is one thing in terms of particular faults. We can look at whether it can be codified within a system, but I think what you're getting at here, David, is saying actually what's the efficiency of the heat network for the energy we're putting in, the energy we're getting out. We can look at the trends in call-outs and issues to be reported and I think we should look again at Patrick, the data that Patrick refers to. So I think it is a valuable recommendation. I think what we're talking about here is an ongoing dialogue with the TRA and residents around how the system's performing. So I think we wholeheartedly support that recommendation.

**FW:** But there is no dialogue. I mean, I've been chair of the Residents Association for now a year and three months. I've had no communications, chair of the Residents Association, about the heating whatsoever.

**SD:** Me neither.

**FW:** There's been one letter I think we got, and that's it. So the tenants know absolutely nothing when they come to meetings. So it's purely anecdotal and they're completely in the dark. You've not kept... We were promised when this, seven years ago, we were promised we'd be kept well informed. We never imagined it would go on for seven years. And there's very little. You get a letter and then perhaps once a year.

And so you're not keeping anybody informed.

**GH:** We did . . . .

**FW:** If you went to any tenant from my estate and said, 'what's going on with the heating?,' they'd say, 'I have no idea whatsoever'. And that's what happens when they come to Residents' Association meetings.

**SB:** Because you used to have Jack and people like that in the sort of the engagement team. And we did have her for a while, arranging regular meetings and updates. And obviously that was during the contract. Is there any chance to get her back. We'll get her back for a while, while this is going on.

**FW:** Just to say, Meric and Sian, they've been... It's appalling, I'm just absolutely so angry that I'm still coming to a meeting about this heating system seven years later, when after the first year where we had faults, Sian and Meric were there at a Residents' Association meeting, when I was on the Residents' Association meeting, promising us it's going to be sorted. And now seven years later on, I'm just flabbergasted . . . and it's taken report after report, test after test, and we've had seven years of absolute total misery, and that's the sum of it. I know we've got to look to the future and try and put it right, but it is an incredible indictment of Camden that, however, we have 1,100 people on the Whittington estate, and it's plus more for Highgate New Town, so that's probably getting on for 2,000 people's lives have been made a misery now for the past seven years.

**SD:** Well, and I would just go one stage further than that, in that people are now getting legal letters, aren't they? Which is not only bullying, but it's threatening and it's affecting people's health, and when you have a system that is as inadequate as it is at present, and has been for the last six or seven years, then surely you really cannot start sending out threatening, bullying letters to people. How can that be?

**GH:** Well, maybe . . . .

**PH:** If we could just bracket that for a minute. Ian wanted to say something.

**IM:** Yeah, well, I'm on the same thread really. I don't think it should be forgotten that a one-bedroom flat like I've got has been charged £15,000 for this heating replacement works. I mean, the value for money for that, for a system which doesn't work properly. Going all the way back to when the lead-up to this project was announced. What was happening on the estate, there were some call-outs, but it was nowhere near as bad as it is now. And they were saying, well, because it's a 40-year-old system, we're going to have to change it. And 'we're going to do it with HIU's. We had all this consultation. And the consultation never really showed us any projected sums of money. So when the individual gas boilers were never, never sort of equated to the district heating and it's turned out to cost like three, possibly even four times as much as probably an individual gas boiler and regular heat. So, you know, on that basis, you know, I believe people are struggling with all sorts of issues in terms of cost of living and looking to the future, I did say I'll bring that back in again, we've also got to go to net zero. And, you know, it seems to me we've got a system which is not fit for purpose.

You know, to have heat pumps fitted, and we need to get off fossil fuel. We all know, well some of us will know, that gas is incredibly energy dense.

If you look at moving to an electric heat pump system, we have to have much lower flow temperatures. How are we going to do it? So my question really to Max Fordham is to tell me really is how is this going to play in the future? And it's probably for another meeting, but I think we do need to have a strategy about how this is all going to be moving forward.

But for one, it doesn't perform as well as the old system, and it's not future proof for an upgrade to heat pumps, not even close. So that is a really, really serious issue and we spent so much money getting here.

**SD:** And the promise was a 30-year life. Just to go back, the promise was a 30-year life.

**SB:** Can I just come back to the sustainability question, because I've got to talk more about that as well, but I don't feel like we've worked out the terms of engagement to the point where we know what's going on.

**GH:** Yeah, if I could just... I mean, there's always a few things really. One is, we did a lot of work with the TRA, oh gosh, a couple of years back, and I can't remember the date, is it Natalie? Yes. So we worked a lot with Natalie on some of the issues that we were addressing at that time. And we have been in dialogue, obviously, with Patrick and colleagues on that more recently. But we're very happy to take advice as it gets better, you know, and we do have an engagement team led by Tom Broad who might have been on an earlier call So certainly we're happy to look at them on going communications and making sure we reach every group and not just the people you know sat at this table and happy to do that And that's absolutely fine.

**FW:** You know, that's on the DMC list, you know who the chair of the Residents' Association is. There's no mystery about it, who I am and what I've been there. So why haven't you been in touch? You haven't. We receive no communication, no regular update. I only find out now. I find out far more, not as the Residents and Tenants Association, but because the leaseholders have done so much work on this.

And of course, it's relevant to the leaseholders with the payment. But of course, the system failing, it doesn't matter whether you're a tenant or a leaseholder, everyone's suffering, the same system. The only thing which is different obviously is that extra impetus, you've got a big bill, you're being threatened with court action.

And it's the same misery for everybody on this stage, all these...

**GH** I'm really happy to speak to that sort of thing, a bit of an apology, it's within...

**FW:** I've copied you on several emails and I've never had a reply or an acknowledgement from you, Gavin.

**PH:** With respect, Natalie has copied me into all of her correspondence. I've seen it all. And essentially, what was happening in the period that you're indicating in that time frame was a discussion about activating the heat meters and her concerns about that and her dialogue with Thomas Broad. It was very limited. It wasn't the sort of thing that we're talking about now. And if I can just rewind the conversation back to what we were talking about regarding the analysis, the diagnosis of where the problem rests with regard to the filters, the strainers. I mean, here's what it says. The recommended actions, these are the immediate recommended actions that are supposedly in progress. This is on page eight. Permanent pipework fittings to allow periodic flushing were not included in the pipework installation. I've already mentioned that. It sounds to me like a design flaw. You've said that you're going to reconfigure the pipework. Is that going to be corrected?

But the main point, so let's not let that one get lost, the main point is the blocking of the HIU strainers is being monitored by Camden to identify trends and track blockage rates. It's awaiting analysis. Now that's something that was supposedly ongoing in June of 22, when this was written, eight months before it was released.

So, you're telling us that actually you can't monitor the blockage rates because you don't have an automated IT system that distinguishes an HIU blockage from any other kind of fault.

But just one tiny anecdote about that, your Thomas Broad, who told us about that, after that meeting a year ago, who told us that the number of call-outs had dwindled to almost zero in February and March 2022. I don't know if that was simply a coincidence. It turned out that he was, as I've told you, ad nauseam in a number of letters, he was undercounting the number of call-outs by a factor of eight, because guess what? What he was actually counting were the number of filter blocking strainer episodes. So Thomas Broad had a method of identifying that back then. I don't know if that happened to coincide with the period where Camden had done the hands-on work to identify filter blocking episodes but those were the data that he mistakenly reported as being the number of call-outs.

So how was that, I mean if that was generated by hand, fine, it's very labour intensive but surely in the year and more since then, if we're interested in diagnosing what is the rhyme or reason behind this, why hasn't an automated system to identify keywords been installed?

I know we've never, we never hear the end of Camden's problems with its IT arm, how difficult it is to get even two words changed in the labeling of a link. But I mean, wouldn't this be worth doing to automate so that you can, you know, so that GEM records?

And do you know what? When I said to GEM, we're losing institutional memory of what's gone wrong, the person I spoke to from GEM had chapter and verse on everything that had gone wrong in my property. I don't know if that's because he was making an extra effort, but the data should be available, and surely, in order to identify a pattern, those data need to be gathered.

David Lindsey, any comment on that? Do you need to gather data in order to acknowledge and recognize a pattern, and isn't this one of the things that you said on page eight under heading two, that the blocking of HIU strainers is being monitored by Camden to identify trends? Who told you that? I mean, did you establish that that was a fact or was that just something that somebody told you?

**DL:** I understood that was happening. I mean, I think, you know, I mean, in my simple mind, I mean, I know it's not as easy as this, but every time you go to a flat because there's a call out, you check the strainer. Yeah. You know, you check the strainer and it's either a tick or a bit grubby, or it's a no.

**FW:** And you need to have GEM engineers who understand the system. You get GEM engineers, some who do understand it. And then you get other people who... a GEM engineer can come who knows nothing about it, opens a cupboard and is completely mystified by it.

**DL:** At this point in time, it's a critical issue that they're not the right person to go.

**GH:** Maybe if Michael just talks through what we've been doing to track the... I mean, the aim is to obviously to eliminate the silt in the system, but maybe...

**MC:** Just to comment on Thomas. Thomas is not here, but we've got the exercise that Thomas issued at the time.

**PH:** Yes.

**MC:** It was taken from a report I put together. And that one, from memory, we just included just the strainers. You can see the report in full if you wish to do that, but that did show a drop off on strainer clearing. You know, it wasn't being made up at all again we haven't, we then looked at this again a few months later but we haven't followed it through with such intensities for some time.

**GH:** So I mean I'm mindful.

**MC:** David said he would expect the strainer to be checked every time GEM came and that is an instruction that we issued to GEM just don't go in there and fix something without checking the strainer because if it's getting blocked we need to know. Don't wait for it to be reported or don't wait for it to fail get it before it fails and then block that as a strainer cleaning.

**SD:** Can I ask what Camden are going to do to help us now, please?

**GH:** Yeah, so that's helpful, thanks Sue. Mindful of the time. So, it probably is good to recap. I think the first thing I noted was to put some narrative on David's table and share that, so it's absolutely clear what's being taken forward, Okay, in the reviews, so that's absolutely fine, we can do that. We'll update on the timeline, so the intention is to be there in December, and

the timescale for the work we are doing, see for 12 weeks. As we discussed, we need to do a bit of work first of all on whether we can compel the contractor to go back to site first.

**SD:** And that doesn't promise to make the system work? That is just an ongoing improvement?

**GH:** So there are two elements of that arm, because the other element we heard from John was around the inline filters, then we'll confirm the timeline for that as well. That will help with getting rid of any remaining silt within the system. But Michael, in terms of the buffer vessel pipework, it's more about efficiency than...

**MC:** It's more about efficiency and reliability. That's what we're aiming for there.

**SD:** So will that make the system work?

**GH:** The thing we're saying is you're improving the reliability and the efficiency. So I think we can try...

**SD:** Will that make it work? Will we all have heating and hot water across the estate? That's all I want to know. Will that...

**GH:** We can't guarantee the system: we could get a power outage and it's completely out of our hands. What we want to do is to be in a position that should we get for example a boiler failure the other boilers will kick in automatically and therefore we're de-risking that element on that side of the system. On the flat side now at the moment we could get a failure because we can't automatically kick in another boiler and engage another boiler, then the only time we know is that we're in a major, you know, people are on the telephone. So system reliability, I think we all have to acknowledge we are getting that.

**SD:** Can I put that down as improve and wait and see?

**PH:** Well Sue, I think we're going to ask for something more specific than that, which is we need to know from the Camden Guide to Heat Networks, what are the benchmarks for what the aim is? On page nine in the heading, saying that the goal is to have a reliable source of heating and hot water.

The problem is that we don't have measures, we don't have benchmarks for efficiency and reliability.

So we need a copy of that 2016 document, if that's still the one that's being used, as the threshold, because that's the one that Max Fordham says that they were referring to when they were using it as the, I don't know what David Lindsay said.

**DL:** It's a benchmark.

**PH:** It's a benchmark.

**DL:** It was slightly after, I think, when the work was done. But it is a benchmark.

**PH:** So I think there are two questions here. What are the key performance indicators? So how are we going to know when the system has been optimized to be as good as it can be? And can we have a copy of the November 2016 plan?

**PM:** That was supplied, Patrick, as part of the FOI. I know, because I supplied it to them.

**PH:** OK, that's great. Well, I've still got an ongoing FOI, which hasn't been responded to yet. So they're probably working on this. So that's great. Thank you.

**PM:** We can provide that for you tomorrow, if you want to.

**PH:** That would be wonderful.

**PM:** I think there's a later version.

**PH:** That's the problem is that the later version is online. I think there's a 2021 version, and that may not be the one that's operative in this instance. So whichever is going to be operative in measuring the, does it work yet? Because I'll tell you one of the anxieties that as a resident I have, that we're going to be told at a certain point that this is now signed off as being as good as it can get and from that point on we as residents are cast adrift.

Now all of the things that you're saying about investigating where responsibility is vested for doing the remedial work, did the contractors, did the design, did the workmanship fall short? That's all new, that was all news, what we've been told repeatedly in writing several times was that the remedial work is being done under contractual mechanisms. And I can cite chapter and verse where we've been told that in writing. Now, when I see that phrase, 'this is being dealt with under contractual mechanisms', I read that to say, 'No, leaseholder, you're not paying. We're dealing with this. It's either going to be covered by Camden because we didn't write the contract tightly enough, and so we were at fault, or it's going to be covered by the contractors.'

So the anxiety is that at a certain point, we're going to be cast adrift, we're going to be told this system is as good as it can get, and from that point on, we're going to be charged for the maintenance, which up to this point, all of the remedial work is being covered by somebody else, and I don't, you know, I'm interested to know who that is. That was among our questions.

**GH:** So I think probably because there's probably some questions we can answer today but there's some questions we need to come back to you in the future so I think we talk through we've got a process to go through in terms of the remedial works can we compel the contractor to site. If not then how do we deal with that cost? And that question hasn't been answered yet. So that's not something we can talk about today.

So just to recap, so we talked about the table, been clear about what we're going to be doing. I think Ian raised the question about the contracts and the parties in terms of design, etc. So we'll re-clarify that. We've gone through all the issues. We've heard from Fabian the need to keep the TRA fully informed, that's fine obviously. And then we heard about the year-end



report, all the maintenance recording, and giving that kind of summary of how the system has been performing, I think that's a good idea.

**SD:** Are you going to continue with your legal threats and your demands for costs, here and now? Because remember the initial system is being priced out at between £15,000 and £27,000 for a promised 30-year life, of which we are now in year 6 or year 7, and 6 or 7 years of that it hasn't worked properly. So I'd be really interested to hear what you're thinking about cost.

**GH:** So in terms of the process, I mean, Cameron and Insley can explain, there are certain things we do as part of our process to sort of reserve our position, if you like, because we'd be having some kind of dialogue, then, you know, I'm very happy to have that dialogue. So I think, I don't know, Cameron, if you want to sort of explain basically how we work.

**CM:** Of course. So the reason why we initiated legal proceedings was because leaseholders' invoices were going to be statute barred under the Statute of Limitations Act.

And it involved quite a lot of money. And I think it would have been irresponsible of us to just ignore that and let all this money become irrecoverable. But saying that, since we've initiated some legal proceedings we have kept a very close eye on ongoing negotiations between residents at Highgate New Town and Camden and so we're taking a fairly soft approach. So I think at the moment, you know, we've not taken a hard line so that anyone's in any trouble with court. And Insley, who's in this call as well, will be initiating mediation with everyone who's got an outstanding invoice for this work. and part of that mediation will involve discussion on the full amount payable.

**SD:** Right. So could you just detail a bit better for me what mediation means then?

**IE:** Let me take on that, Cameron. For us it's a round-the-table conversation. We've not . . . . It's not binding in any way unless you agree to anything discussed individually or as a group.

Preferably, the relationship is on an individual basis, as it is a financial matter, based on the individual circumstances. Necessary plans could be the cause for agreements. If there is a scope for reduction, reductions can be applied, provided we've got consent in the zone. It's basically a conversation with the individuals on their external balances of how we go forward. Do we put in a Tomlin Order? Do we arrange for an instalment plan? Do we have any reductions? A lot of things have been taken into consideration before anything has been documented in writing. [Indecipherable.]

**SD:** So what are the things that are going to be taken into consideration?

**IE:** It will be individuals' circumstances.

**SD:** But you can't tell me what the individual circumstances might be?

**IE:** If they can't afford to pay over 2 years, they may get an extension to 5 or 6 years.

**SD:** But that's already been offered hasn't it? It's already been offered that.

**IE:** To some residents, yes.

**SD:** No, it's been offered to all the residents.

**IE:** It's on an individual basis.

**SD:** So what are the individual circumstances?

**IE:** I cannot pinpoint any specifics at present because I have to speak to the individuals to conduct the research.

**LR:** Can I make a comment on that please? I'm just absolutely shocked to hear this. I'm a leaseholder, I've paid my £15,000, so I'm not one of the ones that are so worried about this court case. So you're actually saying you're taking people to court and then involving them in a mediation process for a failure on your own part to deliver what you said you would do, which is to provide the heating system.

**SD:** Thank you.

**LR:** I mean, I can't believe it. I'm just more and more shocked by the situation.

**FW:** Yes, well I'm shocked too, and I must say this might sound slightly flippant, but considering that I've gone through seven years of absolute misery, having freezing cold, winters, no heating, no hot water, and that I'm now expected to pay £15,000. I paid the first £3,000 and then stopped when it was clear the system wasn't working. And then I feel that I should, Camden should be paying me £15,000 for the misery it's caused.

How can you possibly expect any leaseholder to pay £15,000 if they're going through this experience, of every winter the system completely and utterly failing?

And in fact it's costing a lot more than £15,000. My original bill, ten, eight years ago, was £18,000. It's only capped at £15,000 because of Flossie's [*sic*; Florrie's] law, because that was a, if it has any, I think it's getting any money from outside, then the total bill they can give to leaseholders is £15,000. But the actual cost is more than that. And goodness knows what it's costing Camden to maintain this system.

And the argument for getting rid of the old system was that it was too expensive to maintain and therefore we needed a new low-maintenance system. I don't know what the call-out would be on the old system, but certainly from my experience, I've had far, far more call-outs on this new system than I've ever, ever had on the old system.

**SD:** It doesn't sound like a Labour council to me. I mean, you know.

**JS:** Can I just say something on the call outs? So, I'm not sure if you understand the contracts we had with GEM and then as our... It's similar to a three-star contract. It's similar to a three-star type of contract. That means...

Their best bet is to get the job done right first time.

**SD:** Oh right.

**JS:** So they don't have to keep coming back. Say they get a hundred pounds per month to maintain your services and your heating. Now, they could get one order for that and they would still get one hundred pounds. Or they could get two hundred orders, but they would still only get £100.

**SD:** Oh right, so they haven't got much incentive really.

**JS:** Well, the incentive is to get it right first time, otherwise they keep having to come back.

**SD:** Oh, OK.

**JS:** It's costing them.

**LR:** But they can't get it right first time because it's broken. Anyway, it's your job. Why are we telling you this? It's a pleasure to meet you, finally, after all these days. I've got a copy of my photographs for you right here if you would like them. Print it out for you, then I send you all the time. I just don't understand why you're talking about GEM. That's your problem.

**JS:** That was coming from the question. They don't get paid for every job.

**LR:** The question for me is just that that's completely... that is a completely, a situation completely made up of you not completing what you decided to do in the first place, which was the heating unit.

**SD:** Explaining about GEM is one thing . . . .

**JS:** I agree, and my aim is to get your systems working fine. We're doing everything we can with this, and I do care for all of you residents, and I want your systems... I don't want this problem that you're facing.

**FW:** Why has it taken seven years? Seven years, seven and a half years, it was July 2016 my system was installed, we're now in August 2023, that's seven years, seven and a bit years, you say you want to do all you can to get the system to work, you've had over seven years to do it and it doesn't work, so how much longer do you need?

**SD:** Meric, can you give us any hope?

**MA:** Well, I mean, you can see, um, every officer here is, you know,

**SD:** But you're a mover and a shaker, you're a mover and a shaker, aren't you? You're a man of influence. Come on.

**FW:** Why hasn't it been put right?

**MA:** You've heard the reasons.

**FW:** Well I haven't heard the reasons, I'm missing an explanation. Why in seven years?

**GH:** Sorry, I'm mindful we could be here completely for a while. I think Sian wants to come in now.

**SB:** I don't want to lose David before we ask him about the heat pumps. Now, on a sustainability level, obviously I know that residents are still being charged with a fixed charge. Is that right? So there's no...

**GH:** Oh, Florrie's Law applies, yeah. That invoice was raised in that year. There's no pressure on the capping.

**SB:** Yeah, so I mean, sorry, no.

**PH:** You mean heat metering.

**SB:** I mean, do you know gas usage and how much bills there are?

**PH:** We're still paying a flat rate.

**SB:** You're still paying flat rate, yeah, exactly. But in terms of carbon emissions, the inefficiency in the system is causing climate change. So you're going to be monitoring that according to what you just said. The UKPIs is quite clear that the efficiency of the system, i.e. how well it deals with the amount of gas, is going to be monitored.

But then at the very end of the introduction, of the summary of your report, it says, if all this is done, it will be suitable for decarbonisation.

I suppose you should go back through that a little bit. Is that... because obviously we're going to get the system working, then they're going to be maintaining the system to get it working really well, like a Formula 1 machine, and then at some point you can put heat pumps on, or...

**DL:** It's not exactly clear how decarbonisation is going to be delivered in London, because this idea of heat zones, so heat could be produced on a kind of a neighborhood basis. There'd be some lovely pipes running up the hill.

**SB:** And the use of wind without that being a low temperature network is right, isn't it?

**Camden:** You may have to change radiators.

**SD:** What?

**PH:** If you go to low temperatures, you need bigger radiators when you get heat pumps.

**DL:** You may not. So, for example, over this last period of the energy crisis, I've been turning my boiler thermostat down at home, and it's become a system which ostensibly needs a temperature of 80 degrees centigrade to heat my house. I've turned it down to about 45, and it's fine.

So I think this system, you know, the intention was that the system is suitable for the connection of a heat pump at some point. Or connection to a local connection.

**MA:** Does that mean the buildings are suitable for that? Do we need to do anything to the buildings to make them more...

**MC:** Well, all the windows were replaced, but window performance has come a long, long way.

**SD:** Single glazed windows.

**DL:** OK, so the windows have got to be changed. There are some very, very good windows on the market now. The performance of the windows is better than the walls.

**SD:** Is there any insulation in our properties, guys?

**DL:** And then rooms, you know, the obvious one, and then maybe flat walls, which, you know, are relatively new.

**SB:** Yeah, yeah, so that all sounds a little bit too optimistic, essentially, at the end of it.

**DL:** Okay, well, I'm, you know, in a way, okay, I think the foresight was there to put in a system which anticipated that a heat pump would come.

**FW:** I have no confidence that Camden could do anything, because every capital works project has gone disastrously wrong on our estate. So we can't even get this system to work. And then we do a green system that would make it, even then that would not work.

**Camden:** Well, we need to get the system working well.

**DL:** I mean, just to be clear, I'm confident that this system can be made to work.

**FW:** But why is it taking...Well, it's been seven years it's not working. Why are you confident? You had seven years to try all these different things, and now you say you're confident. How many years do you need to? I'm not saying it's not an individual thing. This is a general response. Not that these are personal attacks on anybody. It's a general thing.

**DL:** There's no reason the system cannot be made to work.

**PH:** Can I swear everybody in this room to secrecy within these walls? What is it? Is it Chatham House rules? Because, you see, I happen to know that without having had any consultation yet, there is a plan in the works to do insulation. Do you all know this? To do insulation, double glazing and work on the roof and on the external... I mean, we're all to say that we're all bound by the same confidence.

Because it hasn't reached consultation, but you know that there is a legal obligation on Camden to release a seller's pack. So that's where the information is filtered through, that there is going to be work on double glazing and insulation and all the rest of it.

**SB:** It'll be in the three-year forward plan as well, won't it?

**PH:** Depending on which seller's pack you believe, it's either looking ahead three years or it's looking ahead to 2023-24.

So can we talk about this at all?

**GH:** There are a few things happening, I'm mindful of the time, but we can put some information out on that. So we've got a current Stock Condition Survey underway, that would lead to a review of our five-year programme. There might well be works already scheduled for Highgate New Town, but certainly the windows are on the radar from memory.

And then we're doing another bit of work around retrofitted [indecipherable], which is a much broader developmental piece and that's looking at how we can fund retrofit for all council homes in a way which is cost effective for everyone concerned.

So there's a few different bits but on the immediate question we can confirm what's in the capital programme at the moment and the caveat is we are doing a review this autumn once our new stock condition survey finishes.

I'm happy to drop you a line on that.

**PH:** All right, and now can I be indiscreet in another way and say, David, have we ever met before?

**DL:** No.

**PH:** We walked in together, but that was a complete coincidence. We just happened to share the lift. You've heard enough to know why I'm going to say that we don't trust GEM to mark its own homework or whoseever homework it is.

And so every time there's a reference to the things that are going to be measured, proved, tested, monitored, et cetera. So far, David Lindsey has not let me down. We trust Max Fordham more than we trust anybody else, such as GEM, at this point, to do all of that work. Or Camden as well.

**MC:** Both I and John instigated the Max Fordham and the report. The brief was produced by myself and John. Which you see that he talks about KPIs. We never intended to include GEM in that report. They're too close to it anyway. That's why we went to David, and that's where we are today. And that's why we're able to have this conversation going forward so we're not including GEM on any high level report, they're not there for that, they're here to give services on the maintenance side and they appreciate that there are times when they're not getting that right.

**PH:** It's just that there is a certain point where it says 'demonstrate to MF/GEM'. It's implicit that someone is going to have to be doing it. Anyway, sorry we're over time.

**GH:** OK, I think we're over time. But thanks everyone for joining. Those on screen and those in the room. We'll do a list of loads of action points, just to try and keep it concise. But have a think, Patrick, about dates for the next meeting. And over the holidays and all that, so maybe have a think.

**PH:** Yeah, yeah. Can we talk about that? I mean, not necessarily now, but are we going to have another meeting? What sort of time frame are we thinking about? A month, two months, a week?

**GH:** I think probably, in my mind, six weeks feels about right. We have some more work to do with John, Michael and Paul.

**PH:** Would you like to come to the estate or should we come here again? I mean, happy either way, but it's up to you.

**GH:** Let's keep it under review.

**MA:** Here would be better because it is set up for a hybrid Zoom and in person meeting.

END AND THANK YOU