

MINUTES 31 05 22 with council and HNT l/holders on Zoom

**HNT /A H/H Water Issues sent before meet**

**A The Contract HNT**

What are the costs of remedying the heating and hot water system? Who will pay for repairs? (Camden's Andrew Georgiou has assured us that no remedial costs are to be charged to leaseholders, please confirm).

Are we now beyond the Defects Rectification Period?

Is Camden seeking damages from the original contractor?

What are the relevant contractual terms and what is the current position?

**We need a clear understanding of where matters stand**

**We request a clear and substantiated explanation of the contractual position, with respect to the original contract for the supply and installation of the system and whatever remedial measures have succeeded it.**

**A Camden response before meet**

In terms of the contractual position, the installing contractor, now operating under the name of Equans, has been provided the opportunity to attend site and remedy the defects. Equans has agreed to do this at their cost.

**A Minutes from meet**

HNT we only received your written notes at 1pm yesterday

C Equans are the original installer, they are doing remedial work at their cost. They are addressing fire stopping and installing additional actuator valves. These are an upgrade and weren't available at the time the units were installed. They will significantly improve the system.

HNT What evidence is there that the valves will solve the problem? Is this a new venture? Because we remember they have been installed before with no change to efficiency.

C Pressure reducing valves are an upgrade. There has been significant reduction in callouts.

HNT Do you have a record of the number of callouts over the years so you can say with knowledge that the number of callouts has been reduced as a result of the valve installation?

C We can go back 2 years, information prior to that is not accurate.

HNT Can you share that data with us?

C Yes, but it will take a while to get it together

HNT So you have not made the comparisons yet?

C The manufacturers recommended the valves.

HNT We asked for a clear statement of the contractual position. Can we see the contracts so we can understand what costs are being passed on and why. We need to understand what the defects position is and what costs Equans are covering.

C We can get you the notes.

HNT Can we see the contract?

C It's on a CD, we can share it.

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**B Review assessment Max Fordham at meet**

C We have shared the brief with you.

HNT MF need to speak to the residents

HNT At what stage in the process are they? We are keen to feed in at an early stage. At what point will we be invited to feed in?

C We are expecting the 1<sup>st</sup> stage of the report anytime now. We can share that. The brief is in 3 parts. 1/ is to look at design and issues with hot water. We have no problems with you meeting with MF.

HNT If you can share 1<sup>st</sup> stage with us we can then set up a meeting with MF.

C Happy to share with you, we can have a sit down and go through it with you.

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**C Ongoing schedule of works and repairs for the next five years/green agenda**

HNT What is on the horizon for works and meeting the **Green Agenda**, and possibly renewing the heating and hot water system to end its reliance on fossil fuels? Is Camden responsible for meeting the requirements of the Heat Trust Register, and in what time frame?

C We only have windows planned but we don't have a date. Sometime in the next 5 years

HNT Is that double glazing?

C We do a detailed scoping schedule, it's a fine balance, repair or replace.

HNT What date would that be within the 5 year cycle?

C Next survey is due this autumn, windows are down for 24/25

HNT Great to know there will be a resident consultation, we would like to feed into that

Councillor Wright With Camden's commitment to carbon reduction and retrofitting I assume that the preference will be to install double glazing rather than repair?

Councillor Berry Wasn't Raydon Lanes windows done and aren't they similar? Can we learn from that?

HNT We can find ways to maintain the appearance and up the thermal value. We would really value having input. We would like to assist you with Resident feedback *before* works are started.

HNT You say heating system is designed to be upgraded. It's odd to spend a lot of money on gas.

Does the system still have a 30 yr life?

C There is no reason why we would change energy source at an earlier point. But it might be that technology is quicker. We are looking to phase out gas in time say in 25yrs, it may be that technology moves on faster than that

HNT You stated that the current htg. system is designed for upgrades, it seems odd to spend money on gas boilers when we are aiming for zero energy. Does it still have a 30 yr life?

C It might be that the technology/energy systems are moving on. Lots more work to be done on that

#### **D Heat meters: HNT written statement before meet**

H meters have not been activated to date, creating excess cost and overconsumption of energy. Cost savings were analysed in the two early Options Appraisals a decade ago, they formed part of the decision to install this particular system. Savings of 15% to 46% were predicted. Please confirm what, if any, savings have been made, both in terms of gas and electricity usage.

In respect of activation, residents (particularly tenants) are concerned at the prospect of paying for heat escape due to leaky windows, single glazed units etc. If the properties had been insulated *before* installing the new heat/hot water system, energy costs would have been saved and the original predicted savings may have been valid. As this has not happened the original arguments for installing this particular system do not stand up to close scrutiny. They are also paying extra electricity costs (documented) which were not disclosed before installation.

#### **D Heat meters Camden Response to above before meet**

We note that we have not yet been able to begin individual heat metering at Highgate Newtown. In order to implement heat metering in a fair and consistent way across the estate, we need a significant majority of households to have active heat meters. As it stands we have been refused access to many

homes for the activation of heat meters, and we are working closely to engage further with residents so that we can gain access, activate heat meters, and begin individual metering.

#### **D Heat meters response at meet**

C 80% of residents with meters are saving money ie spending less than they would be on the standard charges otherwise. Activating meters is a question of access. We need a significant majority of residents to allow access. We are preparing an information sheet.

HNT Why are residents refusing access?

C A number of reasons but we're trying hard to address that.

HNT I haven't been asked for access for metering. It's not a matter of residents resistance.

C Gem have been asked to do the work at the same time as the heat activator installation, it's a matter of turning a switch.

Councillor Wright: I have heard many stories from residents about access, it's a major issue, we need to address it in a different meeting. It's a bigger issue and it's something Camden needs to get to grips with.

HNT All we hear from residents is that appts. are made and not kept to. There needs to be a whole new approach to how residents are dealt with. Its been going on 6 years. Maybe residents are thinking I'm not prepared to go on wasting my time.

#### **E Review/Assessment HNT written statement *before* meet**

We understand that Camden are to engage Max Fordham to carry out an assessment of the system. Max Fordham have stated that they are happy to work on the project through Camden in an open way, to listen to residents concerns, ask pertinent questions and help residents understand what is being said and proposed. Our issues could fall within this scope.

We request:

- to see the criteria to be used for the review
- to input our concerns into the review
- to raise our own queries for inclusion in the review
- to know when the review is going to take place and how long it will take
- to know who is going to pay for it (ultimately)

- to share the findings
- to know what will Camden do with the findings/ who will pay for any remedials suggested

We request *input* to a clear, professional assessment of the current problems, stated in clear language but with enough specific technical detail to be comprehensible to the architects and engineers among our members. The results to be fully disclosed so that together we can find a way forward.

We ask that Camden share information in respect of the *independent* professional assessment of the problems. This information to be shared to allow constructive input at all stages.

### **E C response at meet**

C We will share the findings after the review

HNT MF have emailed us and said they are willing to engage with us. I can't find any reference here to consultation with residents.

HNT At what stage in the process are they? We are keen to feed in, it would be useful for residents to engage at the beginning of the process not the end. At what point will we be invited to feed in?

C We are expecting 1<sup>st</sup> stage due any time now. We have discussed some of their draft findings. We can share that. Brief is in 3 parts. 1/ to look at design and issues with hot water. If you wish to meet with MF we have no problem with that

HNT We would like to meet after we have seen 1<sup>st</sup> stage of the report

C And then we can sit and have a sit down meeting and go through it

HNT We'll meet with MF after seeing 1<sup>st</sup> stage report

### **G. A Constructive Partnership HNT written state before meet**

HNT With respect to the heating and hot water, and the contractor visits, the Highgate New Town Leaseholders Association has begun to pilot a digital pro-forma for the reporting on the non-delivery of the system and for the reporting of the contractor no-shows.

We want to see Camden as our partners. Can Camden meet us halfway to rebuild some of the trust undermined by systemic failures of quality control and delivery and to build a relationship based on mutual respect? We cannot overstate the degree of anger and misery shared by many of the residents on the estate.

**Please provide measurable success criteria and specific, time-bounded commitments for our mutual agreement. These should be for the next three months.**

**In that time we are prepared to compile a list of the above (digital pro forma data), incorporating both parties response to this meeting in preparation for mutual agreement at our next meeting.**

**Response at meet**

C We are keen to work with you and see data

HNT OK we'll share it

**H. Monitoring and Control**

**HNT We ask for an immediate commitment to put a stop to contractor no-shows, with closer monitoring and control of their performance**

We ask Camden to share the anonymised qualitative responses to the satisfaction survey of residents that Gavin Haynes was asked to provide in a meeting on 3 June 2019 (he declined to provide on data protection grounds) Camden data of breakdowns/repairs is not always reliable (e.g., the disappearing March 15 repairs).

**H Response at meet**

C We have taken this in house and have seen the issues with people booking appointments and appointments not being met. We are happy to share the data from the survey a couple of years ago with you

**I Costs**

**HNT We ask that Camden commit to providing us with the relevant lines out of its accounts. We understand the system costs are to be audited in July. Please confirm this is the case.**

- **We need a clear understanding of where matters stand with respect to the charges to leaseholders.**
- Payment : **this is a collective dispute. The hold on the invoice of any individual property should not be lifted** until the whole system is working.
- Amounts should be jointly agreed by residents and Camden after full disclosure of costs, contracts, guarantees and financial responsibility for faulty works/ parts.

**Response at meet**

C Costs/ invoices that have been sent in Feb are the final account summary, that's the final contribution we expect I/holders to pay. They are currently on hold. We do expect I/holders to pay within the next 6 months

HNT Do we not need to have a system that's fit for purpose before payment?

C We do have a system that is providing heating and hot water and we do expect payment

HNT We can't pay for something that's not working and we do need to be a corporate voice rather than individuals

C In terms of payment we expect that to be on an individual basis

C We take on board that maybe after the MF report we can consider things

Councillor Berry This (accounts) refers the general right that residents have to inspect Camden accounts during July. There is an officer from the finance dept. there to assist residents with that. It only goes back a year though. We can liaise about that.

HNT We might need a wider set of information to analyse it

Councillor Berry The other thing you can get from accounts is what else your service charges are being spent on, you should ask for that too.

HNT We need to **agree a definition** with Camden of what a functioning hot water/central heating system is. Currently the system is not fit for purpose and has not been since installation

## **J FIRE response at meet**

C Camden's FRAs are published online, you can find them at <https://www.camden.gov.uk/your-fire-risk-assessments>. Dominic Johnson, head of Resident and Building Safety has provided the following update:

C There has been an FRA for the woodworking workshop and the boiler room, it is available on the link above

## **K – 'Resident management' response before meet**

Suitable for leaseholders might be Right to Manage, you can find out about creating an RTM company here [Right to Manage - The Leasehold Advisory Service \(lease-advice.org\)](https://www.lease-advice.org/)

**ACTION POINTS AGREED (compiled by councillor Anna Wright)**

- HNT to have access to the contract: within 2 weeks
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- C to share data on results of valves being fitted and meter installation: early data shared in 2 weeks
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- C Access difficulties: information shared in 4 weeks. Separate Meeting to be arranged to solve access problems
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- 1<sup>st</sup> report from Max Fordham shared within 2 weeks
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- Data from survey: available within 2 weeks
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- C parameters for definition of *fit for purpose* system: in 2 weeks
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- HNT as above ( to share their data )
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- HNT as above/ to compile a *fit for purpose* brief
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- HNT to view the accounts in July: consult with Sian

Next meet: after 6 weeks ie. after 12 07 22 . This structure ie HNT send over agenda and queries. C responds, to be maintained

**END**