

COUNCIL MEETING – WEDNESDAY 8 JULY 2015

NOTICE OF MOTION

This Council notes with concern that it is now more than 9 months since an independent investigation was commissioned into the whistle blowing allegations of corruption and mismanagement within Circle Housing Merton Priory's (CHMP) repairs and maintenance service.

This Council welcomes CHMP's admission that their repairs contractor, Keepmoat Property Services, has been overcharging for works and their announcement that they are now undertaking a wider investigation to assess the scale of overcharging and to identify ways of improving the system to stop contractors from overcharging.

However, despite the severity of the allegations and the number of people potentially affected, the full audit report is still yet to be released to residents and councillors and no firm timetable for publication has been forthcoming.

Furthermore, this Council is disappointed with CHMP's continued inability to manage repairs and strongly believes that it is important to identify a way forward as Merton residents have had to put up with inadequate repairs for too long.

This Council takes seriously its various legal responsibilities and duties to hold CHMP to account on behalf of all tenants, leaseholders and freeholders and therefore:

- a) Calls on CHMP to take urgent steps to ensure the repair service is radically overhauled so that residents get the service they deserve and already pay for;
- b) Urges CHMP's senior officers to attend the next Sustainable Communities scrutiny panel to answer questions from councillors and residents on the issue of repairs;
- c) Demands the immediate publication by CHMP of the independent audit report on alleged fraud and repeated overcharging of residents by its repairs contractor, Keepmoat Property Services;
- d) Requests that any other such investigations conducted in the future in relation to CHMP or any of its contractors, including by the Homes and Communities Agency (HCA), are published in a timely fashion to ensure full transparency and accountability; and
- e) Calls on the Cabinet as a matter of urgency to set out clearly how best to use the legal powers available to the Council under the terms of the housing stock transfer agreement to safeguard the needs of residents on Merton's housing estates and hold CHMP to account on the quality of its repairs and maintenance service, particularly in light of the HCA Regulatory Notice served on Circle Anglia Limited in February 2015.

Cllr Michael Bull

Cllr Janice Howard

Cllr Linda Taylor

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