

THE LONDON BOROUGH OF CAMDEN

At a meeting of the **CABINET** held on **WEDNESDAY, 26TH FEBRUARY, 2025** at 7.00 pm in Council Chamber, Town Hall, Judd Street, London WC1H 9JE

MEMBERS OF THE CABINET PRESENT

Councillors Richard Olszewski, Sagal Abdi-Wali, Camron Aref-Adib, Marcus Boyland, Pat Callaghan, Sabrina Francis, Adam Harrison and Anna Wright

MEMBERS OF THE CABINET ABSENT

Councillors Nasrine Djemai and Nadia Shah

ALSO PRESENT

Councillors Steve Adams and Tom Simon

The minutes should be read in conjunction with the agenda for the meeting. They are subject to approval and signature at the next meeting of the Cabinet and any corrections approved at that meeting will be recorded in those minutes.

MINUTES

1. APOLOGIES

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors Djemai and Shah. Apologies for lateness were received from Councillor Wright.

2. DECLARATIONS BY MEMBERS OF STATUTORY DISCLOSABLE PECUNIARY INTERESTS, COMPULSORY REGISTERABLE NON-PECUNIARY INTERESTS AND VOLUNTARY REGISTERABLE NON-PECUNIARY INTERESTS IN MATTERS ON THIS AGENDA

There were no declarations.

3. ANNOUNCEMENTS

The Chair reminded those present that the meeting was being broadcast live by the Council and was recorded and later made available on the website. Those addressing the meeting were deemed to be consenting to having their contributions recorded and broadcast.

4. DEPUTATIONS

There were no deputations.

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

There was no notification of urgent business.

6. REPRESENTATIONS RECEIVED ABOUT WHY THE MEETING SHOULD BE OPEN TO THE PUBLIC

No representations were received.

7. MINUTES

RESOLVED –

THAT the minutes of the meeting held on 15th January 2025 be approved and signed as a correct record.

8. MATTERS REFERRED FROM A COUNCIL SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

There were no matters referred.

9. TREASURY MANAGEMENT STRATEGY (CS/2025/03)

Consideration was given to a report of the Cabinet Member for Finance and Cost of Living that was introduced by Councillor Aref-Adib.

RESOLVED –

THAT the following be agreed and be recommended to full Council to approve:

- 1) The Borrowing Strategy as set out in section 5 and Appendix 1;
- 2) The operational boundaries and authorised limits in Appendix 1 (prudential indicators 3 and 4);
- 3) The prudential and treasury management indicators in Appendix 1 (prudential indicators 1-8)
- 4) The Investment Strategy as set in section 6 and Appendix 1;
- 5) The creditworthiness policy and credit rating criteria as set out in Appendix 1 (Table 3);

- 6) The investment instruments categorised as specified and non-specified in Appendix 1 (Table 4 and 5); and
- 7) The Minimum Revenue Provision (MRP) Policy as set out in Appendix 1.

Reasons

For the reasons set out in the report.

**10. 2025/26 REVENUE ESTIMATES AND COUNCIL TAX SETTING
(CS/2025/04)**

Consideration was given to a report for the Cabinet Member for Finance and Cost of Living.

Councillor Aref-Adib spoke about the significant financial pressures in the two service areas of children's social care and temporary accommodation and that the Council was facing an over spend this year. Due to these financial challenges and in order to provide funding for vital services in the borough, an increase in Council Tax and an increase in the premium charge for second homes would be recommended to the next meeting of the full Council.

In response to questions Councillor Aref-Adib confirmed that Camden would continue to maintain the Council Tax Support Scheme, mentioning that Camden's scheme was one of the most generous, not just in London but across the UK. Sitting alongside the Cost of Living Fund, the Community Welfare fund and the work at Acland Burghley School, highlighted in the report, they provided an environment that protected the most vulnerable and provided access to funding that helped to make Camden a fairer and more progressive borough.

RESOLVED –

1. THAT the decisions made regarding the recommendations in this report be exempt from call in (as agreed by the Chair of the Resources and Corporate Performance Scrutiny Committee) on the grounds of urgency, and for the reasons set out in paragraphs 2.3 to 2.4 of the report.
2. THAT it be noted that the Council has not received any feedback following the consultation with Non-Domestic Ratepayers, and have due regard to the result of the equality impact assessment in Appendix F.
3. THAT the following be agreed and referred to full Council:
 - (a) The council tax requirement for the year 2025/26 of £154,792,070 (inclusive of the Garden Squares levies).
 - (b) The calculations for determining the council tax requirement for the year 2025/26 in accordance with the Local Government Finance Act 1992, as set out in Appendix B.

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- (c) To note that the 2025/26 Greater London Authority (GLA) precept set out in this report is £490.38 for Band D and as shown for all bands in Appendix B and is subject to Greater London Authority approval of the budget on 25 February 2025.
 - (d) That the Council sets the amount of council tax for 2025/26, as detailed in Appendix B and notes that this will mean a Camden element of council tax of £1,615.98 for Band D residents not in Garden Squares.
 - (e) That the Council hereby determines that its basic amount of council tax for the financial year 2025/26 is not excessive, as outlined in paragraph 2.45.
 - (f) The budget summary as set out in Appendix C.
 - (g) The budget investments included in paragraphs 2.24 to 2.37, including the continuation of the £2m Cost of Living Crisis Fund.
 - (h) Note the statutory Section 25 notice detailed in paragraphs 7.1 to 7.22 summarising the assurance that the budget is set using sound assumptions and the level of reserves is deemed adequate.
 - (i) The Garden Squares levy requirements received for each Garden Square Committee for 2025/26, as shown in Appendix B.
4. THAT in relation to fees and charges the following be agreed:
- (a) THAT the new fees and charges and those increasing above 7% discussed in paragraphs 2.53 to 2.55 and in Appendix D1 be agreed, and recommend to Council the fees and charges listed in Appendix D2.
 - (b) THAT authority be delegated to the relevant Executive Director to decide increases to existing fees and charges up to a maximum of 7%, following consultation with the relevant portfolio holders.
 - (c) THAT authority be delegated to the Head of Camden Accessible Transport Services, after consultation with the Director of Environment & Sustainability and the Director of Finance, the ability to amend the CNG charge set out in paragraphs 2.56 to 2.57 of the report in line with wholesale prices, adding on VAT and overheads.
 - (d) THAT authority be delegated to the Director of Recreation to decide fees for ICCS.070, ICCS 166, ICCS.171 and ICCS.283 up to the maximum amounts set out in Appendix D1, for reasons set out in paragraphs 2.58 to 2.59 of the report.
 - (e) THAT authority be delegated to the Chief Experience & Information Officer to agree customisation options and costs on the Council's Here's to You reception packages on an individual basis, as per paragraph 2.60 of the report.
5. THAT the following be noted, in paragraphs 2.64 to 2.72 the planned use of reserves, and in paragraph 7.22 the adequacy of reserves as stated, and that no major allocations of general balances are being considered at this stage.
6. THAT the capital investment in children's social care provision, social housing and improvements to Acland Burghley School Hall detailed in paragraphs 2.73 to 2.81 be agreed and that authority be delegated to the Executive Director Corporate Services, to take all relevant steps to implement the purchase of

properties for Children's Social Care and Social Rented units as they are identified be agreed.

Reasons

For the reasons set out in the report.

11. LONDON BOROUGH OF CAMDEN'S ANNUAL COMPLAINTS REPORT 2023/202 (CS/2025/01)

Consideration was given to a report of the Borough Solicitor that was introduced by the Cabinet Member for Finance and Cost of Living.

Councillor Aref-Adib spoke about how the report had provided a corporate overview of the complaints process with information from each of the Council's departments. Also explained, and as set out in the report, were the reasons for the rise in complaints in Camden and neighbouring boroughs, the issues being faced by the Council and the steps being taken to deal with complaints in Camden. It was noted that the revised format of the report had been well received at the Resources and Corporate Performance Scrutiny Committee. The data provided in the report was for the period 2023/24 and since then there had been a slight decrease in complaints but it was stressed that there was no complacency about this decrease and that there would continue to be a focus on addressing complaints.

In response to questions about why increases in complaints were described as 'a positive' in the report, it was explained that describing them in this way was an acknowledgement that Camden was open to saying where things had gone wrong, that the Council was listening to and focusing on customers in order to get things right. While the Council would like residents to have fewer reasons to complain the focus has not been on keeping the numbers of complaints low but instead had focussed on listening and taking action when they did complain. Camden's systems were designed to make lodging a complaint as easy as possible. Listening to Camden's residents had brought about process changes and Members should be reassured that there was a focus on monitoring, with action being taken to improve services.

RESOLVED –

THAT the report, and in particular the Ombudsman's findings of maladministration in Appendix 7 of the report, be noted.

Reasons

For the reasons set out in the report.

12. LEARNING DISABILITIES COMMUNITY SUPPORT COMMISSIONING STRATEGY (AH/2025/01)

Consideration was given to a report of the Cabinet Member for Health, Wellbeing and Adult Social Care.

Members welcomed the report and the examples of innovative and excellent work that was taking place in the borough.

RESOLVED –

THAT having considered the results of the extensive engagement with key stakeholders, the result of the Equalities Impact Assessment (Appendix 1) and having due regard to the obligations set out in section 149 of the Equality Act 2010:

1. THAT the procurement strategy as set out in this report, which includes a 40% price / 60% quality split and initial term of four-and-a-half-years, with a three-year extension option, for an estimated value of £16,347,078 be agreed.
2. THAT authority be delegated to the Executive Director Adults and Health, following consultation with the Cabinet Member for Health, Wellbeing and Adult Social Care, to make the contract award decisions resulting from 1 above.

Reasons

For the reasons set out in the report.

13. AWARD OF GRANT FUNDING TO THE COMMUNITY SMOKING CESSATION SERVICE (PH/2025/01)

Consideration was given to a report of the Cabinet Member for Health, Wellbeing and Adult Social Care.

Members of the Cabinet welcomed the report and the work taking place to help people stop smoking. The Cabinet Member for Health, Wellbeing and Adult Social Care and the team working on this initiative were thanked for the difference this would make to people's health.

Councillor Wright spoke about smoking and obesity as key determinants of health, how they were drivers for ill health in older years and about the commitment to preventative work in her Cabinet portfolio.

RESOLVED –

THAT having due regard to the obligations set out in section 149 of the Equality Act 2012:

1. THAT the arrangements for the provision of additional stop smoking support by way of a grant agreement between Camden Council and Central and North West London NHS Foundation Trust (CNWL) be approved. This consists of an annual grant from 2025-26 to 2028-29, subject to satisfactory performance and funding being received from the Office for Health Improvement and Disparities.
2. THAT authority be delegated to the Director of Health and Wellbeing, following consultation with the Cabinet Member for Health, Wellbeing and Adult Social Care, to renew the grant annually until 2028-29 subject to satisfactory performance and funding being received from the Office for Health Improvement and Disparities.

Reasons

For the reasons set out in the report.

14. IN-SOURCING OF DOMESTIC GAS SERVICING, REPAIR AND INSTALLATION (SC/2025/11)

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

Councillor Abdi-Wali spoke about the key benefits of the proposals. How the insourcing of the service was an initiative that would provide value for money, as well as a workforce that would include locally trained local young people. In-sourcing of the service would create 40 new jobs, future proof the service and support the Council's tenant first approach.

Cabinet Members welcomed the improvements that would be provided by the proposals, the training opportunities and the new employments opportunities that would be created.

RESOLVED –

THAT having due regard to the Equalities Impact Assessment (Appendix 1 of the report), and the obligations in section 149 of the Equality Act 2010:

THAT the in-source strategy for the provision of Domestic Gas Boiler service, repair and installation be agreed.

Reasons

For the reasons set out in the report.

15. ANY OTHER BUSINESS THAT THE CHAIR DECIDES TO TAKE AS URGENT

There was no urgent business.

The meeting ended at 7.48 pm.

CHAIR

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MINUTES END