

## **THE LONDON BOROUGH OF CAMDEN**

At a meeting of the **CULTURE AND ENVIRONMENT SCRUTINY COMMITTEE** held on **MONDAY, 15TH SEPTEMBER, 2025** at 6.30 pm in Committee Room 2, Town Hall, Judd Street, London WC1H 9JE

### **MEMBERS OF THE COMMITTEE PRESENT**

Councillors Awale Olad (Chair), Nina De Ayala Parker, Sharon Hardwick, Matthew Kirk, Izzy Lenga, Rishi Madlani, Liam Martin-Lane and Stephen Stark

### **ALSO PRESENT**

Councillors Adam Harrison (Cabinet Member for Planning and a Sustainable Camden), Pat Leman and Nadia Shah (Cabinet Member for Voluntary Sector, Equalities and Cohesion).

**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 Culture and Environment Scrutiny Committee and any corrections approved at that meeting will be recorded in those minutes.**

### **MINUTES**

#### **1. APOLOGIES**

Apologies for lateness were received from Councillor Awale Olad.

In the absence of the chair the Principal Democratic Services Officer opened the meeting and invited nominations for the election of a temporary chair until the arrival of Councillor Olad.

Councillor Hardwick nominated Councillor Madlani which was seconded by Councillor Martin-Lane. In the absence of any other nominations, it was:

#### **RESOLVED –**

THAT Councillor Madlani be elected temporary Chair until the arrival of Councillor Olad.

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

There were none.

**3. DEPUTATIONS (IF ANY)**

There were none.

**4. ANNOUNCEMENTS (IF ANY)**

The Chair announced that due to IT problems in the Committee room the meeting could not be webcast.

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

There were none.

**6. MINUTES**

**RESOLVED –**

THAT the minutes of the meeting held on 14th July 2025 be signed as an accurate record.

**7. CAMDEN GREEN SPACE INVESTMENT PROGRAMME 2026-2030**

Consideration was given to the report of the Director of Recreation and Public Safety.

Katy Knight (Head of Leisure), Joe Lewis (Green Space Development Manager) and Oliver Jones (Director of Recreation and Public Safety) provided the following information in response to Committee members questions:

- Local Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) funding could be allocated to priority projects within wards, as determined by ward Councillors. For example, Belsize had received funding for the Antrim Gardens project through this process.
- Section 106 funding was ringfenced for spending on public open spaces and not on green space located on housing land. It was highlighted that there were statutory limitations governing expenditure.

- With regards to identifying deficiencies in green space provision, it was explained that these were mapped and used to guide investment decisions, Belsize was considered as an area of concern.
- In relation to councillor engagement, an email had been circulated to all councillors approximately 5–6 weeks ago, seeking suggestions for new green space opportunities. Members were informed that some responses had been received from one ward which demonstrated ongoing engagement with elected members to shape future investment. Officers agreed to follow up with those Councillors who had not yet responded to the request for new green space project ideas.

**Action By: Green Space Development Manager**

- The investment programme aimed to address areas of deficiency and deliver improvements across wards.
- The Council tried to get the best ecological value out of all projects embarked on.
- The Council also worked with landscape architects and its Biodiversity Officer to develop its Tree planting strategy noting that the borough's tree canopy and green corridors were key assets of the borough. The Council also followed best practice when it came to herbicide and pesticide use.
- With regards to new ideas and suggestions put forward by residents in Oriel Place about the further uses that could be made of the green space areas, officers would take note and consider how these ideas could be acted on.

**Action By: Head of Leisure**

- In relation to flood resilience in areas such as Goldhurst Terrace, there was a much stronger emphasis on cross borough working and managing the risk through integration of ecological approaches.

A member commented that residents in areas of West Hampstead were delighted with the greenery and beauty of the area and had taken guided tree tours around West Hampstead.

The Committee thanked officers for the report and

**RESOLVED –**

THAT the report be noted and recommended it to Cabinet for approval.

**8. CABINET ADVISER REPORT ON RESIDENT ENGAGEMENT ON ANTI-SOCIAL BEHAVIOUR AND COMMUNITY SAFETY**

*Councillor Olad took over chairing of the meeting from Councillor Madlani.*

Consideration was given to the report of the Cabinet Adviser on Resident Engagement on Anti-social Behaviour and Community Safety.

Members made the following comments:

- It was important to also flag up information between Council departments and the need for the fluid flow of information between departments.
- Given that Camden did quite well in partnership working it would be useful if the learning from partnership and participation working with a broader range of people from the community could be used for this as well.

Councillor Edmund Frondigoun Cabinet Adviser on Resident Engagement on Anti-social Behaviour and Community Safety informed the Committee that the scope of the report was limited to how the Council managed communication with residents and gave the following key responses to questions:

- The borough had a high number of private sector residents with a diverse range of ages and ethnic groups who would not normally access Council services. Social media alone would not reach all groups, a solution would be the use of paper-based communication delivered by hand which would get through to all residents including private tenants.
- The proactive approach of using this method of communicating would help inform all residents of the powers and responsibilities the Council had in combating ASB in the borough.
- A recommendation to help improve the effectiveness of Safer Neighbourhood Panels was by providing more support for these panels. The biggest improvement could occur by aiding with the maintenance of document logs as well as providing panel members with training and support in their roles on the panel.
- The Council could improve its offer to Safer Neighbourhood Ward Panels by taking responsibility for supporting secretariat duties. Including supporting the Mayor's Office for Policing and Crime (MOPAC) to ensure members, new and existing were signposted to training and support in their roles and advising on membership lists which would help to broaden invite lists to ensure panels were fully representative.
- With regards to the Police and Council's resource constraints and the need to focus on more pressing issues, residents noticed little things such as spraying of graffiti, anti-social behaviour and it showed that residents were being heard when there was a crackdown on these low-ticket issues.
- It was useful if Camden officers could attend the SNP meetings.
- With regards to having 2 Community Safety officers per ward in the borough, in an ideal ward the Council would aspire to this, however due to resource constraints this did not appear to be feasible.

- In relation to young people, the Council had direct one to one communication with the Police on youth safety and gang related graffiti.
- The term anti-social behaviour used in the report was based on the Council's definition which was behaviour which causes, or was likely to cause, harassment, alarm or distress to persons not in the same household.
- In terms of measuring, monitoring progress and assessing the impact of the measures it was important that the information was recorded accurately, however in addition to subjective calls in defining what was considered gang related graffiti for instance there were also huge external factors such as the drug epidemic affecting the accurate reporting of the stats.

The Cabinet Adviser was thanked for the time and effort put into the report and

**RESOLVED –**

THAT the report be noted.

**9. ANNUAL REPORT OF THE CABINET MEMBER FOR VOLUNTARY SECTOR, EQUALITIES AND COHESION**

Consideration was given to the annual report of the Cabinet Member for Voluntary Sector, Equalities and Cohesion.

In response to questions, Councillor Nadia Shah (Cabinet Member for Voluntary Sector, Equalities and Cohesion, Oliver Jones (Director of Recreation and Public Safety) made the following points:

- With regards to the protests across London over the weekend and what more the Council was doing to make residents in the borough feel safe, the Council's leadership had regular meetings with the police which had resulted in the presence of more police officers and community intelligence officers in the area to deal with areas of heightened tension.
- The Council had also encouraged community engagement and cohesion, by fostering interaction between local communities at events, such as interfaith dialogues and cultural exchanges.
- There were also interfaith coffee mornings and interfaith network workshops within the borough as well as Brave Cafes, which involved engagement sessions to dispel myths and stigma involving deep set issues around discrimination and equality.

- The interfaith coffee mornings at various places of worship had been useful for the Council to connect with local communities and prioritise the feedback from what was being heard.
- As Co-Chair of the interfaith forum, with Councillor Flier, a lot of work had been done around issues caused by conflict in other parts of the world which also caused worry in individuals and local communities. Issues had caused the gap between communities to start widening again. Both co-chairs had been going out into the community meeting with community leaders. Local MPs and talking within local community settings where people were comfortable. There had also been no place for hate surgeries in communities and allowing for all voices in the community to be heard. The Council continued to ensure that cohesion was at the heart of everything it did.
- The Council had a proud history of supporting the LGBTQ+ community, it had encouraged and championed more celebratory events throughout the year. It had continued to fund two LGBTQ+ organisations and worked with communities that continued to face familiar cultural barriers.
- LGBTQ+ voices were embedded in co-design, the Council continued to invest and celebrate these communities. It was still committed to support and prioritise members of the LGBTQ+ communities.
- The Council was very much keeping an eye on the hate crime stats particularly around the LGBT+ community as well as worldwide issues affecting all communities. All the strands including encouraging reporting of hate crimes were being worked on in the background and creating safe spaces to enable integration of communities in the borough.
- In terms of VCS funding, Camden was one of the biggest investors and one of the only boroughs providing 7-year funding for voluntary organisations.
- The whole idea behind which was to ensure that these organisations could plan ahead to sustain themselves because when funding was provided in little bits organisations were unable to survive.
- Camden's approach was regarded as innovative as it was not just financial but a community partnership focussed on creating real impact over 7 years.
- There was a new equalities group which had provided support to smaller groups enabling them to apply and receive funding from the Council.
- Council officers had also provided support to the smaller organisations by aiding with applications for funding.

- The Council invested £1.9m annually in 38 key community organisations providing unrestricted multi-year funding which allowed these organisations to adapt to emerging challenges while maintaining their core work.
- Camden's funding was long term flexible funding nationally recognised by the Institute for Voluntary Research as a leading example of open and trusting grant making. There were also tools for measuring and monitoring the impact of the funding across all communities.
- There were heightened tensions across the borough with different communities hurting and experiencing hate crimes. It was a very difficult time for everybody and it was important that all incidents were reported to the police.
- The Council provided support to teachers and schools. Each school managed the issues in different ways.
- There were organised coffee mornings attended by faith leaders and the police.
- At University level there was lots of work going on with student groups,

The Cabinet Member for Voluntary Sector, Equalities and Cohesion and Officers were thanked for their work, time taken to attend the meeting and their responses.

**RESOLVED –**

THAT the report be noted.

**10. CULTURE AND ENVIRONMENT SCRUTINY COMMITTEE WORK PROGRAMME FOR 2025/26 AND ACTION TRACKER**

Consideration was given to the report of the Executive Director Supporting Communities.

Members discussed the work programme and requested that

- Consideration be given to including a Cultural Update on the Work Programme for February 2026.
- That Motorbikes be included with the annual Transport Strategy Review in December.
- The Chair send an email to Thames Water regarding actions outstanding from the February meeting.

Subject to these it was,

**Resolved:**

That the report be noted

**11. ANY OTHER BUSINESS THAT THE CHAIR CONSIDERS URGENT**

There was none.

The meeting ended at 8.39 pm.

**CHAIR**

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**MINUTES END**