

THE LONDON BOROUGH OF CAMDEN

At a meeting of the **CULTURE AND ENVIRONMENT SCRUTINY COMMITTEE** held on **MONDAY, 10TH NOVEMBER, 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), Sharon Hardwick, Matthew Kirk, Izzy Lenga, Rishi Madlani and Liam Martin-Lane

MEMBERS OF THE COMMITTEE ABSENT

Councillors Nina De Ayala Parker and Stephen Stark

ALSO PRESENT

Councillors Pat Calagahan (Cabinet Member for Safer Communities) Sabrina Francis (Cabinet Member for Jobs, Young People and Culture) Adam Harrison (Cabinet Member for Planning and a Sustainable Camden) Patricia Lehman.

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 absence were received from Councillors Nina De Ayala Parker and Stephen Stark.

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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. ANNOUNCEMENTS (IF ANY)

The Chair announced that the meeting was broadcast live by the Council to the Internet and could be viewed on the website for six months after the meeting. After that time, webcasts were archived and could be made available on DVD upon request. Those who were seated in the room or participated via Teams were deemed to have consented to their contributions being recorded and broadcast and to the use of those sound recordings and images for webcasting and/or training purposes.

4. DEPUTATIONS (IF ANY)

The Chair informed members that two deputations had been received and accepted, copies of the deputation statements were included in the supplementary agenda.

The first deputation was from Jill Henry, accompanied by Fran Newell and Richard Burdett on behalf of some Fortune Green residents and was requesting extending Hampstead Cemetery opening hours during longer daylight months; and

The second was from Dr Iain Oswald and related to the location of Bike Hangars on Dartmouth Park Avenue.

Hampstead Cemetery Opening hours

Consideration was given to the deputation statement referred to above.

The following response was given by the deputies to members questions:

- The opening hours prior to the pandemic were from 7.30am till about 9pm in the summer months. Since the pandemic the Cemetery now closed at 4pm.
- Residents requested the restoration of pre-pandemic seasonal opening hours at Hampstead Cemetery, as the early and late access supported wellbeing, daily exercise, and access to nature.
- Dog-related anti-social behaviour had improved with the introduction of weekday security.
- The costs of extending the opening hours would be minimal because the gates already opened daily.

Oliver Jones, Director of Recreation and Public Safety, made the following comments in response to the deputation and members' questions:

- Hampstead Cemetery was jointly managed by the London Boroughs of Camden and Islington (ICCS), aligning with Islington and Trent Park cemeteries' hours.
- Current closing time was 4pm in the winter and 5pm in summer.

- Past reasons for reduction in the opening hours were due to staffing, costs, parking misuse, and to reinforce the cemetery's purpose as a burial ground rather than a general park.
- Officers and ward councillors had been developing a pilot scheme for extended opening hours from 2026, allowing up to two hours' extra access in summer months, funded through ward budgets. (Community Infrastructure Levy).
- The proposals were to fund for a trial period in 2026. The details were being together and once finalised would be shared with the Committee. Officers also agreed to provide cost information of the pilot to the Committee.

ACTION BY Director of Recreation and Public Safety.

Members welcomed the proposals, and the deputies were thanked for their contribution.

Bike Hanger Placement, Dartmouth Park Avenue

Consideration was given to the deputation statement referred to above.

The following response was given by the deputy to members questions:

- Residents were interested to know how locations and streets were selected for bike hangars.
- With regards to responding to the consultation, an email was sent to the Council suggesting alternative locations but no response was received.
- Cycling provision was supported in principle but a request was being made to relocate from where it was proposed they would be situated.
- He objected to a bike hanger proposed outside his home, citing restricted vehicle and mobility access for elderly and disabled residents.
- Suggested alternative sites along walls or fences in the street to avoid obstruction.

A Committee member noted that there would not be a detailed Council response to individual comments during a consultation because of the number of people responding. There would be a response on the points made in the formal report but acknowledgement of individual responses to consultation was not something the Council would normally do.

Steve Cardno, Lead Principal Transport Planner, made the following comments in response to the deputation and members' questions:

- Thanked the deputy for attending the meeting and raising the issue and apologised for delays in responding to residents' correspondence.
- Highlighted that the lack of secure cycle parking was a key barrier to the take up of cycling in the borough and across London.
- As a result, there were ambitious targets to provide more bike hangers in the borough.

- Camden had over 430 bike hangars and 300 more were planned.
- Advised that the site was selected following consultation; there had been three direct requests from the same street for more hangars and 58 people on a waitinglist nearby.
- Officers focused on the midpoint of Dartmouth Park Avenue during site selection because the gradient was quite flat and midpoint made it more accessible to residents on other streets.
- The site was chosen based on engineering considerations such as pavement width, gradient, lighting, and avoiding manholes or private land.
- Other criteria used to select the site was where the street and pavement surface was free of obstruction, free of trees, where the pavement was at least 1.8 metres wide and provided sufficient space to open the hangar door and for people to get past. It also included looking at sites that were near lamp columns which enhanced visibility and security at night.
- It was noted that vegetation was in front of gardens of house numbers 24 and 26 which would act as visual screen.
- In relation to the sites proposed by the depute sites 1 and 2 were considered to be unsuitable because they were on a slope. Site 2 in particular was on a bend and sites 3 and 4 were on private land.
- The Resident Cycle Hangar Programme was for sites on the public highway.
- Of the 4 responses received from the public consultation, 2 were objections, 1 was supportive and 1 provided comments. These were carefully considered when the decision report was provided to the Chief Engineer.
- The proposal would only result in the loss of one parking bay.
- The Chief Engineer has already approved the hangar and it was due for installation late this year or early next year.
- Moving the hanger to a completely new location would require a new consultation and cause a 12-month delay.
- The alternative sites proposed by the depute would require new consultation, which would further delay implementation of much needed cycle hangar provision.
- Officers would, however, check if the hangar could be moved slightly left or right to help with access.
- They also suggested the resident may apply for a dedicated disabled parking bay if needed.
- This was something the Council was willing to consider.
- Officers committed to monitoring the location and adjusting if access issues arise.

A Committee member commented on weaknesses in the consultation process, noting residents lacked opportunities to suggest better sites before decisions. The Lead Transport Planner accepted that engagement could be improved but emphasised resource limitations.

Committee members requested that the officer meet with Dr Oswald to explore minor relocation options and report back.

The Chair thanked the depute for his deputation.

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 15th September 2025 be signed as an accurate record.

7. A NEW MET FOR LONDON - PHASE 2

Consideration was given to the New MET for London Police report and the annual report of the Cabinet Member for Safer Communities, items 7 and 8.

In attendance to answer questions were Chief Superintendent Jason Stewart (the new Borough Commander), Superintendent Matthew Cox (Responsible for leading Community Policing in Camden)

The Borough Commander (BC) and Superintendent Matt Cox introduced themselves informing the Committee that the BC had responsibility for Camden and Islington which made up Central North London, while Superintendent Cox was responsible for Neighbourhood Policing within Camden. They highlighted the strong partnership working with the Council and the progress on reducing neighbourhood crime in 8 of 11 neighbourhood crime key metrics despite the significant demands in London and the Country across the summer and over autumn. They noted that there had been a decrease in offending which they said was very positive.

They highlighted that there was the need to continue to deliver on these results despite the funding challenges they faced, with the Metropolitan Police expected to lose 1,700 officers and staff by April next year. This meant that the Police focus shape and design needed to be aligned with its performance priorities and within that a commitment to protect neighbourhood policing.

The Committee was informed that a key focus area for them was low public confidence in the Police in Camden. This was something Police colleagues were looking to improve as it did not reflect the hard and outstanding work that they saw

everyday across the partnership. Improving Police visibility and engagement was a priority.

Superintendent Cox commented that coming from a strong neighbourhoods' background he believed that was the core for solving local issues in and for the interests of local people. He was of the opinion that targeting and arresting more offenders particularly the more prolific offenders would have a significant impact on crime in the locality.

They said other key priorities included, trust and confidence, neighbourhood crime, violence against women and girls, retail crime, robbery, and reducing the stock of wanted offenders.

A Committee member congratulated the new Police team stating that this was the first period, and he had been a Ward Councillor for 11 years, that there had been an excellent local Sergeant and full Neighbourhood Police team in the ward, with crime overall falling in Bloomsbury Ward.

Committee members raised questions around:

- The high extraction of neighbourhood police to protests.
- Impacts of repeated protests on Bloomsbury and central Camden.
- How the police used private security (e.g., in Kings Cross) without shifting policing responsibility.
- Hate crime reporting and rising tensions, especially for Jewish and Muslim communities.
- Culture change following the Met misconduct scandals.
- Officer misconduct, recruitment and training.
- Retail crime on the Finchley Road, Camden Town and other hotspots.
- High turnover of sergeants in some wards.
- Safety after major incidents (e.g., stabbings, murders).
- Online far right and extremist content.

In response to members questions the Police and Council officers provided the following information.

- Abstractions for protests remained a challenge; efforts were underway to reduce impact and share demand across teams. This included getting help across all departments, not only neighbourhood teams.
- Public order planning now used stricter risk-based deployment which involved the use of more risk-based policing for protests, including earlier and stronger powers.
- Protests were managed more proactively with community impact assessments. before and during protest events.

- The Police opposed reliance on private policing but welcomed better data sharing working with partnerships, business improvement districts and Camden officers to avoid duplication.
- They were working closely with Camden's Community Safety team on all high-risk incidents. Rapid response teams removed hate graffiti swiftly (via Veolia). Close cooperation between police and council ASB teams was highlighted.
- Police response officers were being retrained on ASB powers to ensure consistency with Council patrol officers.
- The Camden Gardens murder response was cited as a model for joint reassurance work.
- The Committee commended the Community Safety Service for its robust on-call and rapid communication system following serious incidents.

In relation to hate crime and trust:

- Hate crime was up slightly (approx. 5%), around 500 offences year-to-date.
- Solved rate had doubled to 14.4%, though still low.
- Camden operated a weekly Tension Monitoring Group chaired by the Council.
- Police Hate crime investigations had improved since moving work to specialist teams.
- In relation to Police culture and professionalism particularly with reference to the Panorama exposé of Charing Cross police misconduct. The BC confirmed that there were no comparable issues in Camden–Islington and outlined training reforms, vetting, and a new Culture Board for staff accountability. He advised that the force was undergoing major culture and leadership training, with stronger vetting and misconduct action.
- More sergeants were now substantive, not acting, which should stabilise neighbourhood teams.
- Retail crime was a Country wide priority. Safer Neighbourhood Panel meetings were held in the Finchley Road area, the Police had not deprioritised any area and would look into deploying some of the tactics used elsewhere in this area.
- Cultural change work ongoing: leadership training, “upstander” training, culture board, and external scrutiny. Recruitment was improving diversity but

it was acknowledged that more work was needed on inclusion and behaviour standards.

- Counter-terrorism referrals for right-wing extremism had increased and were being monitored through counter-terrorism units
- The Police agreed to provide the Committee with Police misconduct and dismissal figures for Camden and Islington and to share local Prevent referral data with the committee.
- The Committee was informed that facial recognition vans were deployed in the area and councillors were invited to observe future operations.

The Committee thanked the Police for their openness, noted the report and supported continued partnership work.

Councillor Pat Callaghan (Cabinet Member for Safer Communities), Pat Coulson, Head of Community Safety and Enforcement and Oliver Jones, Director of Recreation and Public Safety made the following points in response to Committee members questions around:

- Accuracy of rough sleeping data.
- More support needed for women's safety.
- Better coordination with private housing providers.
- Slow process for rapid-deployment CCTV cameras and lack of clear updates.
- Impact of ASB linked to rough sleeping in central areas.
- Need for more resources to tackle hotspots.
- £700k government funding secured for prevention and support services.

The following information was provided in response:

- Community Safety managers were on call 24/7 for serious incidents.
- After major incidents, officers carried out reassurance visits, letters and joint patrols.
- Referrals between housing providers, police and Community Safety had strengthened.
- There was a universal ASB risk assessment tool used for all cases.
- High-risk ASB cases went to the Community MARAC (multi-agency panel).
- Registered social landlords could refer cases into Camden systems.
- Rough sleeping numbers were being reviewed as current figures may under-count.
- New statutory guidance now required automatic ASB case reviews after three reports within six months.
- Camden operated a monthly ASB Review Panel and high-risk MARAC for complex cases.

- The Council had a pilot partnership with Origin Housing who were providing funds for dedicated Council enforcement officers working on their estates to specifically deal with anti-social behaviour.
- There were consistent standards required for registered housing providers and they were held accountable through housing regulations.
- Use of a universal risk assessment tool factoring both frequency and resident impact.
- The need to improve the rapidity of deployable CCTV camera installations – currently slowed by evidential and data protection requirements.
- Officers confirmed Camden had 30 redeployable cameras boroughwide and would provide members with deployment lists.
- Officers reiterated Camden’s “compassion first” approach but acknowledged challenges in maintaining safety for residents.
- The £700k funding was for part prevention and part support for the Alcohol and Drug Service and not particularly for people who were rough sleeping on the public realm.

Members stressed the need for accurate rough sleepers data.

Officers advised that they would review the rough sleeping figures and share the CCTV location list.

Resolved:

To note the report.

8. ANNUAL REPORT OF THE CABINET MEMBER FOR SAFER COMMUNITIES

Please see item 7.

9. THE CULTURAL STRATEGY FOR CAMDEN 2026-2031 (SC/2025/49)

Consideration was given to the report of the Cabinet Member for Jobs, Young People and Culture.

In attendance to answer questions were Councillor Sabrina Francis (The Cabinet Member for Jobs, Young People and Culture) Zerritha Brown, (Head of Culture) Mike Candler, (Arts Development Manager) and Daniel Pope. (Director of Economy Regeneration and Investment)

Committee members raised questions around:

- How local residents can be more involved.
- If cultural groups can help reduce high ticket prices for children and low-income families.
- How the Council supports LGBTQ+ culture and events.
- Whether more can be done to decarbonise filming (e.g., reducing diesel generators).
- How resilient Camden's cultural sector is after Arts Council cuts.
- Use of libraries as community spaces and the high cost of out-of-hours access.

In response the Committee was informed that

- The Council worked with local artists, community groups and residents through networks and advisory groups.
- The culture team would explore with theatres and venues how they can improve access for residents, including affordable ticket pricing.
- Camden would host events for LGBTQ+ History Month and had commissioned a new artwork by an LGBTQ+ artist for the Grand Lobby, Town Hall
- The Generator Project had been running since 2021 and was a partnership between leading sustainability consultancy Sustainable Film and FilmFixer. The works had been conducted with Camden Councils Air Quality team via a Mayors Air Quality Fund funded project, carrying out Emissions Reports across major productions in Camden.
- Cultural organisations were struggling financially; collaboration between them was encouraged.
- Library access costs were mainly due to required security; a “trusted partner” model was being explored.

Members welcomed the strategy and asked for:

- More local events in areas with fewer cultural spaces.
- Stronger links with theatres for affordable access.

The Committee

Resolved: To note the report and support the strategy.

10. TREE PLANTING STRATEGY UPDATE

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

In attendance to answer questions were David Houghton, Tree Manager
Justin Hill, Interim Head of Leisure and Oliver Jones, Director of Recreation and Public Safety

The key points highlighted were that:

- Camden's canopy cover had increased from 22.9% (2016) to 24.6% (2024).

- There had been a focus on planting in areas with low canopy and high flood risk.
- Some challenges included finding space in areas such as Zone 1, due to climate change impacts.
- Trees were inspected every 3 years; species chosen to avoid pavement damage.

Committee members raised questions around:

- How planting was balanced with street lighting and safety.
- What powers the Council had over unsafe private trees.
- How well the service responded to fallen saplings.
- How climate change and extreme weather would affect tree management.
- Why some wards appeared to have low canopy even when residents felt it was greener.

In response the Committee was informed that

- Officers chose species that allowed light through where needed.
- Maintenance cycles would continue, with adjustments for climate stresses.
- Fallen young trees should be re-staked promptly; any delays would be followed up.
- Maps showed whole-area canopy cover, not only street trees, which may explain differences.

Members discussed climate resilience and tree management and were informed that this was part of the green infrastructure strategy noting that tree management had previously been discussed at the Committee.

Members extended their best wishes to Head of Leisure who was currently on maternity leave.

Resolved:

To note the report and supported ongoing work.

11. CULTURE AND ENVIRONMENT SCRUTINY COMMITTEE WORK PROGRAMME 2025/26 AND ACTION TRACKER

Consideration was given to the report of the Executive Director Investment Place and Opportunity.

Members discussed the work programme:

- TfL attendance confirmed for upcoming meeting in December a Committee member suggested that an invite be sent to the GLA Assembly Member to attend..
- CCTV strategy scheduled for March (or earlier if space allows).
- Thames Water invited to provide update on recent burst mains.
- Facial recognition van visits to be arranged for councillors.
- Thames Water would be asked for a note explaining a recent burst pipe.

The Committee wished Councillor Nina De Ayala Parker a happy birthday.

Resolved:

That the Work Programme be noted.

12. ANY OTHER BUSINESS THAT THE CHAIR CONSIDERS URGENT

There was none.

Having applied committee procedure rule 19(a) at 9.30pm the meeting ended at 9.47pm.

CHAIR

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MINUTES END