

THE LONDON BOROUGH OF CAMDEN

At a meeting of the **CULTURE AND ENVIRONMENT SCRUTINY COMMITTEE** held on **MONDAY, 23RD MARCH, 2026** at 6.30 pm in Camden Town Hall, Judd Street, London, WC1H 9JE

MEMBERS OF THE COMMITTEE PRESENT

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

MEMBERS OF THE COMMITTEE ABSENT

Councillors Nina De Ayala Parker

ALSO PRESENT

Councillors Adam Harrison (Cabinet Member for Planning and a Sustainable Camden) Councillor 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 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 Councillor Nina De Ayala Parker.

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 the Committee that he had agreed to accept 2 deputation requests in relation to the Call-in of the Fitzjohn's Avenue Area Safe and Healthy Streets and would be taken with that item.

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

There was none,

6. CALL IN- FITZJOHN'S AVENUE AREA SAFE AND HEALTHY STREETS

Consideration was given to the report of the Director of Environment and Sustainability.

Councillor Tom Simon attended the meeting to support the call-in. He outlined the reasons for calling in the decision made by the Cabinet Member for Planning and a Sustainable Camden on 26th February 2026, regarding the implementation of the Fitzjohn's Avenue Area Safe and Healthy Street Scheme along with the alternative course of action proposed within the call-in request.

He referred to the loss of St Mary's bus stop. Raising concerns about access and safety for children and older people, given the number of schools and the above-average concentration of older residents in the area. He conceded that the officer's analysis showed reduced walking distances for children coming from the northbound side to access southbound bus stops due to new crossings, and only marginally increased distances for children from southbound schools.

However, he questioned what the distances would have been if the southbound bus stop had been retained believing that they would have been even more favourable. A remaining concern was for residents approaching southbound bus stops from that side of the road, who would not benefit from the new crossings and would experience increased walking distances.

Bus stop design was highlighted as an ongoing concern across the borough. While the proposed designs for Fitzjohn's Avenue were considered better than those on Haverstock Hill, he urged that every opportunity be taken to refine and improve these designs further, ensuring they were at the cutting edge for floating island bus stops.

With regards to shared cycle and pedestrian pavements, Councillor Simon felt that the officer's response on this point was weaker. Noting that some shared spaces were not close to any side roads (e.g., on sheets 7, 8, 9, and 10 of the plans pages 161 -162 of the agenda), leading him to question their function beyond potentially encouraging cyclists onto pavements where they were not supposed to be. He argued these shared spaces needed careful re-examination and significant modification.

In relation to the narrowing of pavements outside 88 Fitzjohn's Avenue. He stated that this pavement was outside two schools and was already a busy space. The original proposal to reduce it from 3.4 metres to 1.9 metres was modified to 2 metres, but this still represented a 40-centimetre reduction. Councillor Simon highlighted that this area was cluttered and the current pavement was barely adequate for its purpose. He stressed the safety aspect, particularly for children accidentally stepping onto a busy road and the risk of cyclists having to swerve or collide with children. He argued this issue required more attention and a thorough analysis of options.

He clarified that the call-in was not against having northbound cycle lanes on Fitzjohn's Avenue, which was considered a good plan in principle, but rather aimed to address drawbacks that had not been properly considered.

Responding to questions from Members, Councillor Simon provided the following information:

- There were 3 wards that were affected in different ways, it was predominantly in Belsize Ward, it also covered the top part of Hampstead Town and a part of Frognal ward.
- There was an exchange of correspondence between the leader of the Liberal Democrats and Conservatives about the call-in and whether to have a joint call-in. However, in the end the Liberal Democrats decided that they were happy to call-in the decision on their own.
- There were four different points to the call-in, this scheme related mainly to Belsize Ward, however Councillors were not limited to making call-ins related to their own ward but what they thought was right for the whole borough.

The Committee also considered the deputations presented by John Chamberlain (Camden Cycling Campaign) and Alessandra Giuliani, (Green School Runs)

Committee members asked the following questions of the deputies:

- Whether bus stop redesigns affected air quality.
- How delays to implementing the scheme would impact children.
- How much local support or opposition existed.
- How similar schemes worked elsewhere.

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- Whether the needs of cyclists and pedestrians could be balanced near schools.

The deputees provided the following responses to the questions from the Committee:

- Delays harmed children's safety and independence.
- The scheme improved walking, scooting, and cycling.
- Most parents spoken to supported safer crossings and cleaner air.
- The detailed design stage would allow further safety improvements

Officers provided the following comments in response to the deputation and members questions:

- Whether changes at 88 Fitzjohn's Avenue in conjunction with the complex junction just north of it could be considered, given the needs of cyclists and the compromise between space for parents/children and road users. It was noted that the aim was to strike a balance. Cutting the cycle lane short would create a difficult transition for cyclists into the general carriageway, posing its own road safety considerations. Officers remarked that the Council was committed to carefully reviewing this during detailed design, which would include statutory consultation on revised designs and looking at decluttering. The balance sought was to continue the cycle lane up to the junction while creating the best possible environment on the other side of the road.
- With regards to shared-use pavements, these were only needed near side roads or crossings. They helped cyclists, including children, move safely from side roads to the main cycle lane.
- With regards to the pavement width outside 88 Fitzjohn's Avenue, the pavement width had already been increased from 1.9m to 2.0m after consultation. It widened further to about 2.3m near the junction. More refinements would be made during detailed design and safety audits.
- In relation to bus stop designs, these followed current national and Transport for London (TfL) guidance. A Road Safety Audit found no major safety problems. Detailed design and another safety audit would happen before construction
- In relation to projections for air quality improvements and increased cyclist numbers. While specific numbers could not be committed to, monitoring of similar schemes across the borough, particularly since COVID, had shown significant improvements in air quality. The Council used capacity sensors in the area which counted cyclists, and an air quality sensor on Fitzjohn's Avenue would carefully track and monitor changes. Officers saw no reason why this scheme would not follow similar positive trajectories.

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- With regards to school coach parking, it was clarified that not all parking had been removed. Two coach bays remained and could still be used for school drop-offs. Single and double yellow lines along Fitzjohn's Avenue would also be available. Yellow lines elsewhere allowed short-term stopping if needed.
- In relation mature trees along the road and how these trees would be protected from disturbance during construction. It was explained that the scheme had been in conception since the 2019 Camden Transport Strategy. The design included build-outs (visible on page 163 of the plans) to accommodate these mature trees. During detailed design, officers would work closely with tree officer colleagues to ensure the trees were protected,
- In relation to the Tesco pinch point, the current situation led to gridlock, idling engines, and poor air quality, particularly exacerbated at school times. Officers confirmed that this was a specific pinch point and the proposed measures would address it, unlocking that section of the high street, removing congestion, and improving air quality.
- It was clarified that the current layout blocked buses because cars parked opposite the bay would not allow the buses to pass. The proposal involved removing two parking bays opposite the Tesco loading bay which would provide enough room for two buses to pass, improving air quality by reducing idling, thus resolving the pinch point.

Committee Members then debated the possible action to be taken making the following comments:

- A Committee member expressed opposition to dithering and delay, stating that action was needed now for children's safety and cleaner air. The member supported the scheme, noting the extensive work already undertaken.
- Another Committee member thanked officers for their written material and responses, noting that many concerns raised would be addressed during detailed design. They hoped that the Committee would support safe designs for cyclists at bus stops. They remained concerned about the pavement narrowing outside the two schools proposing recommending to the Cabinet Member that the left half of map 9 be considered separately for future work, while confirming the decision for all other parts of the scheme. This aligned with Option B.
- Another Committee member emphasised the importance of time, noting the scheme's conception in 2019 and the iterative work and changes already made in response to consultations. They felt this discredited the idea that Council decisions were a "fait accompli." They believed the scheme worked together as a whole to improve the walkability and flexibility of Fitzjohn's Avenue, and taking a chunk out would undermine this. They also highlighted

that encouraging safe cycling from an early age was important, and delaying the scheme would not help with this education. They supported Option A.

- Another Committee member stated that they had spoken to many residents and groups who felt they had not received sufficient answers from Camden. Suggesting that a meeting would be welcome, regardless of the decision, to specifically address the points raised, particularly those in a letter sent to the Cabinet Member. This aligned with Option D.
- Another Committee member indicated that they supported Option A, thanking the deputees for their insights. They expressed frustration at what they perceived as dithering and delays for political reasons, stating that councillors were elected to improve residents' lives, make the borough safer, greener, and cleaner. The Committee member praised the officers' work and believed the scheme would benefit drivers, cyclists, and pedestrians, encouraging greater uptake of cycling from a younger age.
- Another Committee member stated that the Council should prioritise the fundamental right of local children and families to a safe commute in cleaner air and encourage active travel. They supported Option A.

The Chair noted that the majority of Committee Members wished to approve the original decision with 5 opting for option A (the original decision), 1 member opting for option B (recommending a different decision, which does not accord with the original decision of the decision maker) and 1 member opting for option d (decide to look at the decision in more depth).

The Cabinet Member for Planning and a Sustainable Camden commented that school runs was a huge issue in Hampstead and the Council would continue to consider schemes for the future.

On the basis that the majority of the Committee was in support of the original decision, it was

RESOLVED –

THAT the original decision of the Cabinet Member for Planning and a Sustainable Camden be approved.

7. ANY OTHER BUSINESS THAT THE CHAIR CONSIDERS URGENT

The Chair informed everyone that this was his last meeting as he was standing down at the next election, thanking officers and members for their support over the 14 years he had chaired the Committee.

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Members of the minority groups thanked the chair for allowing them to voice their views during his term as chair and wished him all the best for the future.

The meeting ended at 8.15 pm.

CHAIR

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MINUTES END