

THE LONDON BOROUGH OF CAMDEN

At an informal meeting of the **RESOURCES AND CORPORATE PERFORMANCE SCRUTINY COMMITTEE** held on **MONDAY, 12TH DECEMBER, 2022** at 6.30 pm in Remote informal meeting via Microsoft Teams. The meeting can be watched live at www.camden.gov.uk/webcast

MEMBERS OF THE COMMITTEE PRESENT

Councillors Chung (Chair), Edmund Frondigoun, Liam Martin-Lane, Andrew Parkinson and Jonathan Simpson

MEMBERS OF THE COMMITTEE ABSENT

Councillors Rebecca Filer, Will Prince and James Slater

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 Resources and Corporate Performance Scrutiny Committee and any corrections approved at that meeting will be recorded in those minutes.

MINUTES

2. APOLOGIES

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors James Slater and Will Prince.

3. 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.

4. ANNOUNCEMENTS

Broadcast of the meeting

The Chair announced that the meeting was being broadcast live by the Council to the Internet and could be viewed on the website for twelve months after the meeting. After that time, webcasts were archived and could be made available upon request. Those who had asked to address the meeting were deemed to be consenting to having their contributions recorded and broadcast and to the use of those sound recordings and images for webcasting and/or training purposes.

Item 9: Annual Report of the Cabinet Member for Finance and Cost of Living

The Cabinet Member for Finance and Cost of Living had given apologies and was unable to attend the meeting. In light of this, the Chair asked that it be agreed to defer Item 9 to the next meeting so that the Cabinet member could be present to answer questions.

6. DEPUTATIONS (IF ANY)

There were no deputations.

7. COUNCIL TAX SUPPORT 2023/24

Consideration was given to the report of the Cabinet Member for Finance and Cost of Living. The report was introduced by the Director of Customer services and the Head of Council Tax, Business Rates and Benefits.

In their consideration of the report, Members asked for a breakdown of the council tax reduction figures by ward. The Head of Council Tax, Business Rates and Benefits agreed to circulate this information to Members.

Action by: The Head of Council Tax, Business Rates and Benefits

RESOLVED –

THAT the report be noted

8. LONDON BOROUGH OF CAMDEN ANNUAL COMPLAINTS REPORT 2021/2022

Consideration was given to the report of the Borough Solicitor who, along with the Service Manager – Business Support, introduced the report.

Members commented that there had been an increase in complaints around the quality of service and asked whether this was mainly housing related complaints. The Service Manager – Business Support, said that generally, most complaints fell under the same handful of categories. Quality was one area of these high complaint categories, though it did vary year to year. Most of these complaints were around housing repairs and property management.

The Head of Property Customer Services and Engagement, responded to Members that there had been a 40% increase in repairs requests so the increase in complaints was proportional. They went on to break down the main reasons behind complaints was repairs work taking multiple visits to fix an issue. The repairs team was in

conversation with contractors to help them understand the frustration felt by residents and seek an improvement. The number of visits and time taken to complete a repair is getting better, based on the number of repairs carried out, but there were still areas that needed improving.

A Member asked what work was being carried out to improve systems where there were multiple elements to a complaint or members enquiry that involved more than one team. The Service Manager – Business Support said that it would be too logistically difficult to split a complaint into the individual components for a response which is why in these instances there is a lead service who take responsibility for liaising with different departments and responding to the resident.

Members discussed the automated responses with the use of no-reply emails. Residents found the system difficult to navigate as there was no contact information provided to follow up their complaint or query. The Service Manager – Business Support responded that they were having conversations with colleagues in IT and system developers. The intention was for contact details of a named officer to be sent out with the reply email, however, some of the reply messages had not been clear about who the resident would need to contact. IT were looking into making the necessary improvements to the system. The Service Manager – Business Support agreed to provide information around the IT process of no-reply emails being sent to residents.

Action by: Service Manager – Business Support

In response to a member question on the increase in Stage 2 complaints being upheld, the Service Manager – Business Support said that Camden were investigating the cause of this. There had been more Stage 1 complaints and proportionally more Stage 2, however they needed to understand whether the increase in upheld Stage 2 complaints was due to complaints not adequately being handled at Stage 1.

Members were interested in the ambition for Tenancy Management to carry out a home visit to every single tenant and whether this was achievable. The Head of Landlord Services responded that this was an achievable goal and that there were over 60 members of staff that would be carrying out the visits.

The Borough Solicitor commented that the increase in the number of complaints could be attributed to the process of encouraging resident feedback. A Member said that whilst this was the case, it was important that systems, such as the email responses, were working as they should.

In response to questions about the repairs service, the Head of Property Customer Services and Engagement gave the following key responses:

- Residents were contacted about their experience with the repairs service and contractor, any negative feedback about contractors would be raised by Contract Managers to seek improvement.

- Reporting complaints was easy and accessible with a variety of options for those who could not use email, for example phone and text service.

The Director of Customer Service commented that Contact Centre staff received ongoing training throughout the year. Camden were moving towards developing culture of conversations, moving away from transactional contacts.

Members discussed Member enquiries and how best review the data around them. The Borough Solicitor agreed to send an email to all members about logging Member Enquiries in the proper way, to allow data on them to be captured.

Action by: the Borough Solicitor

The Head of Member Support reinforced the importance of logging member enquiries using the correct system. They recommended that Members utilise their support officers to log enquiries.

RESOLVED –

THAT the report be noted

9. ANNUAL REPORT OF THE CABINET MEMBER FOR FINANCE AND COST OF LIVING

RESOLVED -

THAT the report be deferred to the next meeting of the Committee.

10. WORK PROGRAMME 2022/23 AND ACTION TRACKER

RESOLVED -

THAT the report be noted.

11. ANY OTHER BUSINESS THAT THE CHAIR CONSIDERS URGENT

There was no such business.

The meeting ended at 8.00 pm.

CHAIR

Resources and Corporate Performance Scrutiny Committee - Monday, 12th December, 2022

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MINUTES END