

THE LONDON BOROUGH OF CAMDEN

At a meeting of the **RESOURCES AND CORPORATE PERFORMANCE SCRUTINY COMMITTEE** held on **TUESDAY, 14TH NOVEMBER, 2023** at 6.30 pm in Committee Room 2, Town Hall, Judd Street, London WC1H 9JE

MEMBERS OF THE COMMITTEE PRESENT

Councillors Chung (Chair), Rebecca Filer, Edmund Frondigoun, Liam Martin-Lane, Jenny Mulholland, Andrew Parkinson, Jonathan Simpson 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

1. APOLOGIES

There were no apologies.

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

With reference to item 7, Councillor Frondigoun declared that he worked for a company that held a license as a non-domestic electricity supplier. He said that as the information being discussed was not commercially sensitive and so his job role would have no bearing on what would be discussed.

3. 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.

4. DEPUTATIONS (IF ANY)

There were no deputations.

**5. NOTIFICATION OF ANY ITEMS OF BUSINESS THAT THE CHAIR
CONSIDERS URGENT**

There was no such business.

6. MINUTES

RESOLVED –

THAT the minutes of the meetings held on 12 September 2023 be agreed.

7. RISK DEEP-DIVE – ENERGY PROCUREMENT

Consideration was given to the report of the Executive Director Supporting Communities. The report was introduced by the Head of Sustainability, Air Quality and Energy and the Director of Energy and Carbon, LASER.

Members asked about estate regeneration projects and whether there was scope to install solar panels on roofs. The Head of Sustainability, Air Quality and Energy said that Camden had a requirement for all new builds to be zero carbon with requirements for renewable energy. He explained that installing solar panels on existing housing roofs was financially challenging because the power generated could only be used to offset demands on the communal supplies rather than individual dwellings, with the majority of the power exported to the national grid at low rates.

RESOLVED –

THAT the report be noted.

**8. TREASURY MANAGEMENT ANNUAL REPORT AND MID-YEAR
STRATEGY**

Consideration was given to the report of the Cabinet Member for Finance and Cost of Living, the report was introduced by the Head of Treasury and Financial Services.

RESOLVED –

THAT the report be noted.

9. AN UPDATE ON WORK BEING UNDERTAKEN TO IMPROVE CAMDEN.GOV.UK

Consideration was given to the report of the Chief Experience and Information Officer and the Executive Director Corporate Services. After an introduction by the Chief Experience and Information Officer and the Head of Digital Product, the Committee discussed the report.

Members commented that would like to see democracy featured prominently on the updated website, this not only helps created a transparency of governance but also reassured residents that there were people who could be contacted if they had issues. The Head of Digital Product said that the team was looking to address the best way of making the democracy pages clear to people, there would be a footer on each page to allow navigation and search engine indexing was being investigated.

Members asked if resources were being given to search engine optimisation. The Head of Digital Product responded that the current focus was the design of the web pages, by looking at design areas such as headings search engine optimisation would improve.

In response to a member question around content and ensuring it remains updated, the Head of Digital Product explained the content model, that it would be handled by a centralised content team that would result in high quality content with less duplication.

The Committee were interested in how the digital team would work with the communications team, sign posting and performance tracking. The Head of Digital Product said that website traffic is tracked from different campaigns and channels but that there was room for improvement. The digital team regularly tested with residents from different groups and areas to ensure that the website and organisation of content was easily navigable.

The Chief Experience and Information Officer responded to member questions about the organisational learning around the principles of engaging and communicating with residents to create a website that they can use. He said that a piece of work was being carried out to work out how to take the best practice and share with the wider organisation.

The Head of Digital Product said that the new website would be launched in December at the earliest but commented that the launch date may be moved to the new year if necessary.

RESOLVED –

THAT the report be noted.

10. HR ANNUAL REPORT 2023

Consideration was given to the report of the Director of People and Inclusion, who introduced the report.

In their discussion of the report the Committee made the following comments:

- Members were pleased that Camden were remaining part of the Stonewall Workforce Equality Index.
- The Committee were interested in the impact of cost of living on the workforce and any potential correlations with staff having to move further afield due to the rental market. The Director of People and Inclusion said that Camden were just starting to gather data around this, she said that whilst the workforce were still relatively local to work, they were not necessarily living within Camden. The Director agreed to build data into a follow up report that mapped where staff lived against grade and tenure.

Action by: the Director of People and Inclusion

- In response to a member comment prising Camden's work giving internships to care leavers, The director of People and Inclusion said that the care experienced people within teams was a huge asset.
- Members asked about hybrid and flexible working options and whether there was a correlation with living distance from work and the options utilised. The Director of People and Inclusion discussed the benefits of having remote working options within the current environment of cost of living increases. Hybrid working could allow staff to save money on commuting, for which prices were increasing, and allow flexibility for childcare. She said that the switch to hybrid working had been managed in a way that kept citizens and a connection to the Camden community as a priority. The Director said that Camden had continued to make the workplace a place where people want to come, the success of this could be seen in the numbers of staff choosing to work from the office being at a higher level than the minimum required.
- Responding to a question from the Committee, the Director of people and Inclusion answered that agency staff could be a sensible and appropriate resourcing model in certain situations and that it mainly became an issue if people were kept on temporary contracts for extended periods of time. Camden's use of agency workers usually benchmarked well against other authorities.
- The Director of People and Inclusion said that the employee assistance programme was open to councillors and households as well as employees. She said that Camden recognised an even higher level of provision was needed around trauma support, this became more clear with the emergence of the recent incidents in Israel and Palestine. The Director of People and Inclusion agreed to circulate information of the employee assistance programme to members of the Committee.

• Action by: the Director of People and Inclusion

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November, 2023*

RESOLVED –

THAT the report be noted.

11. WORK PROGRAMME 2023/24 AND ACTION TRACKER

RESOLVED –

THAT the work programme be noted.

12. ANY OTHER BUSINESS THAT THE CHAIR CONSIDERS URGENT

There was no such business.

The meeting ended at 8.00 pm.

CHAIR

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MINUTES END