

THE LONDON BOROUGH OF CAMDEN

At a meeting of the **CULTURE AND ENVIRONMENT SCRUTINY COMMITTEE** held on **THURSDAY, 14TH DECEMBER, 2023** 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 and Rishi Madlani

MEMBERS OF THE COMMITTEE ABSENT

Councillors Camron Aref-Adib, Izzy Lenga and Stephen Stark

ALSO PRESENT

Councillors Linda Chung(remote attendance) Adam Harrison (Cabinet Member for a Sustainable Camden) Lorraine Revah (remote attendance) Nadia Shah (Cabinet Member for Voluntary Sector, Equalities and Cohesion) and Nanouche Umeadi (remote attendance).

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 Camron Aref-Adib, Izzy Lenga and Stephen Stark.

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)

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 Sam Ebner-Landy and was about providing plant-based catering at council events; and

The second deputation was from Ben Pearson of the Save London Motorcycling Group regarding the Council's policies towards motorcyclists in the borough.

Plant Based Catering at Council events.

The deputation was presented by:

- Sam Ebner-Landy

The following responses were given by the deputees to Members questions:

- In terms of the cost implications of the Council switching to Plant based catering, the Cambridge City example indicated that there was no difference in terms of the cost and impact on the budget, it however had a massive climate impact.
- It was a powerful way of showing people that it was something that could be done in their own home, providing sustainable environmentally friendly food.
- It was being approached from the environmental angle rather than an ethical angle because in terms of the environment it could create drastic change as seen with other Councils around the UK. There was an absolute commitment to plant-based foods in total while still providing people with the choice to bring their own food which would have a powerful effect.
- It was important to be aware of where all nutrients consumed in all diets came from. There should be education about whatever diet you had.
- Introducing plant-based food in schools involved a lot of overly complicated issues which would need to be pitched correctly and need to address issues in terms of the cost-of-living crisis and what people could afford.
- Some of the supermarket staples which were often plant based could help to feed a lot of people at a relatively small cost.
- Camden was one of the richest Councils, also situated in London where there were so many vegan options readily available. It had the ability to lead the way in what was being provided showcasing excellent plant-based food to residents.
- It would be a good idea when events occurred in Camden to work with the Events Team to show everyone that came to Camden to show case what could be done in homes in relation to plant-based food highlighting the impact this would have on climate action.

In response, Richard Bradbury (Director of Environment and Sustainability), made the following comments:

- Camden Food Mission was working to ensure that by 2030, everyone ate well every day with nutritious, affordable, sustainable food outcomes.

- So that residents were food secure and did not need to access crisis food provision and food was a foundation of children's and young people's flourishing lives.
- Camden's food system contributed to tackling the climate crisis and enabled residents to have healthy and balanced diet.
- The mission, included running public awareness campaigns to encourage more climate friendly diets, including the recent Camden and Re London eat like a Londoner, a campaign which was now live in bus stops and social media, and specifically took planet friendly meals to its heart.
- In terms of food procurement Camden Food Mission sought to ensure that food secured by the Council promoted the provision of sustainable and healthy food.
- With regards to the Camden event service, currently the service worked on a 50% provision of meat free options with vegan and gluten free options which were included in this menu.
- They concentrated on only meat being chicken, which had to be halal. There were some fish and prawn options with an assortment of mixed bread and sandwiches. They always provided fresh fruits.
- On the point made about buying catering through the events team and putting on an event, various caterers could be used. You could bring in your own caterer if that were what you were looking for.
- When an event was being run in Camden, the Council did have a specific caterer. If the request were for the Council to cater for a fully plant based or meat free event or that was what you wanted that could be arranged. So, there was a broad range available.
- The Camden food buying standards, built on this work and emerged as a priority through the food mission. Developing a set of standards would give Camden the opportunity to take a food systems approach to the food purchased by the Council.
- The Council could positively influence changes across health, environment, social and economic domains. Ensuring that food was nutritious, supported a healthy weight and was environmentally sustainable, taking into consideration how food was produced, processed and transported.
- Minimised waste in terms of food waste and packaging, supported ethical systems like fair trade promoted local food production and investment in local small medium sized enterprises and the wider Camden economy. So, it was appropriate for the main target group for any particular setting.
- The Council was currently forming these proposed standards around the Soils Associations Food for Life, silver standards, and as these had been shown to be fit for purpose in their use by many other boroughs, the Council would adapt them according to the consultation that was taking place in the coming months, along with examples of good practice.
- The consultative group was being set up, working in all areas of the Council that purchased foods for schools, internal meetings, events, holiday activities, 5, St Pancras Cafe and other venues like Libraries, Leisure Centres and Parks.

Culture and Environment Scrutiny Committee - Thursday, 14th December, 2023

- The standards that the Council worked with and would develop further while working with the consultative group would aim to have draft proposals in place by around early February.
- Specifically for the deputation that was being discussed today currently the Camden standards would be aiming towards a 50% plant-based target and from a population health and nutrition perspective, the standards set could significantly reduce the amount of meat being consumed.
- Alongside such a change, it was important to focus on optimizing nutrition, including reducing levels of food high in fat, sugar and salt, as well as levels of ultra processed food that has already been discussed.
- So, getting the balance right on these issues was critical for population health, environment and wellbeing.
- There was an opportunity for the Council to develop the conversation that had occurred today around the Camden food buying standards which in early 2024 would be developed by the organization.

The Director of Environment and Sustainability provided the following information in response to Committee members questions:

- The working aim of the food buying standards was towards a 50% plant-based target on all food bought by the Council which was broader than the focus of the deputation.
- It was about the full buying capacity of the Council around food.
- The Council did not do a lot of catering for internal meetings and the Council's event service was broadly an income-based service.
- People that hired the Council's venues for events could bring in their own caterers which from an Events Management perspective eroded the leverage the Council might have.

The Cabinet Member for a Sustainable Camden invited to comment on the deputation remarked that there had been a discussion at full Council about the opt out in schools for meat free Mondays, noting that most schools in the borough had decided to do meat free Mondays which he felt had been a success. He felt that the recommendation of a trial period was a good suggestion, alongside all the other work the Council was doing on food security and standards.

Committee members made the following comments:

- It would not be a good idea for the Council to lose revenue from holding events particularly at the time of a cost-of-living crisis, it made sense for the Council to do things which were in its control and for officers to look at those aspects which were in the Council's control.
- The Council needed to do more particularly as there was a climate crisis which was only going to get worse. Camden was good at leading the way and it would be good if the Council could support plant-based food catering at all internal events which could be conducted on a trial basis which would hopefully show that it was doable.

- There were lots of different settings and variables, including commercial aspects, given that there was very little catering done for Camden internal meetings, these were hardly the global changes being sought and it was doubtful whether this really had any impact or meaning but happy to support this for internal meetings on a gesture basis.

The Committee were generally supportive of the idea of using plant-based catering for Council internal meetings and the aspiration going forward of the Council carrying this out on a trial basis. Members requested a report back from officers exploring the feasibility and implications of these recommendations for the Council and Camden schools.

RESOLVED

That officers provide a report back on the implications of using plant-based food for all Camden internal catering events before recommendations are made to Cabinet.

Action By: Director of Environment and Sustainability

Save London Motor Cycling

The deputation was presented by:

- Ben Pearson accompanied by Rachel Mawby

The following responses were given by the deputies to Members questions:

- The reason for asserting that the Council was anti motor cyclist was because the response from the Council to complaints about noise and anti-social behaviour was disproportionate for motorcyclists. For example, a complaint from one individual about pollution and noise resulted in the targeting of only motorcycle parking while car parking was left untouched.
- The justification from the Council for taking out motorcycling bays was that complaints had been received from residents over a number of years and putting in greening was an additional benefit.
- With regards to harassment of the motorcyclist, the person concerned was not comfortable contacting the Police.
- The issue of harassment of the motorcyclist had been raised with the Council, which appeared not to have taken any steps to address this. If any other road user had raised this the response would have been different.
- From the evidence provided in response to the Freedom of Information (FOI) request it appeared that no monitoring was undertaken. The information obtained from the FOI could be shared with ward Councillors.
- In agreement with a member's comment, it was noted that motorcyclists were grouped with motor vehicles in Camden's Transport Strategy at the bottom of the transport hierarchy. The mindset that motorcycles were indistinguishable

from cars was what essentially underpinned the Council's policy decisions and where recent parking proposals had come from.

- It was irrational under the new proposals that electric motorcycles and electric mopeds would pay the same charges as electric cars. There was no way this could be defended from a carbon or environmental impact.
- The evidence was extremely clear that allowing motorcyclists to use bus lanes would not pose a safety risk to cyclists. Around London it was becoming the norm to allow motorcyclists to use bus lanes.
- Another implication of the new parking charge proposals was that a resident who had a small scooter and a car would need to choose between the different modes of transport. So, the policy which was aimed at reducing emissions could result in increased car use.
- Allowing motorcyclists into bus lanes was probably the single biggest intervention that could be taken to improve motorcycle safety which was also part of the net zero vision.
- The issue being raised was that the policy framework in which the officers were operating would not move forward without the political will to deal with the issues.

In response, Richard Bradbury (Director of Environment and Sustainability), made the following comments:

- As already highlighted Camden's Transport Strategy was scheduled to be considered by the Committee at the meeting in February and a fuller response would be provided to the deputation then as well as a number of points raised by the Committee.
- The Committee had discussed Flaxman Terrace, there were currently 377 motorcycling bays in Camden of which the highest concentration was located in the southern area of the borough where Flaxman Terrace was situated.
- The removal of two motorcycle bays in Flaxman Terrace was a public decision made following public consultation with a report on the Council's website.
- There was a 50/50 split in terms of removal and non-removal of the bays which considered views of residents and businesses as well as the underutilisation of motorcycle bays in nearby areas on Burton and Duke Roads.
- There was a recognition by the Council of the disappointment of motorcycle groups on the decision, officers had developed good engagement and dialogue with the motor cycling groups in the borough.
- Camden's established policy of not allowing two wheel powered vehicles in bus lanes had long been established since 2008 and was consistent with a number of other boroughs.
- Camden shared borough boundaries with many other boroughs including Westminster, Hackney, Haringey and Barnet, there had been contradictory information and some difficulty in establishing the impact on the casual rate or safety of cyclists in bus lanes when used by motorcyclists. Evidence did however show that motorcyclists speed increased by 10 miles an hour when

using the bus lane and the Council's view was that this increased the risk for vulnerable users such as pedestrians and cyclists when using bus lanes as a buffer from the main traffic flow.

Committee members were of the view that it would be a good idea to see the Council's updated Transport Strategy as well as the deputation response being picked up in the wider context of the strategy at the February meeting. A Committee member also requested that as part of the response consideration be given to why an individual could only register one vehicle whereas there were categories of people in the borough who had a good reason to have two different types of vehicle or modes of transport.

The Committee thanked all the deputees for attending and for their deputations.

RESOLVED –

THAT

The response to the motorcycle deputation be included as part of the wider context of the Transport Strategy update report to the Committee in February.

Action By: Director of Environment and Sustainability / Head of Transport Strategy and Projects

4. 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.

A member announced that Councillor Francis, The Cabinet Member for Young People and Culture had sent an email round to all Councillors advising of the Love Camden website which provided a link to all Camden's cultural events in the borough.

A member also highlighted that there appeared to be an issue with Royal mail delivering post in some areas of the borough which could become a bigger issue.

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

There was none.

6. MINUTES

RESOLVED –

THAT the minutes of the meeting held on 13th November 2023 be signed as an accurate record.

7. ANNUAL REPORT OF THE CABINET MEMBER FOR VOLUNTARY SECTOR EQUALITIES AND COHESION 2022/23

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

Members made the following comments:

- The Council did a lot of good work in supporting and working with the Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, Queer and Intersex (LGBTQI +) community and it was disappointing that the LGBTQI+ community was not specifically mentioned in the report. It would be helpful if the work the Council was doing to support this community could specifically be mentioned in future reports.
- There was a lot of good work in the report.

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

- With regards to the LGBT community recognition that, hate crime was under reported. Work was being done with the Police to see how reporting of all hate crime to the police could be made easier for all communities.
- There was work ongoing with the Council's Community Safety team in partnership with the Police and other partners in the borough to encourage reporting of these type of crimes so more resources could be targeted towards this.
- The Community Safety Partnership Team in conjunction with the Police was also working on building trust and confidence among the community in Camden, so members of all Communities in the borough could have confidence in reporting crimes to the police.
- The Council was raising awareness of issues through training of staff and members, guest speakers had been invited to speak highlighting challenges faced by members of the LGBT+ community and seeking advice from LGBT+ champions on what more could be done to provide support to the diverse groups in the community.

- Special days, historical occasions and events such as Trans day and Pride had been celebrated in the borough. This had brought awareness to the wider Camden Community.
- The Council was known to be a welcoming borough on diversity issues, recognising that there was still a lot more work to be done, it aimed to be a lead on diversity issues in London and eventually the country.
- In terms of the absence of an Ice Rink in Camden, Islington's press material illustrated that a large subsidy was required to maintain an ice rink. Any addition of service required a business model to make it work. The Council already had subsidised activities at its leisure centres with an active business model required to make it work. Adding more subsidised activity would make it a very challenging business environment.
- There was a hierarchy of need with a multitude of sports considered that the Council was required to respond to. There was an ice rink at Alexandra Palace in Haringey.
- Lee Valley consisted of multi rink provision which London Boroughs contributed to and was a space where all Londoners could go.
- With regards to the rents across all the Community Centres, there was a big mix of different leases. The Council was going through a difficult and arduous process of sorting out the different rents and leases of each organisation and property was being looked at on a case-by-case basis which would take some time to sort out.
- In terms of supporting Voluntary organisations, after Covid, organisations were granted an 18-month funding extension period to assist them with getting back on their feet. The Council was also ensuring that it had an open clear and fair process which allowed all Voluntary organisations in the borough to have fair access to funding. Camden was one of the London boroughs that invested most in its Voluntary Sector.
- The Council's Community Partnership team was not that big, however as Cabinet Member the intention had been to visit those organisations that were not on the radar but quietly got on with things. Other members and ward councillors also highlighted a number of organisations, these organisations were reached out to and their needs considered. The Council looked to give the best support possible wherever possible to the organisations in the sector.
- As Co-Chair of the interfaith forum, with Councillor Flier, it had been a very challenging time particularly due to the crisis in the Middle East with people hurting in the communities. Both co-chairs had been going out into the community meeting with community leaders. Local MPs and talking within local community settings and 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.
- It had also been realised that reporting systems and reporting structures particularly for the Muslim community was under resourced. This was now being looked into.
- In terms of the initial response to the crisis in the middle east, the strategy was to consult with representatives of the community who provided feedback on what was being said. A whole programme of events was carried out

celebrating the diversity of both the Jewish and Muslim communities as well as recognition of special days for all faiths. There had been a lot of work put into this.

- There had also been deep discussions around schools because this issue had come up on a number of occasions. What further support could be provided to teachers and parents was being looked at.
- In terms of addressing the concerns of disabled members of the community, the Council had the Disability Oversight Panel, chaired by Councillor Revah. The views of the Panel were taken on board before a decision was made on a policy. The Disability Oversight Panel was specifically set up for disabled members of the community to have a voice. They choose the agenda and officers provided support.

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.

8. INSIGHT, LEARNING AND IMPACT REPORT QUARTER 2 2023-24

Consideration was given to the report of the Executive Directors of Adults and Health, Children and Learning, Supporting Communities and Corporate Services.

In response to a question about Regeneration and Planning and for more information on how artificial intelligence (AI) and machine learning would be used, the Director of Recreation advised that he would request further clarification from colleagues in Planning and report back to the Committee.

ACTION: Director of Recreation

A member highlighted how difficult it was to forward plan services for a borough the size of Camden given financial constraints and the limited period for which financial payments were received from central government.

RESOLVED –

THAT the report, including the most recent data and trends and the emerging challenges identified, that relate to the services that fall within the Committee's remit, be noted.

9. WORK PROGRAMME

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

The Chair apologised to members commenting that the agenda items for this meeting had not been what had been agreed at the last meeting. He noted that a few items had been moved around because this meeting had fallen a week before Christmas and he felt that there would not be a huge turn out to consider the dockless bike item which had therefore been deferred to January 2024.

There were however quite a few items on the work programme for January and there might be a need to further shift some items around including considering an additional meeting between the meeting on January 22nd, 2024, and 26th February 2024.

Action By Principal Committee Officer

Members discussed the work programme and suggested that items on the Committee's Work Programme should be moved around.

For the January 2024 meeting the following items were expected

- Annual Report of the Cabinet Member for New Homes, Jobs and Community Investment
- Thames Water
- Dockless Bike Hire Update – Lime and Human Forest to be invited.
- The Use of Pesticides should be moved from January 2024 to the extra meeting to be scheduled in February 2024

For the February 2024 meeting the following items were expected

- Report from the Cabinet Adviser on Safety for Women and Girls -Cllr Djemai
- Violence against Women and Girls Update moved from January 2024 - February 2024
- Climate Action Plan Annual Review including Climate Resilience Plan
- Transport Strategy Delivery update

Items moved to the Spring.

The Met Police Turnaround Plan

Facial Recognition - Police.

Night-time Economy Strategy

NLWA Joint Waste Strategy – (The Director of Environment and Sustainability to confirm with NLWA if this was possible in December

Response of the Cabinet Member for a Sustainable Camden to the Circular Economy Panel Recommendations. - to be moved to a later date.

RESOLVED –

THAT the above changes to the Work Programme be agreed.

ACTION BY: Senior Policy and Strategy Officer / Principal Committee Officer

10. ANY OTHER BUSINESS THAT THE CHAIR CONSIDERS URGENT

There was none.

The meeting ended at 8.49 pm.

CHAIR

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MINUTES END