

THE LONDON BOROUGH OF CAMDEN

At a meeting of the **CULTURE AND ENVIRONMENT SCRUTINY COMMITTEE** held on **MONDAY, 26TH FEBRUARY, 2024** at 6.30 pm in Committee Room 1, Town Hall, Judd Street, London WC1H 9JE

MEMBERS OF THE COMMITTEE PRESENT

Councillors Awale Olad (Chair), Camron Aref-Adib, Nina De Ayala Parker, Sharon Hardwick, Matthew Kirk, Izzy Lenga, Rishi Madlani and Stephen Stark

MEMBERS OF THE COMMITTEE ABSENT

None.

ALSO PRESENT

Councillors Danny Beales (Cabinet Member for New Homes, Jobs and Investment), Pat Callaghan (Cabinet Member for Safer Communities), Richard Cotton, Nasrine Djemai (Cabinet Adviser on Safety for Women and Girls), Gio Spinella and Sue Vincent.

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

There were none.

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

Councillor Matthew Kirk declared in relation to item 6 (Camden Evening and Night-time Economy report) that he was Treasurer of the London Piano Festival Association at Kings Place which was just outside the boundary of the borough.

Councillor Rishi Madlani in relation to the same item declared that he was a Council member of RADA which had a licensed venue in the borough.

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 four deputations had been received and accepted, copies of the deputation statements were included in the supplementary agenda.

The 4 deputations related to item 6, the Camden Evening and Night-Time Economy Report and were from Barbara Brownlee – Chief Executive Soho Housing, Katie Gemmell - Chair Tenants and Residents Association Camden Town (TRACT), David Kaner – on behalf of Covent Garden Community Association and Tricia Richards – Chief Executive Castlehaven Community Association.

The Committee was informed that the deputations would be heard when that item was reached on the agenda.

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

There were none.

6. CAMDEN EVENING AND NIGHT-TIME ECONOMY REPORT (SC/2024/02)

Consideration was given to the deputation statements referred to in Item 4 above.

Superintendent Jack Rowlands Met Police Officer was in attendance and was invited to comment on the deputation statements and the Evening and Night-Time Economy Strategy.

He informed the Committee that from the Police perspective the Nighttime Economic strategy impacted the higher generating crime wards not only in the borough but across London, highlighting that Bloomsbury and Camden Town were amongst the top 20 of the highest generating crime wards in London. Remarking that although the Police had dedicated town centre teams, emergency response teams and other units that policed those areas, resources were limited and there was not likely to be an increase in resources in the near future. He was of the view that putting communities first, connecting and listening to residents' needs was always the right way to go as well as being mindful that there were both positive and negative impacts of the

strategy. Commenting that Camden did not want to see an increase in crime and anti-social behaviour in the area providing reassurance that he would work with the Council to mitigate it.

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

- The strategy appeared to be concentrating on post-midnight drinking, it needed diversification and to include things that would encourage young people and families to get out and about. This included developing nondrinking and non-alcoholic venues.
- The Council should consult with young people and should not assume it was only about alcohol venues.
- Residents did not like the proposals in the policy to remove the cumulative impact zones in areas around Camden Town.
- There were a lot of issues with the strategy particularly in relation to anti-social behaviour in the green space off of Camden High Street. There were health and safety risks with broken glass and cabs causing noise nuisance in the early hours of the morning when picking up patrons.
- The concern for residents was that the Licensing Policy was based on the Evening and Night-time Economy Strategy which was proposing to extend the hours for all venues including alcohol serving venues.
- The issue also for residents was that balance was not included in the vision. The Licencing Policy was looking to extend the hours for venues and remove cumulative impact areas which would increase the consumption and sale of alcohol in the area on the other hand there was not enough balance and consideration provided from the point of view of residents.
- A range of diverse and different types of venues could not flourish in the borough presently until the prevalence of alcohol led venues was reduced.
- In terms of consultation on the strategy and involvement with the Citizens Assembly, Katie Gemmell was asked for her comments prior to the Citizens Assembly being established and applied to be involved in the Citizens Assembly but was not selected and was not involved. The only input she had was to respond with the deputation when the draft Citizens Assembly report went to Committee.
- In relation to the strategy being aligned with the Licensing Policy, Katie Gemmell was of the view that the strategy needed to be in place and several policy work streams developed. The strategy needed to be developed to balance the needs of all the stakeholders.
- David Kaner was involved in pre-discussion and applied to be on the Citizens Assembly but was not selected and not given the opportunity to participate. The only time he got to participate in the process was to comment on the presentation on the first day the Citizens Assembly met.
- The Citizens Assembly report was produced and then the Licensing Policy was derived from the Nighttime Economy Strategy, there was no discussion with residents in between the production of the two reports.
- There was a lot of good stuff in the strategy, however residents wanted a vision statement that had been debated, discussed and agreed on.

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- A priority for the Council that needed to be addressed was to review how the evening and nighttime hot spots were managed, to work with local partners to ensure there was active stewardship in street problem solving.
- The problem and issue for residents and families was the disturbance after 11pm, the evening activities before this were fine.
- Families were moving out of their apartments in Camden because of the number of nighttime activities and associated issues which were preventing kids from sleeping at night.
- Tricia Richards highlighted that the feedback from residents that lived close to Camden Market and the High Street had indicated that the area became loud and noisy after 11pm and residents did not want their kids on the street anywhere near Camden market in the evening because the streets were not safe. Most of the demography of the area had changed over the last two years with more Air Bed and Breakfast accommodation and short term lets becoming prevalent in the area.
- Everybody appreciated the importance of the nighttime economy for the borough, however the strategy required more work, more imagination, more partnership work which would take residents views into consideration was what was being asked for.

Committee Members made the following comments:

- I believe this strategy was what was really needed and was welcomed. It corrected the imbalance towards it being massively weighted to anti-nighttime economy over the past decade. The nighttime economy was at the heart of Camden and was what made Camden an amazing creative borough.
- Reference to drinking in the strategy was not mentioned enough given the effect that it had on the Community, the strategy should be withdrawn and worked on further to take on board the views of residents.
- I agree with the deputees view that the vision statement does not reflect the concept of balancing the needs of residents. A lot of the process had focussed on the Citizens Assembly. Although the strategy was good in many ways, if stakeholders such as Tenants Residents Associations and Community Associations had been consulted more along the way and allowed to respond when it was at the draft stage it would have been a better strategy.
- Camden was a vibrant borough, fighting to keep its nighttime economy alive. It was an industry worth in the region of £955m which needed protection because it employed so many people in the borough, brought in many visitors and contributed to business rates payments.

Councillor Beales (Cabinet Member for New Homes, Jobs and Investment), Gillian Marston (Executive Director Supporting Communities), David Burns (Director of Economy Regeneration and Investment and Patrick Jones (Business Growth

Manager) made the following comments in response to the deputations and members questions:

- The Council used the Citizens Assembly to conduct varied and significant consultation on the Nighttime Economy Strategy. People were independently and randomly selected resulting in a group of people that were demographically representative of the community.
- There were a number of useful Citizen Assembly sessions of which the Cabinet Member for New Homes, Jobs and Investment attended one listening to the views of participants. Some Councillors also attended some of the sessions.
- Other consultation included online surveys, use of a stakeholder group which worked with the Council throughout the process, Area based workshops which were open to all who wanted to participate, independent consultants were recruited to interview stakeholders. Council Officers and the Cabinet Member did a nighttime walk about visiting venues including the Youth Centre and Youth Council, talked to residents, people that worked in the venues and neighbours. The Council also engaged with the GLA who were kept up to date with the process.
- The Council engaged with over 1500 people, majority of which were residents also running disability workshops and engaging with Age Concern UK the group for older residents.
- There were wide ranging diverse, different and conflicting views from residents and various groups. The feedback from all the various forums and consultation fed into the strategy and report.
- In terms of balance residents were referred to 14 times in the document and were very much key stakeholders alongside businesses, visitors and workers. The strategy's vision referred to the borough being welcoming, safe and inclusive for residents, businesses and workers.
- The status quo was not helping anyone, the strategy was seeking to remedy issues the deputees had referred to such as safety, better management of venues and liveability.
- The Strategy does not refer to extended hours or cumulative impact areas, that related to the Licencing Policy which was a separate process and subject to further consultation and engagement.
- Some suggestions made by the deputees including transport movements, street cleaning, women's safety were already included in the strategy. In addition, helpful suggestions provided by the Cabinet Advisor on Safety for Women and Girls would be incorporated into the strategy.
- The Council was seeking to balance the needs of residents, businesses and visitors and improve case management. Committing £1.4m more to street cleaning and jet washing of the high streets in the evening and at night.
- Engagement with the community had been significant, the deputees had indicated that they were not happy with the engagement that had occurred. However, this was the start of a process, where an ongoing Stakeholder Panel would be established which would include residents and would oversee

the delivery of the strategy including identifying gaps and develop actions to remedy issues.

- The strategy does refer to family friendly evenings, a focus on culture, promoting alternatives to alcohol, cleaning streets, improved lighting and making the evening and nighttime economy much more family friendly was a key part of the document.
- The key vision of the strategy was for the borough to be a safe, welcoming inclusive place for all with an Independent Panel of stakeholders overseeing the delivery of this.
- The strategy document was widely advertised, there was nothing preventing Housing Associations and other organisations from engaging in the consultation. There was widespread interest, the Council made a significant effort to go above and beyond engaging with people. It was accepted that some people felt that insufficient consultation was conducted, the Cabinet Member apologised for this indicating that this would be reflected on and learnt from going forward.
- The document was a positive document that reflected a majority of the issues that had been discussed today.
- The document does talk about a balanced approach which met the needs of visitors,
- The Council had also had a full debate on the evening nighttime economy which was open to all and which a lot of the people present this evening had participated in. The need for balance to address the issues and concerns people had as well as the scope to innovate and grow responsible evening and nighttime economy businesses were discussed.
- People had raised concerns that the borough was losing cultural venues, community pubs with many struggling to survive. The Council was seeking to support these types of businesses as well as growing a family friendly responsible culture led evening and nighttime economy offer to keep the borough's high streets thriving, whilst also addressing concerns some residents had about management of poorly managed venues.
- Some actions in the strategy included activation of public spaces in the evening which were accessible for families and did not cost a lot of money, improving employment standards, working with partners to look specifically at safe travelling to and from work in the evening.

Councillor Sue Vincent with the agreement of the chair also addressed the Committee informing the Committee that she was concerned that the appropriate information on noise nuisance, complaints from residents and anti-social behaviour had not been presented to members. She was of the view that the nighttime economy caused a lot of disturbance for residents and in agreement with the deputies asked that balance from the point of view of the residents be included in the vision statement of the strategy.

Responding to a Committee member's question, the Cabinet Member for New Homes, Jobs and Investment commented that although the strategy document referred to balance many times, when introducing the report to Cabinet he would

specifically talk about the need for balance which would be minuted at Cabinet as the intention of the strategy, should the report be agreed. Priority for place management which had come through strongly at this meeting would be included as an important action for the Stakeholder Panel as well as inclusion of resident representation on the Panel.

Councillor Kirk proposed a recommendation which was seconded by Councillor Stark that the strategy be withdrawn and a proper full consultation process which included the deputees, Chairs of Tenants Residents Associations and Community Associations took place to develop a strategy to manage the balance between residents and businesses.

The Committee voted on the recommendation and by a vote of 2 in favour and 5 against

Resolved

That the recommendation be rejected.

The Chair thanked the deputees, the Cabinet Member, Councillors and officers for attending.

RESOLVED –

THAT the report be noted and recommended that Cabinet approve the recommendations in the report.

7. REDUCING VIOLENCE AND ABUSE FOR WOMEN AND GIRLS

Consideration was given to the report of the Cabinet Adviser on Reducing Violence and Abuse for Women and Girls.

Councillor Nasrine Djemai Cabinet Adviser on Reducing Violence and Abuse for Women and Girls gave the following key responses to questions:

- Domestic abuse and violence covered a huge area, in future she would want to look into how this affected the LGBT community and would want to speak to LGBT charities and organisations.
- A way of creating safe venues in the borough was to have open lines of engagement, encouraging venues to have a collaborative approach for example this would involve sharing information about perpetrators of harassment or violence between venues and alerting the police.
- Self-defence was one of the tools people could use to look after themselves and act confidently. Nine times out of ten perpetrators of violence were deterred from trying to approach a person that acted confidently.

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- Self-defence was not only a good tool used for defending yourself from an attack/harassment, but it was also good for physical and mental wellbeing and the confidence from this could be used throughout all aspects of life. It would be good if this could be shared throughout all Camden schools providing kids the opportunity to take this up if they wished.
- Discussion about self-defence had taken place with kids at Regents Park School who had shown an interest in taking this up.
- Hopscotch was already undertaking a project in Haverstock School with focussed sessions among young people on positive masculinity and negative behaviours. Attitudes were slowly beginning to change, the challenge was how this could be sustained long term and the service spread across all schools in Camden.
- In relation to discussions with young boys about Andrew Tate, the discussions were quite uncomfortable for the young boys as they appeared not to have been exposed to these conversations. The discussions needed to include a whole range of issues, however discussions about Andrew Tate did not feature that much in the conversations.
- An experience of a single mum with a 14-year-old son was that the son was aware of who Andrew Tate was from social media he was however not seen as someone who was good or admired. A way of tackling this was through continued education of children from a young age.
- Having self-defence on the secondary school curriculum along with Personal, Social, Health and Economic Education (PSHE) would shape the way violence and harassment was viewed.
- There was the need to have more women in all areas that crimes and harassment of women could be reported to and who could serve as role models.
- Educating children in primary school about decency and about respect for women was already being done through reading and storytelling and speaking about kindness. It was suggested that it was important to have this in secondary schools because that was when there was more awareness.
- In terms of the Police Strategy of tackling violence against women, the Executive Director Supporting Communities advised that a report was due after 12 months. At the moment it was only 4 ½ months into the strategy, there was no outcome yet because it was new.
- A lot of women when reporting incidents of sexual harassment to the Police had felt a sense of despair as they were either not taken seriously or not believed, particularly when reporting to male police officers.
- It was important that people were educated and made aware, this included educating older men as well.

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- The issue of violence and abuse against women and girls was a societal issue affecting everyone and the idea was to have a central space with the available resources and information.
- In the modern age of technology, it should not take too long to set something up which provided a link to all the resources in the borough. It was suggested that the Council could actively take a stake in having a platform and offering this to residents so they could access the service they required. Making access available to everyone.
- A way of tackling and publicising the issue was to make use of public spaces such as bus stops, schools and also using online platforms such as Instagram and twitter to call out abuse and hope it served as a deterrent. This would also create an awareness and a cultural shift.
- An example of this was the Mayor of London's recent call out campaign with posters on Transport for London. This had caught a lot of attention and has had a positive effect.
- There were suggestions that representatives from the Youth Council, students from Universities could be approached to provide more information on these issues regarding violence, abuse and sexual harassment faced by these groups.

The Cabinet Member for Safer Communities commented that it had been a learning curve for her thanking the Cabinet Adviser for her commitment and hard work and for taking the opportunity to shape the Council's approach to safety for women and young girls.

The Chair informed the Committee that the Violence Against Women and Girls Update should have come to this Committee meeting but there had been a mix up in terms of producing the report, the Council's position on violence against Women and girls was due to be presented to the next meeting of the Committee.

The Cabinet Adviser was thanked for her excellent report and

RESOLVED –

THAT the report be noted and that the recommendations as set out in the report be endorsed by the committee.

8. WORK PROGRAMME

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

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The Committee discussed the Work Programme, with members suggesting that the following items be included on the Work Programme for 2024/25:

- GLL or Better Leisure Centre to understand what they were doing in Camden considering they had financial difficulties,
- An item on Culture, and Libraries
- Royal Mail be included on the Work Programme to discuss issues with missing post-delivery in the borough.

RESOLVED –

THAT the Work Programme be noted.

9. ANY OTHER BUSINESS THAT THE CHAIR CONSIDERS URGENT

There was none.

The meeting ended at 8.58 pm.

CHAIR

Contact Officer: Sola Odusina
Telephone No: 0207 974 6884
E-Mail: sola.odusina@camden.gov.uk

MINUTES END