

## **THE LONDON BOROUGH OF CAMDEN**

At a meeting of the **CULTURE AND ENVIRONMENT SCRUTINY COMMITTEE** held on **MONDAY, 11TH NOVEMBER, 2024** at 6.30 pm in Council Chamber, Town Hall, Judd Street, London WC1H 9JE

### **MEMBERS OF THE COMMITTEE PRESENT**

Councillors Awale Olad (Chair), Nina De Ayala Parker, Sharon Hardwick, Matthew Kirk, Izzy Lenga, Rishi Madlani, Stephen Stark and Shiva Tiwari

### **ALSO PRESENT**

Councillors Marcus Boyland (Cabinet Member for Best Start for Children and Families) Councillor Cameron Aref-Adib (Cabinet Member for Finance and Cost of Living) Councillor Adam Harrison (Cabinet Member for Planning and a Sustainable Camden) Councillor Anna Wright (Cabinet Member for Health Wellbeing and Adult Social Care)

**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 no apologies for absence.

#### **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 Sharon Hardwick declared for transparency in relation to item 9 on the agenda (Libraries and their Neighbourhoods) that she worked for the Chartered Institute of Library Professionals.

Councillor Stark declared that in relation to the first deputation (Council plans and traffic orders on Fleet Road NW3 pertaining to the South End Streatery) the depute had raised concerns about him contributing to this item citing a conflict of interest. Although he had meetings with the Council on the issue, he was not involved in the decision-making process. He had also attended meetings of the Hampstead Neighbourhood Forum as a Coopted member as were the Frogna and Gospel Oak

ward members, and was of the view that attending meetings of the Hampstead Neighbourhood Forum would not impact his judgement in contributing to this item.

Councillor Madlani declared in relation to item 8 (Camden Transport Strategy Delivery Plan 2025-2028 and Local Implementation Plan) that he was an Emeritus Governor at the London School of Economics and a number of his colleagues were running a campaign relating to the Holborn Station intersection.

### **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 Council Chamber 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.

#### **Variation of order of business**

In accordance with paragraph 10 of the Constitution, Committee Procedure rules, the Chair proposed and the Committee agreed to vary the order of reports on the agenda and take the Draft North London Joint Waste Strategy report item 10 before item 9, the Libraries report.

### **4. DEPUTATIONS (IF ANY)**

The Chair informed members that seven deputations had been received and accepted, copies of the deputation statements were included in the supplementary agenda. In addition, Councillor Lorna Russell had requested to speak on the Dartmouth Park Area Petition item.

- 4 deputations related to item 7 – Response to Petition to extend the Dartmouth Park Area Healthy Neighbourhood Consultation Deadline and these would be taken at the start of that item.
- 2 deputations related to item 8 – Camden Transport Strategy Delivery Plan 2025 -2028 and Local Implementation Plan and would be taken at the start of that item.
- The final deputation was from a group of Fleet Road residents with regards to Council plans and traffic orders on Fleet Road NW3 pertaining to the South

End Green Sreatery – This item would be taken after consideration of item 5 and the minutes item 6.

### Fleet Road Residents Deputation

Consideration was given to the deputation statement referred to above.

The following response was given by the depute to members questions:

- The new planned proposals were that the number 24 bus would stop and wait on Fleet Road rather than use the bus terminus. It did not matter how much pressure was put on TfL the buses had to wait somewhere.

Anthony Christofi Transport and Design Manager, Sam Margolis (Head of Transport Strategy and Projects) and Richard Bradbury, (Director of Environment and Sustainability) made the following comments in response to the deputations and members questions:

- The Southend Green and Heathy Street Scheme aimed to create healthier, safer and more accessible streets and a new public space with greening and seating for community use that would contribute to the south end green village character and identity as a neighbourhood centre.
- Having learnt lessons from previous trials and due to a long standing ask from local people to close a slip road, proposals were developed for the area which were consulted on over a period of 4 weeks in September and October 2022.
- The consultation involved setting up consultation pages on Camden's We are Camden Citizens Space seeking people's views, 2,700 postcards were sent to residents, businesses and local stakeholder groups in the vicinity of the proposed scheme asking for their feedback.
- During the consultation 69% of respondents supported the proposals.
- Following the consultation time was taken to consider the feedback and meet with stakeholders including TfL to understand concerns and to find ways to mitigate issues highlighted.
- A period of detailed design was required as well as ground surveys to provide the information required to revise the scheme, including information from TfL on a new electric bus platform that would struggle to make turns required for both bus services that used the Crescent area, something which neither parties were aware of during the early development of the scheme.
- Following consultation and refinement of the proposals a decision was taken in August 2024 to move ahead with the scheme, with some elements made permanent and the re-routing and standing of buses as an 18-month trial.
- The trial represented a further consultation stage where the Council would collect data and feedback from residents and businesses.
- Residents wee written to in August 2024 to inform them of the current status of the scheme and the changes that were being made to the trial scheme in line with the Council's established processes.

- Residents would be written to ahead of the scheme's delivery, setting out how they could respond and provide their views to the 18-month trial period.
- Council officers had responded to a number of enquiries from residents and were happy to continue to do so.
- The deputation referred to a 5-day period for comments, which officers believed was Camden's usual decision-making process. The notification period ahead of a decision. This was not a consultation period or a period for comments but rather a period after a decision where the public could review the decision documents.
- With regards to the Freedom of Information concerns and discussions with TfL and content of the FOI email in July 2024 to Camden, the organisation fed back some comments. Camden and TfL had continuous discourse during all transport schemes and since those emails and consultation, TfL and the Council had met to develop the bus tracking and stand arrangements further with discussions still ongoing.
- The chronology and detail might be unclear from the emails alone, however officers wanted to reassure residents that feedback and concerns raised by TfL had been listened to as well as reviewing the feasibility of the changes. In particular concerns raised by TfL about electric bus tracking and other matters on 8<sup>th</sup> July had been responded to by the Council.
- With regards to the experimental traffic order question that would be part of the 18-month consultation, it was experimental and could be removed.
- Money to remove the trial was secured within the scheme budget should it be required.
- It was acknowledged that Gospel Oak ward Councillors did not state that they supported the scheme, this was an error in the report for which officers apologised. An addendum would be added to the decision-making report to clarify this also informing the Committee that no blue badges would be removed in the scheme.
- Parking bays were removed in the scheme, if during the trial it was established that there was a need for more blue badge parking the experimental traffic order could be revised to accommodate this.
- The footway was to be widened on Pond Street at the location of the relocated bus stop which would have shelter, seating and would be close to the Royal Free Hospital entrance.
- The Royal Free Trust had not objected to the scheme or changes to the road layout. The objective of which was to ensure smoother traffic flow, this would however continue to be monitored and updated to reflect any revisions to the scheme, their impact alongside any relevant mitigation measures.
- With regards to the servicing requirements outside the Italian Deli, there would be double yellow lines with no curb lips. There was no loading bay southeast at this stage, although anything was possible and the outcome of the experimental scheme could determine whether this needed to be added if required.
- With regards to disabled bays, there were no bays being removed, however there were no bays in that location currently. Blue badge holders could park on double yellow lines which was still the situation.

- 3 residential parking bays were being removed, there would be a loss of any parking provision within those bays which would be monitored very closely during the trial as well as the impact on blue badge holders. If it were a requirement for blue badge holders during the trial period the blue badge process would be followed to ensure these users were catered for.
- The cost of the scheme was about £700,000 which was quite normal for a scheme of this scale.
- With regards to consultation engagement this was always a learning process for the Council and something which could be improved. The Council had recently completed a study undertaken by an independent consultant to look at how the Council engaged and consulted with stakeholders and how it could improve. This had resulted in a series of recommendations which the Council was working towards for future projects and was a continual theme as evidenced by the engagement undertaken with the Disability Oversight Panel during the development of the Camden Transport Strategy Plan. Where there were lessons to be learned from this process they would be taken on board.

The Chair noted that the Committee did not appear to recommend that the Council took a different direction on this issue but asked that officers continued to engage with residents and the depute maintaining an open line of communication.

Officers agreed to provide direct contact details to the depute after the meeting.

**Action By: Transport and Design Manager**

The Committee thanked the depute for the deputation and attending the meeting.

## **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 7th October 2024 be signed as an accurate record.

## **7. RESPONSE TO PETITION TO EXTEND THE DARTMOUTH PARK AREA HEALTHY NEIGHBOURHOOD CONSULTATION DEADLINE**

Consideration was given to the report of the Director of Environment and Sustainability which was a response to a petition.

The petition requested that the Council extend the consultation period for the scheme, conduct proper consultation and provide an explanation of the purpose and objectives of the scheme.

In considering the petition, the Committee heard from Andrew Sulston (Chair Highgate Society) (Lead petitioner) and Charlotte Alderson (a local resident) who expressed their concerns over the limited time period taken to engage with all stakeholders, the apparent lack of a well-designed plan based on robust data which would lead to long term congestion and pollution in surrounding areas impacting many lower income households. Agreeing with the Transport Secretary's view that LTNs should be implemented with local community support and asserting that the Council's delivery of the co-design phase was inadequate, they asked that the Committee either recommend that the Council re-run the co-design or that the phase 3 consultation period be extended from the standard four weeks to twelve weeks.

The Committee also heard deputations from David Metz, Jeremy Leach, Chair of London Living Streets, Stephen King, 4 Roads Group and Graeme Blythe parent of a local primary school pupil (who were broadly in support of the Council's proposals for the Dartmouth Park Area LTN). The Committee also heard from Councillor Lorna Russell who noted that it was a complex scheme that would bring about significant change to the area and therefore felt it was critical that time be taken to get the scheme right considering data, evidence, and the views of residents and local groups.

In their response to the petition officers stated that "engagement and consultation were a highly valued part of the Council's Healthy Streets scheme development. The views of residents, businesses and stakeholders were used to gauge the overall level of support or objection to a proposal and also impact on revisions of plans/designs, for example to either improve the scheme or respond to issues that Officers may not have been aware of.

Officers advised that the views of the borough's communities played an important part in the decision-making process, alongside relevant data and policies, which all helped to create the final scheme". As such in November 2021 Camden's Cabinet approved the Council's approach to consultation and decision-making for healthy streets transport schemes.

Officers highlighted how the Dartmouth Park Area Healthy Neighbourhood project aligned with the Council's adopted approach to engagement and consultation for a 'large' scheme of this type. It was also noted that prior to the current scheme, similar proposals were under consideration by the Council and requested, for a number of years (since 2017/18) by stakeholders across the Highgate Ward.

During the discussion Committee members sought clarity from the petitioners on the number of responses from residents that they would regard as adequate, given that

the report highlighted that 2,000 responses had been received during the engagement phase. Officers were asked how responsive the Council was to feedback from the data and real-life experience from the trials, as this was fundamental in getting the detail of the scheme right, and whether the phase 3 consultation could be extended as suggested by the petitioners from 4 weeks to 12 weeks.

In response the petitioners advised that the feedback received from the people they had talked to was, that it was a complex scheme and the Council had not appeared to have considered alternative measures. No explanation was given of why alternative traffic management measures were dismissed. There needed to be an improvement in the quality of the engagement.

In response to Committee members questions, officers and the Cabinet Member for Best Start for Children and Families advised that, they agreed that a flexible approach was the right way in developing such schemes, taking on board information and data from trials and changing some of the locations of the traffic restrictions that came up from public feedback as had occurred in other schemes put forward by the Council such as the Queens Crescent and Arlington Road Schemes.

The consultation period was defined as a minimum of 4 weeks, this had been extended on previous schemes in the past and officers would be willing to consider extending the length of the period of consultation for this scheme which was not set in stone.

In considering the petition, the Committee discussed the 3 available options:

- No further action is necessary;
- A further report should come back to the Committee; or
- The matter should be referred to the relevant decision-making body or officer of the Council with a recommendation on what to do. (In this case the Director of Environment and Sustainability in consultation with the Cabinet Member for Best Start for Children and Families)

The Committee noted that officers had recommended that no further action was necessary, a member suggested that while phase 2 consultation should not be reopened the Committee should encourage officers to follow upon the direction of their comments and extend the phase 3 consultation as much as realistically possible in order that everyone that wished to contribute could at the proper stage of the process.

Invited to comment of this suggestion the Head of Transport Strategy and Projects advised that the consultation period was set out in the Cabinet approved consultation and decision-making process which was a minimum four-week period. He informed the Committee that an extension to that period for a particular scheme could be looked at and this would be taken away for consideration.

**Action By: Head of Transport Strategy and Projects**

The Committee thanked the petitioners and deputees for attending the meeting and highlighting their concerns with the engagement process issues and the merits of the scheme in general.

The Committee although agreeing that no further action was necessary asked that it be kept informed on the progress of the consultation and implementation of the scheme and

**RESOLVED:** That officers should commit to extend the phase 3 consultation as much as realistically possible so that everyone who wished to contribute could contribute at a proper stage of the process.

**8. CAMDEN TRANSPORT STRATEGY DELIVERY PLAN 2025 - 2028 AND LOCAL IMPLEMENTATION PLAN**

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

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

- With regards to the Holborn intersection, Camden Cycling Campaign commended the Council for making permanent a number of cycle ways, particularly the transformational changes to the Holborn Gyrotory where sadly there had been some accidents resulting in deaths to cyclists.
- Camden Cycling Campaign were pleased with the changes made to Clerkenwell Road and in responding to the consultation had made some suggested improvements to the plan.
- With regards to Kings Cross, TfL had not finished the work on the cycle lanes on York Way and not provided the plans to show how the cycle lanes would safely and conveniently cross the busy Euston Road and Kings Cross.
- Camden Cycle Campaign were happy to work with the Council in engaging with TfL on their plans for the borough.
- With regards to the 603 buses, it arrived half an hour before school closed, the only way school children could use the bus was if school closed early. Alternatives were the 210 and 268 buses which were dangerous options for the children because it involved crossing Whitestone Pond which was a very busy road. An option was to have crossing guards on a section of the road but that would not solve the problem.
- There was the need to have a bus going up the road from South Hampstead all through Hampstead and to tweak the existing bus schedule due to it getting dark quite early in the evening by 4.30pm and 7am in the morning.
- Even the Police agreed that the area was open woodland and dangerous particularly when dark for children getting off buses at that time in the area.



## ***Culture and Environment Scrutiny Committee - Monday, 11th November, 2024***

- TfL had not provided any response to the issues raised and it would be helpful if the Council could assist in raising these issues.

Richard Bradbury, (Director of Environment and Sustainability), Sam Margolis (Head of Transport Strategy and Projects) and the Cabinet Member for Planning and a Sustainable Camden made the following comments in response to the deputations and members questions:

- Camden Cycling Campaign were thanked for their broad support of the Council's three-year Delivery and Local Implementation Plan and engagement responses in the development of the plan, recognition of the targets, specific schemes and policies proposed.
- Officers noted Camden Cyclists disappointment with the lack of progress in developing a workplace parking levy, however provided reassurance that work was ongoing and the initial feasibility was almost complete and being considered ahead of next steps.
- The Council was pleased to see the growth to just under 7% of resident trips in the borough now being made by bike and further measures were proposed to reach the Council's longer-term goal of 10% of residents' trips by bike by 2030 and 15% by 2041.
- Officers also wished Jean Dollymore (Camden Cyclist) a very happy 90<sup>th</sup> birthday which she had celebrated in October. The Committee was informed that she had been a stalwart of Camden Cyclists for decades and continued to champion the cause of all active travel including holding the Council to account when she felt something was not quite right.
- Officers informed the Committee that buses played an important role in achieving the vision of the Camden Transport Strategy to transform transport and mobility in Camden and to enable and encourage people to travel sustainably.
- The Transport Strategy contained several bus related policies and measures including Policy 3G which was to lobby TfL to ensure that they maintained a bus service that provided a good level of frequency and accessibility to Camden residents.
- The role of buses was recognised as the most accessible part of the public transport system, the transport strategy also noted the importance of providing more orbital buses in the borough and improving the frequency and general operation of the 603-bus service would contribute to the Council's goals of encouraging safer and more sustainable school journeys and reducing car dependency which had been a huge priority for Camden.
- Supporting sustainable school journeys had been a huge priority for Camden demonstrated by the Council's ambitious roll out of the healthy school streets programme across the borough as well as partnering with schools to promote the adoption of walking, cycling and public transport for school journeys.
- The Transport Strategy Delivery Plan outlined measures to lobby TfL for the review, expansion and improvement of the 603 bus route, Appendix C of the plan recognised that extending the timings and frequency of the bus route 603 had been a long standing public demand and included next steps to lobby TfL

to review the feasibility of expanding and amending existing routes such as the 603 bus route.

- Appendix B of the Delivery Plan noted that the Council would bid for the TfL Better Bus Partnership Funding, which would fund three boroughs up to £10m each for bus network improvements for the next 3 years. The measures in the Camden bid would include such things as using the funding to work with TfL to enhance the hours of operation of the 603-bus service linking Swiss Cottage with Muswell Hill providing an important orbital east-west link in the north of the borough.
- Officers supported the deputation to expand the 603-bus service and would seek to deliver its requests. All the suggestions would form part of the Council's ongoing lobbying of TfL for amendments and included exploring the feasibility of regular buses from Muswell Hill to Swiss Cottage, exploring the option of earlier and later schedules to accommodate early and after school club attendees and exploring replacing the double decker with a single deck of buses for the 603-bus route.

Inviting the Cabinet Member for Planning and a Sustainable Camden to explain how this could be pushed from a political level, the Cabinet Member commented that he could work with the GLA Assembly member for Barnet and Camden Anne Clark to present the case once all the data and arguments had been assembled.

In relation to timescales when this would happen, officers advised that the expression of interest for the TfL Better Bus Partnership Funding would take place over the next 2 weeks. An assessment of the expression of interest and shortlist of successful bids would be provided in early 2025, so the Council should know the outcome of the initial expression of interest in a short space of time.

The Committee thanked Camden Cycling Campaign for attending the meeting and helping to inform Council policy and the 603 Bus Route Campaign noting that officers were addressing this. They were thanked for their deputation and attending the meeting.

Consideration was given to the report of the Cabinet Member for Planning and a Sustainable Camden.

Sam Margolis (Head of Transport Strategy and Projects) Brenda Busingye (Transport and Travel Planning Manager) Karl Brierley, (Safe and Healthy Streets Team Manager), Anthony Christofi (Transport Design Team Manager) and Richard Bradbury, (Director of Environment and Sustainability) made the following comments in response to Committee members questions:

- In terms of consultation engagement, as already mentioned officers were working through the recommendations of the recently completed work undertaken by an independent Consultant looking at how the Council engaged and consulted with its communities. Officers were looking at how

improvements could be included based on the recommendations from that study.

- There had also been an improvement in the Council's overall consultation engagement approach, particularly since Covid.
- Support from residents for the low traffic neighbourhood healthy street schemes tended to grow over time. However, to bring communities along there was a need to engage carefully with residents making sure the schemes were right.
- In relation to the Tavistock and Torrington experimental order trial a big lesson learnt from that project was the outputs and metrics to justify changes to the scheme.
- In terms of car ownership in the borough that had not been broken down by ward. The information in appendix A of the report provided overall outcome data around the number percentage of car ownership reduction in the last few years. In particular it showed an overall 22% reduction in car ownership in the borough between 2016 and 2022 which was the highest percentage in London.
- With regards to whether the point to point only car club schemes should be revisited, there had been a huge increase in the availability of alternative point-to-point systems within the borough, whether that was uber ride sharing facilities, and cycle hire or e-scooter schemes.
- With the data being seen at the moment including the shift to lower levels of car ownership, increased levels of walking and cycling meant at this stage there was not a particular need or demand for the point-to-point system on car clubs.
- In relation to the joined up working with planning colleagues and other departments of the Council on car clubs, in recognition of the importance of back to base car clubs in the borough there was a focus area on this in the delivery plan Appendix c page 253 of the agenda which referred to supporting bay expansion through planning, development and other complimentary initiatives. This included identifying opportunities to expand car club provision through development opportunities and further measures to grow car clubs while also maintaining existing locations because of the role they played.
- With regards to the Swiss Cottage gyratory, this was currently a very challenging environment for all road users, appendix B of the report referred to the Council using funding to work with TfL to undertake a feasibility study into unravelling the Swiss Cottage Gyratory to improve conditions for buses and all other road users.
- In relation to the use of lower polluting vehicles for local deliveries, the Council adopted a Freight and Servicing Action Plan which included a series of actions such as making deliveries more sustainable by minimising the impact of deliveries on the environment. One of the things being looked at was the use of lower polluting vehicles.
- An important thing about the Freight and Servicing Action Plan was that it was a live document as it dealt with partnering with industries that were actually undertaking activities to deliver in this area.

- In relation to the dockless bike hire system, while recognising that there were still issues, there was a contract in place requiring that bike operators mandated that bikes were parked in specific locations. Through contract management there had been an improvement in the way bikes were parked and this continued to be monitored.
- The bigger issue now was that the parking bays were experiencing an overflow problem. The Council was looking to expand the size of the bays.
- Increasing the size of the bay did not mean that bays would not be created in other areas of the borough. It was evidence based and a multi-faceted approach with bays created in areas where required.
- With regards to bus stop by passes, these were important tools used on the cycle network with part of the objective being that a competent 12-year-old would be able to travel round the road network without conflict, with larger vehicles including buses.
- All Camden's Bus stop by passes and shared use bus stops matched the Department for Trading Standards Design Guidance. Camden had used the by passes for up to 10 years.
- A road safety audit was used, they were video monitored closely with studies so the Council could tell where any potential conflicts were and what people's concerns were so that these could be addressed.
- The Council was also working with TfL on long term monitoring and best practice looking at where it could better improve bus stop bypasses and schedule bus stops moving forward.
- With regards to the Healthy School Streets, the next phase of these schemes was going through the decision-making process. Officers had learned from previous experience and put in place processes to ensure that the infrastructure was ready on the day of launch or very soon after the launch. Officers would aim to ensure that some of the delivery issues experienced in the past would not happen on the next phase.
- With regards to cycle training, this was an important part of the programme with a whole package of complimentary measures to support cyclists. Cycling training was provided to adults that requested it as well as the Council proactively reaching out to schools, to workplaces and travel plans to encourage people when they come into the borough to take this up.
- Transport officers worked closely with green space colleagues in the development of the 3-year delivery plan with a significant amount of internal engagement to make sure that the different teams in the Council were working towards shared goals such as green corridors.

The Chair remarked that it was a good report and thanked officers for attending.

**RESOLVED –**

THAT the report be noted.

## **9. LIBRARIES AND THEIR NEIGHBOURHOODS**

Consideration was given to the report of the Director of Recreation.

Committee members made the following comments;

- The report was very much welcomed, Camden was hugely respected across the Library sector as evidenced by the range of organisations such as the Department for Digital Culture Media and Sport (DCMS) and the Arts Council England that were present at the training event organised by the Council.
- It was good that the Council was exploring different pathways into the sector such as training on the job.
- Libraries were not just a nice service to have, for marginalised residents and those in areas of deprivation in a mixed borough such as Camden they served as free access to knowledge and cultural enrichment in a safe and trusted place.

Oliver Jones, Director of Recreation and Fiona Tarn, Head of Libraries, made the following comments in response to Committee members questions:

- In terms of routes into the library profession, the Council had been working closely with CILIP (Chartered Institute of Library and Information Professionals) who had carried out a skills audit of the Council's library team to find out areas that required development, and the different opportunities available to develop the team.
- Apprenticeships had been considered and a commitment had been made to have at least one apprenticeship at level 3 in the service at any one time.
- Consideration was also being given to investing in the Libraries team to provide pathways into professional qualifications and professional recognition via CILIP.
- The Council had also commissioned the reading agency to work with the team to develop a reading strategy for all ages in Camden.
- In terms of the green agenda, Camden was trailblazing in terms of decarbonising its library buildings. The Council had invested £3.7m in Swiss Cottage Library decarbonisation works, Highgate Library was about to reopen after a £1.8m investment and West Hampstead Library was due to close on 18<sup>th</sup> November for £500,000 investment in decarbonisation.
- Kentish Town Library had a cargo bike and Queen's Crescent Library was due to receive one which would support the green agenda. Library of things were present in two libraries also supporting sustainability.
- Kilburn Library was due to close for a redesign project next May so options were being considered as to where the Library of Things might go in the interim while the work was carried out at Kilburn.
- Camden no longer had a mobile library but does have s a Home Library Service which provided a service to vulnerable residents as well as a digital library. Only LB Barnet had a mobile service in London.

- In terms of schools, the Council's Library Service was very proactive working in conjunction with the British library on a number of initiatives, including developing a group for school librarians in Camden to form a network to strengthen the links between public libraries and school libraries similar to the Haringey British Library Support network.
- Other initiatives with schools and the British Library included the launch of the Summer Reading Challenge at the British library which was a well-attended event by about 4 different primary schools. The Council's Library team were always trying to work collaboratively with primary and secondary schools in the borough to engage different audiences of all ages.
- Over the last two years the Council's Library team had built links with the three community run libraries in the borough, meeting up every six to eight weeks to share ideas and support each other where possible.
- In relation to demographics, the Council's Library team had worked with the Reading Agency and the Council's Data and Insight Team to carry out a needs analysis and review of library catchment areas based on demographic data. This data was currently being analysed and would inform the Reading Strategy.
- In terms of the consistency of the offer across Camden's library infrastructure, the libraries across the borough tended to respond to the needs of residents, creating neighbourhood spaces so the libraries did not all look and feel the same, however it was important to have some common offers in the libraries to cater for all ages and feedback from residents was always taken on board.
- In terms of digital inclusion, there were databanks at Queen's Crescent Library and Camden Town, the Council was working with Good Things Foundation to provide free data to residents as well as investing in and installing new Wi-Fi capability across the whole library network.
- Digital inclusion was important, free drop-ins were available across the network of libraries for residents to get support on using their own device or the computer in the library.
- In terms of green spaces around libraries, there was a large programme occurring around Swiss Cottage currently relating to the improvement of the green space there, work was also going on with the Green Spaces Team with developing green space opportunities around West Hampstead.

The Committee thanked officers for attending the meeting and responding to questions, and

**RESOLVED:**

That the report be noted.

**10. DRAFT NORTH LONDON JOINT WASTE STRATEGY 2025-2040**

***Culture and Environment Scrutiny Committee - Monday, 11th November, 2024***

Consideration was given to the report of the Managing Director of the North London Waste Authority.

Martin Capstick, Managing Director, Eleanor Hayward, Senior Strategy and Policy Manager and Isaac Rosen, Senior Strategy and Policy Manager made the following comments in response to Committee members questions:

- The North London Waste Authority (NLWA) were part of an overall joint delivery strategy for North London. Camden collected the waste and relied on NLWA to dispose of the waste by using their facilities.
- NLWA relied on understanding what residents in Camden were generating in their household waste so that the Waste Authority could plan and deliver accordingly.
- In relation to how people were kept informed of NLWA activities and key updates, the Waste Authority aimed to be as open and transparent as possible by producing an annual report and publishing this on the website. Some Councils had requested regular attendance at scrutiny meetings.
- NLWA officers were happy to be guided by its members as to how they should be best kept informed of its activities and strategies.
- The NLWA also produced regular two-to-three-year action plans setting out what it could do to improve the environmental performance of the waste sector. This set a sense of direction and some thought could be put in to how members could be engaged with those action plans.
- In terms of the climate emergency, in consulting with residents there was a strong recognition amongst them that waste was a contributor to the climate emergency both in consumption and disposal of waste so action to reduce and manage waste in the right way could deliver a strong climate benefit.
- Members were also clear that tackling the climate emergency was a key priority of the waste strategy both in the collection and disposal of waste.
- There was a limitation to what the Waste Authority could do to control the waste received and was a reason why it wanted to work in partnership with the government and manufacturers.
- The more things were reused and recycled, the more waste was reduced, the better the environmental outcome.
- In terms of lobbying, NLWA was the second largest waste disposal authority in the country. It was close to Westminster and regularly dealt with government officers and had a powerful voice.
- The most promising area for environmental improvement was increasing the polluter pays principle which referred to manufacturers paying into a fund in accordance with the amount of packaging they produced. This drove behaviour change as it served as an incentive to improve packaging making it more recyclable.
- In terms of disposal of harmful/difficult materials, NLWA was generally guided by Environment Agency rules and research rather than a particular north London approach.
- In terms of plastics, there had been steps taken by the government to reduce plastics and were strong supporters of the deposit return scheme which

encouraged people to recycle and put plastics in the right place so that it could have a new life after its initial use.

- In terms of the North London Heat and Power Project, work was underway and not being paused. There had been a delay due to the contractor not subcontracting the work on time which caused construction delays. However, there was no change to the capacity of the facility and the waste volumes forecast.
- In terms of the recycling rate, in general terms authorities that declared a recycling rate of around 50%, 25% of that would be garden waste., 50% residual waste and 25% general recycling in north London. In urban areas garden waste was around 5% of the total which was why there would always be a lower recycling rate in urban areas such as London compared to Oxfordshire or Norfolk.

The Committee thanked NLWA officers for attending the meeting and responding to questions, and

**RESOLVED:**

To note the draft North London Joint Waste Strategy in Appendix 1 and the Consultation Survey in Appendix 2.

**11. CULTURE AND ENVIRONMENT SCRUTINY COMMITTEE WORK PROGRAMME FOR 2024/25 AND ACTION TRACKER**

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

**Resolved:**

That the report be noted

**12. ANY OTHER BUSINESS THAT THE CHAIR CONSIDERS URGENT**

There was none.

Having applied committee procedure rule 19(a) at 9.30pm the meeting ended at 9.39pm.



**CHAIR**

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

**MINUTES END**