

THE LONDON BOROUGH OF CAMDEN

At a meeting of the **JOINT CHAIRS OF SCRUTINY COMMITTEE** held on **WEDNESDAY, 29TH JANUARY, 2020** at 7.00 pm in The Council Chamber, Crowndale Centre, 218 Eversholt Street, London, NW1 1BD

MEMBERS OF THE COMMITTEE PRESENT

Councillors Douglas Beattie, Alison Kelly, Oliver Lewis and Awale Olad

MEMBERS OF THE COMMITTEE ABSENT

Councillors Andrew Parkinson

ALSO PRESENT

Councillors Georgia Gould, Leader of the Council, Pat Callaghan, Deputy Leader of the Council, and Councillors Meric Apak, Cabinet Member Better Homes, Oliver Cooper, Abdul Hai, Cabinet Member Young People and Cohesion, Nadia Shah, Cabinet Member Safer Communities, and Nazma Rahman.

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 Joint Chairs of Scrutiny Committee and any corrections approved at that meeting will be recorded in those minutes.

MINUTES

1. ELECTION OF CHAIR

It was moved, seconded and agreed that Councillor Alison Kelly be elected Chair for the meeting.

RESOLVED –

THAT Councillor Kelly be elected Chair for the meeting.

2. APOLOGIES

Apologies for absence were received from Councillor Andrew Parkinson.

The meeting endorsed the approach of allowing Councillor Oliver Cooper to ask questions on Councillor Parkinson's behalf.

3. DECLARATIONS BY MEMBERS OF PECUNIARY, NON-PECUNIARY AND OTHER INTERESTS IN RESPECT OF ITEMS ON THIS AGENDA

There were none.

4. DEPUTATIONS (IF ANY)

There were none.

5. ANNOUNCEMENTS (IF ANY)

There were none.

6. NOTIFICATION OF ANY ITEMS OF BUSINESS THAT THE CHAIR CONSIDERS URGENT

There were none.

7. TERMS OF REFERENCE

RESOLVED –

THAT the following terms of reference be noted;

1. To consider the Leader's Annual Statement and any other relevant cross-cutting business of the Cabinet, or business deemed relevant by the advice of the Chief Executive;
2. To consider, in particular, areas and a programme of joint working by the scrutiny committees (see Part 3 of the Constitution) with the power, for the purposes of individual projects, of agreeing to vary terms of reference between the committees (subject always to statutory provisions) to facilitate joint and cross-cutting scrutiny working; and
3. To agree the allocation of scrutiny panels between scrutiny committees for the forthcoming year based on the Council's agreed priorities within existing resources.

8. MINUTES

Consideration was given to the minutes of the meeting held on 18th March 2019.

RESOLVED-

THAT the minutes of the meeting held on 18th March 2019 be approved and signed as a correct record.

9. THE LEADER' OF THE COUNCIL'S ANNUAL REPORT

Consideration was given to the report of the Leader of the Council.

Councillor Georgia Gould, Leader of the Council, took the meeting through her report highlighting the challenges facing the Council around the impacts that demographic changes would have on the borough; Council funding; crime and youth safety; the climate crisis; health and wellbeing; building an inclusive economy and citizen participation.

Councillor Georgia Gould and Pat Callaghan, Deputy Leader of the Council, then gave the following responses to the committee's questions:

Creating a family friendly borough

- The demographic change happening to the borough (20% reduction in birth rate, highest in the country) was being driven by the high cost of property in Camden; the reduction in housing benefit; insecure private rental housing market; Brexit; and the move to change private rented sector homes to Airbnb properties. All these issues were having a profound impact on the number of new family's in the borough and therefore the number of children seeking school places, rather than Community Investment Programme regeneration schemes decanting.
- Though effective systems were in place to assess school place planning, these combined issues had put pressure on school numbers much sooner than anticipated.
- This challenge was being now addressed through the development of a family friendly approach to Council services. This would mean a different approach being developed for managing school place numbers (e.g. looking at the way schools could use the space they had to become hubs for the provision of other services), looking at new social housing provision to ensure more family homes were being built. Also the Council was seeking information as to why and when people were leaving the borough, especially as it was very successful in attracting young people to live and work in Camden. The development of the Council's family friendly approach was being led by Councillor Anna Wright, in her role as a Cabinet Adviser.
- Information would be provided regarding the number of children that would need to be born each year to keep its school places to existing numbers, along with the areas in Camden currently suffering the greatest level of decline.

ACTION BY: Executive Director Supporting People

- The Council recognised the great work being done by local schools to meet the needs of deprived communities, and did not wish to see any close down. The Council had been working with school leaders to help develop a way forward for schools suffering a reduction in pupil numbers. Apart from the development of service hubs, this could also involve the sharing of staff and school leadership. This was a borough-wide issue (as recognised at the last Council meeting on 20th January, when the theme of supporting 21st Century Education was discussed) and did not just relate to one or two schools (e.g. Carlton Primary School). A report would be brought to the Cabinet in April 2020 suggesting a way forward.
- Anecdotal evidence suggested that young people in Camden still wished to own their own home, but in order to do this they had to move out of borough due to the high cost of buying a house or a flat here. This was not the same as in other parts of Europe, where young people were happy to stay and have families whilst living in the private rented sector homes long-term. Better regulation of the private rented sector, manageable rents, security of tenure, along with the availability of more housing could help change young people's minds and encourage them to stay.
- The Council and schools were working hard to see greater improvements in key stages 4 and 5 attainment. Here best practice was being shared, the school improvement team were working to support teachers deliver the curriculum, and the Council was investing into school's infrastructure to give pupils and teachers the best environment in which to work and study.

Healthy Independent Lives

- The Council had taken an innovative approach for the new extra care services to be provided at Charlie Ratchford Court, which was being built as part of the Council's Community Investment Programme (CIP). Construction would be completed in October 2020 and it would be open to tenants in January 2021. The Council intended to develop a model of support at Charlie Ratchford Court which would enable support to be 'flexed' to meet the changing needs of tenants and avoid creating reliance on paid support. Also self-managed teams would be used to organise themselves, along with four 'intergenerational support tenants' who would provide informal support to tenants and occupy two of the two-bed flats. If this provision was successful then the service would be rolled out to other schemes.
- It was proposed that the service would be delivered by an in-house team which would allow the development and implementation of an innovative care model shaped by tenants, which did not currently exist in the extra care market but would require external expertise/support – and additional investment - during the implementation phase. In-house delivery would also allow the Council to 'test and learn' and refine the service once it was operational.

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- The Council was developing a new contract procurement process which would seek to ensure that the Council's 2025 vision was being delivered. Once the new procurement process had been finalised then it could be scrutinised accordingly.
- The Council would be working with Mike Cooke, Camden's former Chief Executive, who had recently been appointed as the Chair of the North Central London's Integrated Care System, to ensure value for money in NHS funding along with it still being locally accountable to residents of the borough.
- Camden would also be seeking to work in partnership with health service providers and community organisations representing health service users, to ensure more resources were put into preventative measures that would enable people to live better for longer.
- The award winning Greenwood Centre, and the Netherwood Family Youth Hub were examples of the Council and local service users coming together to design and operate services, along with building conversations and relationships that were helping to connect communities. The example set by these facilities were the way forward for this type of service provision, and it was hopeful they this citizen led approach would be extended into other types of provision.
- Another example of the Council taking forward its citizen participation agenda was the establishment of the Health and Wellbeing Neighbourhood Assembly which would discuss wellbeing and community connectedness.

A place to call home

- The Council's Community Investment programme (CIP) was an ambitious scheme that sought to create new social housing, improve existing housing along with delivering community facilities (e.g. sixth form centre for LaSWAP secondary school and the Greenwood Centre, Camden's first centre for independent living). The CIP programme was developed as the means to fund the need to provide new housing, regenerate existing homes and community facilities as no Government funding was available to do so.
- The Council had learned lessons from each CIP scheme it had undertaken, with new schemes now ensuring that appropriate project management processes and tenant engagement teams were in place to work with the affected community so that the scheme matched their expectations.
- The Council had robust risk management process in place to assess and monitor the financial viability of its CIP. By acting as the developer of the regeneration schemes the Council was also able to ensure valuable community facilities and homes were provided upfront.
- The CIP was not only delivering new social housing but also providing better quality modern homes with larger floor space and extra bedrooms for families in need.
- The Council believed that its CIP should provide high-quality housing for people to live in, and many of the schemes that had been finalised had been recognised as award winning places for people to live. CIP enabled life changing investment to be undertaken, which was transforming people's

quality of life by delivering new homes and more bedrooms. Other local authorities, who had differing land values, had approached regeneration differently so it was difficult to do like-for-like comparisons regarding cost and quality of each home built.

- The Council had been working with TRAs on the Chalcot Estate to help tenants and residents understand the reason as to why the new windows were being installed. This approach was enabling tenants and resident to be reassured about the work to be done and was achieving a positive response. It was hoped that this approach would allow all the windows to be fitted without the Council needing to have to take any further action.

A safe, strong and open Camden

- The Euston Citizens Assembly was enabling residents to be at the heart of the plans for the development of the station.
- The Community Wealth Fund was a proposal that was being developed, whereby local business would put forward resources that would then be invested into community schemes that would benefit the people living in the local area.
- European Union Citizens played a valued part of life in Camden and the borough would always be open to them to come and live and work here. Camden was a gateway to Europe and the borough would always seek to be open to and welcoming to European citizens.
- The ending of free movement of European Union citizens to this country could have a real impact on some of the businesses based here in Camden, who should they then determine to leave the country, could then have an impact on the business rates generated here.
- The Council was disappointed that the Government had overturned the House of Lords amendment to the Brexit Bill that would have restored the right of unaccompanied child refugees to be reunited with their families in the UK.
- The Council was continuing to support unaccompanied children generally (even though no Government resources were available to fund this) and those who had been resettled following the war in Syria. The Council was championing this type of commitment through London Council's as it was an important London wide issue.

A clean, vibrant and sustainable Camden

- The Council was playing a vital role in helping to tackle the climate emergency. The Council had clearly set this out in its 2025 vision for Camden. As part of this process, it had held the Country's first Climate Emergency Citizens Assembly, which had considered 225 proposals from residents for it to consider. This then led to 17 recommendations for action which the Council then agreed to take forward.
- The work of the Culture and Environment Scrutiny Committee was welcomed in helping shape the way forward for the Council on this, and work would be

done with the scrutiny committee to take forward the recommendation from the Citizens Assembly to set up a Climate Emergency Panel.

- The Council had agreed a new Tree Strategy, which was enabling community organisations to provide over 200 trees to be planted by residents as part of process of creating a new Camden forest.

Investing to create and affordable and accessible Camden

- The Council recognised the importance of the old Town Hall building on Judd Street, and though the costs of refurbishing the building had increased the scheme still provided value for money and it would provide a commercial revenue stream going forward when it opened.

The Chair then thanked Councillors Georgia Gould and Pat Callaghan for attending the meeting and answering the questions.

RESOLVED –

THAT the report be noted.

10. ANY OTHER BUSINESS THAT THE CHAIR CONSIDERS URGENT

There were none.

The meeting ended at 8.30 pm.

CHAIR

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MINUTES END