

## **THE LONDON BOROUGH OF CAMDEN**

At a meeting of the **RESOURCES AND CORPORATE PERFORMANCE SCRUTINY COMMITTEE** held on **TUESDAY, 15TH NOVEMBER, 2022** at 6.30 pm in Committee Room 2, Crowndale Centre, 218 Eversholt Street, London, NW1 1BD

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

Councillors Chung (Chair), Rebecca Filer, Edmund Frondigoun, Liam Martin-Lane and James Slater

### **MEMBERS OF THE COMMITTEE ABSENT**

Councillors Andrew Parkinson, Will Prince and Jonathan Simpson

### **ALSO PRESENT**

Councillors Richard Olszewski

**The minutes should be read in conjunction with the agenda for the meeting. They are subject to approval and signature at the next meeting of the Resources and Corporate Performance Scrutiny Committee and any corrections approved at that meeting will be recorded in those minutes.**

### **MINUTES**

#### **1. GUIDANCE ON HYBRID MEETINGS**

#### **RESOLVED**

THAT the guidance on hybrid meetings be noted.

#### **2. APOLOGIES**

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors Andrew Parkinson, Will Prince and Jonathan Simpson. Apologies for lateness were received from Councillor Rebecca Filer.

#### **3. 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 Edmund Frondigoun declared, in relation to item 10: Camden's Corporate Energy Strategy, that he worked for an Energy Provider. He did not feel this would influence his views or questions in discussing the report.

#### **4. ANNOUNCEMENTS**

##### **Broadcast of the meeting**

The Chair announced that the meeting was being broadcast live by the Council to the Internet and could be viewed on the website for twelve months after the meeting. After that time, webcasts were archived and could be made available upon request. Those who had asked to address the meeting were deemed to be consenting to having their contributions recorded and broadcast and to the use of those sound recordings and images for webcasting and/or training purposes.

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

There were no deputations.

#### **7. MINUTES**

##### **RESOLVED –**

THAT the minutes of the meetings held on 18 July 2022 and 6 September 2022 be agreed.

#### **8. UPDATE FOR COUNCIL AND SCRUTINY ON THE COST OF LIVING CRISIS AND THE COUNCIL'S RESPONSE**

Consideration was given to the report of the Cabinet Member for Finance and Cost of Living. In their introduction of the report, the Cabinet Member commented on the seriousness of the cost-of-living situation and that it would impact all services in different ways. There was then a brief introduction from the Head of Corporate Strategy and the Director of Customer Services.

Members were pleased to hear of the Warm Welcome spaces and asked whether there was scope to use Tenant and Resident Association halls for this. The Director of Customer Services responded that many council assets had now been set up as Warm Welcome spaces. Camden were working with services and children centres, who were offering spaces for children, to also open to families as Warm Welcome space. These centres were also providing fresh fruit, activities and some were beginning to trial opening on Saturdays.

The Council were communicating what support was already there, many spaces were already open and welcoming, however, Camden was looking at how to extend the offer by working with neighbourhood groups to create more spaces and activities. The Council had seen an increase in interest from community groups like Tenant

and Resident Associations and faith leaders who were looking to establish Warm Welcome spaces.

In response to a member question about whether council tax banding was an effective way of gauging residents with disposable income, the Director of Customer Services commented that the Council only had certain ways of targeting higher earning residents as they did not have access to earnings data. Recognising that not all of those in higher Council Tax bands would be cash rich, the proposal to send out letters asking for residents to support others this winter would exclude anyone in arrears, in receipt of benefits or in receipt of a Council Tax discount. Camden would also aim to word the letter sensitively, not only suggesting a money donation but also volunteering opportunities in the community for those not in a position to support financially.

With reference to paragraph 4.24. and the retrofit programme, a Member commented that residents would be keen to know if they would fall into high priority for a retrofit. The Director of Customer Services said that deciding the programme of work was ongoing though there was already an extensive retrofit programme. Camden would be looking at whether works at any high priority properties could be expedited, for example street properties that tended to be less energy efficient.

A Member commented on the importance of being able to provide Warm Welcome spaces every day of the week, the Director of Customer Services said that on the website there was a map of locations and hours that also specified the targeted cohort. She continued that now Camden had a list of spaces, centres and groups onboard Camden would look at where there are gaps whether that be days of the week or geographically.

**RESOLVED –**

THAT the report be noted.

**9. CAMDEN'S CLIMATE INVESTMENT 2027, THE COUNCIL'S LOCAL CLIMATE BOND**

Consideration was given to the report of the Director of Finance, who, along with the Cabinet Member of Finance and Cost of Living, introduced the report.

To questions from Members, the Director of Finance gave the following key responses:

- Two other Councils had similar schemes running at the same time as Camden, all with different rates. This had been fed back to Abundance as something to bear in mind when considering future schemes.

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- There had been a total of 398 Investors, 38 of whom were local. Of the local the investors, about 4 were businesses.
- Members were keen to increase the number of local investors in any future schemes. The Director of Finance said that companies who ran these schemes did have an existing base of investors who are aware of the processes. The Climate Bond was launched during the pre-election period and so the Council were limited in the amount and nature of communications. For future schemes, Camden would look at launching wider and more comprehensive communications.
- When considering whether to use this method of fundraising in the future, interest rates would be one of many considerations. A primary consideration would be whether a specific project could be funded through other sources to ensure that Camden opted for the best option.

**RESOLVED -**

THAT the report be noted.

**10. CAMDEN'S CORPORATE ENERGY PROCUREMENT STRATEGY**

Consideration was given to the report of the Cabinet Member of Finance and Cost of Living. The report was introduced by the Head of Sustainability, Air Quality and Energy.

Members raised concern over working closely with LASER, a subsidiary of Kent County Council (KCC); it had been reported that KCC have warned of possible bankruptcy and Members were worried of the impact this may have. In response to this, the Head Sustainability, Air Quality and Energy commented that the proposed strategy was to appoint a Central Purchasing Body (CPB), LASER was one of a number of options for this. Work would continue to ensure Camden opted for the right CPB.

Members endorsed the recommendations and welcomed the report.

**RESOLVED -**

THAT the report be noted.

**11. CORPORATE PERFORMANCE REPORT QUARTER 1 2022-23**

Consideration was given to the report of the Executive Directors of Supporting People, Supporting Communities and Corporate Services. The Head of Corporate Strategy introduced the report before responding to questions from the Committee.

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In response to Member concern over complaints and Member Enquiry response times, the Director of Customer Services commented that more information would be given with the Annual Complaints Report at the next meeting, however, there were factors that would have impacted the figures. Some of these were: going live with the new system would have had a delayed impact on performance, pressure on services continuing to increase and an increase in complex cases.

Members asked whether the general fund would include an overspend as a result of the pay award being agreed. The Director of Finance commented that the pay award would add an additional financial pressure of around £10 million.

The Committee asked whether the meetings with the Office for National Statistics (ONS) around the census results had been productive as there were concerns around whether the census data was reflective of a post-lockdown Camden population. The Director of Customer Services said that the results and possible errors could not be rectified, however, Camden had asked that mid-year estimates were used as a base for funding instead.

**RESOLVED –**

THAT the report be noted

**12. WORK PROGRAMME AND ACTION TRACKER 2022/23**

Consideration was given to the report of the Executive Director Corporate Services. The report was presented by the Head of Corporate Strategy.

Members agreed that they would defer discussions of having a Scrutiny Panel looking into Customer Services until after the Customer Services report had been considered by the Committee in the February meeting.

**RESOLVED -**

THAT the report be noted.

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

There was no such business.

The meeting ended at 8.00 pm.

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**MINUTES END**